

## H.P. Lovecraft's THE SHADOW OVER CATALINA:

A Modern Update on The Shadow Over Innsmouth (Parts I – III)

Rewritten by T. Christopher Kurth (Last Edit 11/25/22)

### Lovecraftian Mysteries:

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Howard Phillips Lovecraft has often been referred to as the new American Poe. If you think of Lovecraft as a 20<sup>th</sup>-century update on the Gothic horror and mysterious classics of Edgar Allen Poe, then you'll truly understand what Lovecraftian terror is all about. However, H.P. Lovecraft also introduced Science Fiction—and even some genuine scientific knowledge—into the traditional horror and mystery genres. As the century progressed, this new style of writing came to be called Weird Fiction. While less respected by so-called serious writers, weird fiction is actually quite close to a more sophisticated literature known as Magical Realism—a genre that is quite popular, today.

Lovecraft, however—while avidly writing about the supernatural—always claimed to be an atheist. Though, he did admit that the apparent realities of religion were probably connected to an afterlife continuation of our dreams and dreaming life—that is, after our physical form had dissolved back into the natural elements. This is why nearly half of his corpus is concerned with his Dreamland mythos. Although not nearly as well-known as his Cthulhu mythos, these obscure Dream-based works are, in fact, very suggestive of eastern shamanism—particularly, the Tibetan Book of the Dead.

### Lovecraft & the Occult:

However, this is where H.P. Lovecraft's story truly gets weird! A few people have actually learned the terrible facts behind Lovecraft's strange vision of life, death, and The Beyond. Apparently—as Lovecraft himself later admitted—there is much more TRUTH lying behind his strange tales than anyone ever realized.

More incredible still, Lovecraft was apparently initiated into these mysteries by a suspicious occult organization; which allegedly revealed much of their secret history—and magickal workings—to this young, aspiring writer. Moreover, he was even encouraged to write about what he had learned—just so long as he claimed that everything they revealed to him was fiction. Evidently, this exceedingly ancient brotherhood—sometimes referred to as the *Dugpas* of Tibet—had decided that it was time for humanity to finally grow up and face the hard truths of existence—namely, that humanity was definitely not alone in the universe. And, that our universe—or multiverse—is actually far stranger than we ever imagined. However, in order to achieve this somewhat dubious enlightenment, humans had to first be exposed to these ideas gradually—so as not to cause widespread hysteria and panic. Then, once these ideas had been effectively introduced into our mass consciousness, men of science would come to realize that much of what had been formerly thought of as mere Science Fiction was actually quite real and indisputably true—Cthulhu's existence, for example. Ironically, Lovecraft was THE MAN this clandestine Order chose for such a peculiar but extremely important mission. And of course, this is why this long dead writer of existential horror is so significant today!

But, don't take my word for it. Listen to how I learned the bizarre truth behind Lovecraft's tale, The Shadow Over Innsmouth. Spoiler alert: It's completely true—only these dangers are not just found in New England. Catalina Island, just off California's West Coast, is also one of these perilous places! But, I'm getting ahead of myself. First, let me make my introductions and explain to you how I uncovered The Shadow Over Catalina.

## The Clandestine History of Catalina (O.i.):

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During the **WW II** occupation of **Santa Catalina Island**—from 1941 to 1945—officials of the Federal government made a secret investigation of certain conditions in the ancient Catalina seaport of **Avalon**. The public first learned of it, after the **U.S. military** took over, when a vast series of raids and arrests occurred; followed by the deliberate burning and dynamiting—under suitable precautions—of a large number of crumbling, worm-eaten, and supposedly empty houses along the **Casino waterfront**. Uninquiring souls let this occurrence pass as just one of the minor casualties stemming from the Pacific war against Japan.

Keener news-followers, however, wondered at the prodigious numbers of arrests, the abnormally large force of men used in making them, and the secrecy surrounding the disposal of the prisoners. No trials, or even definite charges, were reported; nor were any of these captives seen, thereafter, in the regular jails of the nation. There were vague statements about disease and concentration camps; and later, about dispersal in various naval and military prisons—but nothing positive ever developed. Afterwards, Catalina Island was left almost depopulated; though now it's showing signs of revival.

Originally, complaints from many liberal organizations were met with long confidential discussions, and representatives were taken on trips to certain camps and prisons. As a result, these societies became surprisingly passive and reticent. Newspaper men were harder to manage, but seemed mostly to cooperate with the government in the end.

## The S.S. Nautilus (O.ii.):

Only one newspaper—a tabloid, usually discounted because of its wild policy—mentioned the deep diving submarine that discharged torpedoes downward into the **Devil's Abyss**, just beyond **Casino Point**. Apparently, this same submarine—the **S.S. Nautilus**—was somehow damaged during this elusive undersea battle. Nowadays, the Nautilus remains only semi-submersible and is currently used for underwater exploration of the island's bountiful fish and sea life. Stories of this strange undersea confrontation, however—gathered by chance from sailors operating the **Catalina Express** ferry—seemed rather far-fetched; since these low, black depths lie a full mile out from **Avalon Harbor**. Afterwards, these reports were usually dismissed as just another fish tale.

## Santa Catalina & the Channel Islands (O.iii.):

Nevertheless, people around **California**—especially, in the nearby ports of **Los Angeles** and **Long Beach**—muttered a great deal amongst themselves; but said very little to the outside world. Californians have talked about this dying and half-deserted island for nearly a century now. And, nothing could be wilder or more hideous than what they whispered—and hinted at—in the years before Catalina's restoration. Many things had taught them secretiveness, but there was no need to exert pressure on them. Besides, they really knew very little; for a wide body of ocean kept most of these folks away from the hallowed shores of **Catalina**—and far from the other **Channel Islands** as well. Of course, the Continental Shelf drops off precipitously, on the seaward side, into the vast **Pacific** abyss. Moreover, during much of the early summer, Catalina Island remains blanked under an obscuring fog—known by locals as the June gloom—not to mention LA's ever-present layer of concealing smog.

## **Avalon & Two Harbors (O.iv.):**

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My name is **Bob Banning** and on this, my 96<sup>th</sup> birthday, I am going to—at last—defy the prohibition on speaking about this thing. Results, I am certain, are so distant and thorough that no public harm, save a shock of repulsion, could ever accrue from hinting at what was found by those WW II raiders. Specifically, within that strange and mysterious half-moon bay called **Avalon**. Besides, what was found might—possibly—have more than one explanation. I do not know just how much of the whole tale has been told—even to me—and I have many reasons for not wishing to probe deeper. For my contact with this affair has been closer than that of any other layman, and I have carried away impressions which are yet to drive me to more drastic measures.

Indeed, it was I who once fled frantically out of Catalina's wilderness haven of **Two Harbors**, in the early morning hours of July 16, 1941—and whose frightened appeals for government inquiry, and action, brought on the whole reported episode. I was willing enough to stay mute while the whole affair was fresh and uncertain; but now that it's an old story—with public interest and curiosity gone—I have an odd craving to whisper about those few frightful hours, in that ill-rumored and evilly shadowed seaport of perversion and blasphemous abnormality. Moreover, the mere telling of this persistent nightmare helps me to restore a confidence in my own faculties: to reassure myself that I was not simply the first to succumb to a contagious nightmare of hallucination. It helps me, too, in making up my mind regarding a certain terrible step, which lies ahead of me.

## **Scripps Institution of Oceanography (O.v.):**

Ironically, I had never heard of Avalon till the day before I saw it for the first and—so far—the last time. I was celebrating my coming of age by a tour of the **California coastline**—with sightseeing, historical study, and genealogical inquiry, combined—and had planned to go directly from **Santa Barbara** to UCSD's **Scripps Institution of Oceanography** in **La Jolla**. This is the place from whence my mother's rigorous academic training in marine biology was derived; and I was planning to stay overnight, at the house of one of my mom's old students. Both she and my mother had told me that they had some sort of "family secret" that they wanted to finally reveal to me. But, that this could best be done within the discreet laboratories located at Scripps Institute.

## Transportation via **Catalina Express** & the **Airport in the Sky** (I.A.):

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I had no car of my own, but was travelling by means of train, city trolleys, and tour-based motor coaches—always seeking a route closest to a **Pacific Ocean** view. In **San Pedro**, they told me that first-class transportation—riding in the Commodore Lounge—aboard the celebrated **Catalina Express** was “the boat” to take to the getaway haven of Two Harbors, located in northern Catalina. And, it was only at the ticket-office, when I objected to the high cost, that I learned about a cheaper fare to the southern **port of Avalon**. The stout, shrewd-faced agent, whose speech told me he was not a local man, seemed sympathetic toward my efforts at economy, and suggested what none of my other informants had offered.

“You could take the Catalina Express ferryboat out of **Long Beach**, I suppose,” he said; “but this regular seating isn’t preferred by rich **Los Angeles**-types. Hell, some people spend over a hundred-and-fifty dollars just to ride in the upper-class ‘Captain’s Lounge,’ and that’s just for one-way. But, the Catalina Express fare from Long Beach can cost as little as seventy-five dollars; and that’s for a two-way, round trip ticket. It goes directly to the larger port of Avalon—you may have already heard about this ‘happening place’—and of course, the LA party-crowd tends to prefer it. It’s usually piloted by a well-known Avalon local—Captain Joe Sargent—so, it tends to get a lot of people, even from **Dana Point** I suspect. It’s a wonder folks never come back, though. I suppose it’s cheap enough for a round trip; but, I rarely see many people return on it—nobody knows where all those folks go. Maybe they return by plane. Catalina Island does have an elevated mountaintop runway, called The **Airport in the Sky**. Either way, Captain Joe’s ferry leaves from the main **Avalon Boat Landing**—the **Cabrillo Mole**, located next to Avalon’s South Beach—every couple of hours, even late into the night, unless they’ve changed it lately. Avalon—though—seems rather like an expensive tourist trap; but I’ve never actually been there.”

## Hollywood Avalon & Catalina's Art Culture (IV.A.):

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That was the first I ever heard of “shadowed” **Avalon**. Any reference to a town not shown on common maps or listed in city guide books would have interested me, and the agent's odd manner of allusion roused something like real curiosity. In fact, having lived in California for eighteen years, I was surprised that I had not previously heard about of this mysterious place—although, I did recall once hearing some wild rumors about Catalina Island itself. A **seaport** able to inspire such a reputation among its neighbors, I thought, must be a rather unusual place—and worthy of any tourist's attention. Besides, it was—sort of—on my way to La Jolla and, I thought, I ought to stop off and see it. So, I proceeded to ask the agent for more info about the place—that is, if he didn't mind my curious interrogation. He didn't, but he was very deliberate. And, he spoke with a slight air of superiority regarding the information which he subsequently disclosed.

### Hollywood's Playground:

“Avalon? Well, it's a queer kind of town, down at the southeast end of the island. It used to be almost a suburb of **Hollywood**—the so-called “*playground to the stars*,” and quite a port after World War I. But, all that changed after the Hollywood crowd stopped going there. Most of the people left the island, and the town went to pieces. It's making a comeback though.”

### Avalon Art Colony:

“About ninety-percent of the island's population lives in or around Avalon. At one time, though, there were more empty houses than there were people. And, no business to speak of, except fishing and some local tourism. Everybody in Avalon still trades mostly here in LA, and especially within Long Beach. Historically, Catalina once had quite a fine **art colony**—specializing in vibrant tiles, unique pottery, and rare fine jewelry. But, there's not much of that left now—except one gold and silver refinery, running on the leanest kind of part-time,” he said.

### Real Estate, Vacation Rentals, & Lodging:

“But, this lack of business has been offset, lately, by the island's **real estate** boom. **Houses** go for enormous sums today. And, Avalon's **hotels**—especially, the upscale one's right along the beach—still rake in lots of tourists and tourist dollars. It kind of seems like old times, nowadays. But, I can't say that I would ever want to live there.”

## William Wrigley—The Brainchild Billionaire (III.):

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Remarkably, the well-informed ticket-agent went on to say, “The gold and silver refinery, though, used to be a big thing; and **Old Man Wrigley**, who owned it, was richer than Croesus. Queer old duck, though—no matter where he went, he always remained mighty loyal to his hometown metropolis of **Chicago**. He’s supposed to have developed some sort of rare skin disease or deformity, later in life, that made him keep out of sight—but the history books don’t talk much about that, I suspect. He was apparently the heir to Tom Robbins’ estate, from old Catalina—namely, that venerable ‘patriarch’ who founded the island’s original **business interests**, in the first place. As far back as the 1840’s, Robbins had acquired the island via a Mexican land grant. But, legend has it that he acquired his ‘real’ **wealth** from mysterious pirates, who hid out in the island’s abundance of secret coves. Robbins second wife seems to have been some kind of foreigner—they say a South Sea islander, maybe—so, everyone raised Cain when she married into the **aristocracy** those many years ago. They always do that about strangers—and folks here and hereabouts always try to cover up any foreign **blood** they have in them. Though, Wrigley’s children and grandchildren looked just like any other Midwesterners, so far as I could tell. I once had them pointed out to me, right here—though, come to think of it, the elder children don’t seem to be visiting much anymore.”

### **Wrigley Memorial & Mt. Ada:**

“I never saw old man Wrigley, though, he was a bit before my time—he died sometime in the early 1930’s. Afterwards, they built that expensive **Wrigley Memorial** to honor of ‘the Old Man’ and his cherished island. I even heard that it includes a beautiful **Botanic Garden**, up near a place called **Hermit’s Gulch**, just west of Avalon proper. Of course, Wrigley’s original house still rests on **Mt. Ada**, looming high above the harbor and port town of Avalon. However nowadays, the **Wrigley Mansion** is a popular **Inn** and bed & breakfast Hotel. Hell, if I ever visited Avalon, I’d want to stay in that old geezer’s Ritzy villa—he really knew how to live in style—that is, despite the vicious rumors surrounding his sometimes strange obsessions.”

## Catalina Island “History” Museum (II.):

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“And why is everyone so suspicious about Catalina?”, the man said. “Well, young fellow, you mustn’t take too much stock in what people say around here. They’re hard to get started, but once they do get started, they never let up. They’ve been telling stories about Catalina—whispering them mostly—for the last hundred years or so. And, I gather they’re more scared than anything else. Though, some of these tales would make you laugh. For example, stories about old **Tom Robbins** driving bargains with the devil and bringing imps—out of hell—to live in Avalon. Or, about some kind of devil-worship and awful sacrifices, inside a place near the wharves; supposedly, in a notorious cave complex that people accidentally stumbled upon around 1850 or thereabouts. But, I come from Kansas City—the ‘Show-Me State’—and that sort of story doesn’t go down with me. But if you want, I hear that you can learn more about these old-timer legends at the **Catalina Island Museum.**”

### **The Devil’s Abyss & Underwater Cave Complex:**

“You ought to hear, though, what some of the old-timers say about Casino point and that black marine abyss just off the coast—the ‘**Devil’s Abyss,**’ they sometimes called it. Of course, it’s well below the surface waters; and only the Scripps’ boats and deep-sea submarines ever attempt to visit it. The story is that there’s a whole legion of ‘sea monkeys’ or some sort of ‘devils’ spawn’ sprawled along an alleged bottomless trench—namely, living within some massive **underwater caves**—below the Pacific Ocean sea floor. And, even darting in and out of some mysterious **cave complex,** near the entrance of the Casino Point dive park. It’s a deep, rugged, and uneven place, more than mile out—occasionally called *Y’ha-nth Wes-taria* by the locals—and ships used to make a big detour just to avoid it. That is, those sailors that didn’t hail directly from Avalon.”

### **Tom Robbins & Pirate Treasure:**

“One of the things they suspected about old **Tom Robbins** was that he was thought to secretly venture out at night, whenever the moon and tide was right. Maybe he did, for I dare say the rock formations along Catalina’s coastline are very shadowy and mysterious. And, it’s just possible he was looking for **pirate loot**—and maybe finding it! But, there was also talk of his dealing with demons there, as well. Fact is, I guess—on the whole—it was really the island’s infamous founder, Tom Robbins himself, that gave the area its questionable reputation.”

### The Catalina Epidemic of 1850:

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“That was before the big **epidemic** of 1850, when most of the folks in Avalon were carried off. They never did quite figure out what the trouble was, but it was probably some foreign kind of disease—brought over from China, or somewhere else, by the shipping. It surely was bad enough, though. There were riots over it, and all sorts of ghastly doings, that I don’t think ever got outside of town. And, it left the place in awful shape. Folks never came back; that is, until recently. But for quite a while, there weren’t many people living on Catalina Island.”

### Catalina Island & Foreign Influences:

“The real thing behind the way folks feel, however, is likely just racial prejudice—and I don’t say I necessarily blame those that hold it. I’m suspicious of those **Catalina folks** myself, and don’t care to ever go to their shadowy village. I suppose you already know—I can tell you’re from California by your accent—what a lot of our ships used to have to do with those far-off ports in Africa, Asia, and the South Sea Islands; and—hell—everywhere else. And, what strange people they sometimes brought back with them. Indeed, you’ve likely heard about the Long Beach men who came home with all those Chinese wives, long ago. And, maybe you even know that there’s still a bunch of native Fiji **Islanders** inhabiting the Los Angeles area. For example, those illustrious but decadent Fijians forming the notorious **Tiki-Ti** ‘spirit’ **society**. Well, there must be something like that behind the **Avalon folks**, as well. The place has always been badly cut off from the rest of the country—that is, both by custom and by nature. And, we can’t be sure about the ins and outs of the matter; but it’s pretty clear that old **Tom Robbins** must have brought back some odd specimens—that is, when he had all three of his **ships** in commission, back in the mid-1840’s.”

### The “Catalina Look” & Subculture:

“There certainly is a strange kind of streak in the **Catalina folks**, today. I don’t know how to explain it, but it sorta makes your skin crawl. You’ll notice it in Captain Joe, if you end up taking the Long Beach ferry—and that’s despite the fact that he is such a gregarious and likable guy. Many of them have rather childlike features and large, starry eyes—with an ever so slight bulge. And, their skin isn’t quite right either. Moreover, they seem to have much less hair than most people. The **youth** are very symmetrical and even **beautiful** or handsome, but they **don’t age well**—at all! And, the older fellows look the worst! Fact is, I don’t believe I’ve ever seen a very old chap of their kind. Most animals hate them, too. Apparently, they used to have all sorts of horse troubles, back during Catalina’s early ranching days.

Basically, ordinary people—within Long Beach and nearby Los Angeles—will have nothing to do with them! And, Catalina folk also act kind of stand offish themselves, whenever they come to town. Especially, whenever anyone tries to fish in their local waters. Strange how fish seem—always—thick off Avalon’s harbor; even when they aren’t anywhere else to be found. But, just try to fish there—yourself—and see how those island folks chase you off!”



### The Hotel Metropole:

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“There’s a popular and established hotel in Avalon—the old **Hotel Metropole**—but I don’t believe you can afford it. Either way, I wouldn’t advise you to spend that much money, you being a student and on such a tight budget. The hotel however, was founded by **George Shatto**, in the late 1880’s—just after the Catalina estate had passed thru three successive landlords. That is, after old Tom Robbins had finally passed away. It was later rebuilt, around the time when **Wrigley** took over. But, I wouldn’t advise you to try leaving for Avalon this afternoon—as it’s getting late and you shouldn’t stay there overnight. Besides, all the hotels are really expensive and probably booked up. And—although I’m told the starry night sky looks beautiful off that lonely island—the place gets pretty weird after dark. Better stay somewhere in Long Beach—along the waterfront—and take an early ferry tomorrow morning. Then, you can catch a late, evening ferry—leaving Avalon around seven or eight o’clock at night. There was once an inspector who stayed in Avalon, a couple of years ago, and he started a lot of unpleasant rumors about the place—something about strange sexual practices and even orgies—but I think that he was exaggerating. It seems that they get a strange crowd there, though—for this fellow said he heard peculiar voices in an adjacent room. Weird voices, that really gave him the shivers. It was foreign talk, he thought; but, he said that the terrible thing about it was the ‘kind of voice’ that sometimes spoke. It sounded so unnatural, he said, that he didn’t dare undress or go to sleep. He just waited up and vacated his room, first thing in the morning. Apparently, the strange talk went on most of the night. This fellow—inspector Casey, was his name—had a lot to say about how the Avalon folks ‘watched him’ and seemed to be on guard. Perhaps, it was because he was an employee of the Los Angeles Police Department, but who knows? And, that’s really the reason why I don’t recommend that you stay there, overnight. Otherwise, as I’ve already mentioned, it’s supposedly gorgeous.”

### The Wrigley Refinery & Art Colony:

“Interestingly, that inspector fellow found the **Wrigley Refinery** to be an especially odd place—with strange antiques and artifacts just lying around. I forgot exactly why he was visiting the **art colony**, but I think that it had something to do with a complaint about a missing person. He said that their financial books were in awful shape, and there was no clear account of any kind of legitimate business dealings. You know, it’s always been a mystery where Wrigley got all that **gold** and **silver** they refine. Ironically, they never seemed to do much buying along those lines; but years ago, they shipped out an enormous lot of precious ingots.”

### Catalina’s Antiques & Native Jewelry:

“There used to be talk of a kind of **strange jewelry** that sailors and refinery men sometimes sold on the sly—or, that was seen once or twice on some of the Wrigley womenfolk. People thought that maybe old Tom Robbins traded for it in some heathen port. Especially, since he was always ordering stacks of glass beads and trinkets, such as seafaring men used to trade with Pacific islanders. Others thought—and still think—that he’d found an old **‘pirate cache.’** But, here’s the funny thing. Ol’ Robbins has been dead for many years now, and there still hasn’t been a good-sized ship in or out of the place since the Civil War. But just the same, the Wrigley’s still keep on buying those native trade items—mostly glass, ceramic, and rubber gewgaws, they tell me. Maybe those Catalina folks just like how they look on themselves—God knows they’ve gotten to be about as bad as South Sea savages or Guinea Island cannibals.”

### **The Wrigley Family & Catalina Islanders:**

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“Indeed, that plague of 1850 must have taken out the best **blood** of the place. Anyway, they’re a peculiar lot now. Besides, the **Wrigley family**—and the other **society** folk—are as bad as any others. As I’ve told you, there probably aren’t more than a few of us normal people in the whole region—that is, in spite of its currently booming population. I guess they’re what they call ‘elites,’ nowadays—all lawless and sly, and full of secret doings.”

### **Catalina Fish & Marine Life—the Jacque Cousteau Connection:**

“As I already mentioned, the Catalina boats always get a lot of **fish, lobsters**, and other valuable **marine life**—so much so that they even do some exporting, mostly to Long Beach, Newport, and Dana Point. Strange how the fish swarm right there around those **Casino Point** kelp beds—and in nearby **Lovers Cove**—and all too often, nowhere else! Hell, I’ve even heard of the Catalina fish mobbing swimmers and savagely biting them; especially if these swimmers are fool enough to bring food with them into these hungry waters. Whatever else it is, Catalina Island sure serves as an abundant **underwater preserve**. I’ve even heard that the **Casino Point Dive Park** was the first authorized park, of its kind, in the world—founded by no less than **Jacques Cousteau** himself, they claim. I’ve even heard that they erected an underwater plaque there, just to memorialize Cousteau’s visit. It’s said that he simply loved the place. And, there are even some funny—but rather lewd and crude—jokes about him ‘screwing fish.’”

### **Catalina Elites & California Tourists:**

“However, nobody can really keep track of these rich **Catalina elites**. And, state school officials, census takers, and even the IRS, have had a devil of a time. You can bet that while **tourists** are truly desired, prying strangers aren’t at all welcome; especially outside the immediate environs of Avalon. I’ve heard, personally, of more than one curious tourist or government man that’s disappeared there. And, there’s loose talk of a guy who even went crazy—and is currently residing in the Twin Towers Mental Hospital, even now. They must have fixed up some awful scare for that fellow. That’s why I simply wouldn’t go at night, if I were you. I’ve never been there and have no wish to go, but I guess a day trip couldn’t hurt anyone—even though some people talk like it’s the greatest place in all of California. If you’re just sightseeing, snorkeling, and merely shopping around, then Catalina ought to be quite the interesting place for you. Note, there are also two large touring businesses working in Avalon—the **Catalina Island Company** and **Catalina Adventure Tours**—and I’ve actually heard good things about both of them. But as I’ve said repeatedly, I’ve never been to Catalina myself. Still, I do talk to a lot of visitors—and as you can probably tell, I also read a great deal as well.”

After that enormously informative—but rather enigmatic—introduction to this “mysterious island,” I decided to take the ticket-agent’s advice and stay within the **Long Beach** area for the night. Henceforth, I spent part of that evening visiting the Long Beach **Public Library**—looking up information about Catalina Island and that rather infamous port of Avalon. But, when I tried to question some **LA natives**—frequenting the popular and trendy shops along **Shoreline Village**—I had found them much harder to get started than the ticket-agent predicted. And I soon realized that I could not spare the time to overcome their initial, instinctive reticence. They had a kind of obscure suspiciousness, as if there was something amiss with anyone too much interested in visiting Catalina Island. At the Y.M.C.A., where I was lodging, the clerk merely discouraged my staying overnight in such a decadent place. Surprisingly, the people at the library showed much the same attitude. Clearly, in the eyes of the local populace, Catalina folks allegedly suffered from an exaggerated case of hedonism—coupled with significant moral and cultural degeneration.

**A Very Short History of Santa Catalina:**

The Los Angeles County **histories**—within its sparse Long Beach **Library** shelves—actually, had very little to say: except that **Santa Catalina Island** was officially founded in 1542, noted for shipbuilding and piracy around the time of the Revolution, renowned for its marine abundance, hunting grounds, and cattle ranching, famous as a center of Hollywood activity, and home to a once prosperous art colony (catering to tastes of the rich and powerful). Interestingly, archaeological evidence indicated human activity in and around Catalina dating back to well before 7,000 BC—with deep connections to the ocean environment and its abundant sea life. Indeed, the unique and important art produced by the island greatly emphasizes this perennial maritime connection—especially with its oldest relics and most ancient archaeological specimens. However, the epidemic and riots in 1850 were very sparsely treated, as if they formed a discredit to the whole county. References to decline were few, though the significance upon the later record was unmistakable. After World War I, all industrial life was confined to the Wrigley Refining Company and its associated Art Colony. And, the marketing of gold and silver ingots, artwork, and jewelry formed the only remaining bit of major commerce—that is, aside from the perennial fishing and local tourism. Unfortunately, that fishing and tourism paid less and less, as the price of the commodity fell and tourists started to travel to father off destinations. And, while large-scale corporate fishing offered more and more competition—ironically, there was never a lack of sea life in and around Avalon Harbor itself. Foreigners, though, seldom settled there; and there was some discreetly veiled evidence that a number of outsiders, who had once tried it, had been scattered in a peculiarly drastic fashion.

Most interesting of all was a brief reference to the **fine arts** and strange **native jewelry**, vaguely associated with Catalina and the other Channel Islands. It had, evidently, impressed the whole country—more than a little—for mention was made of specimens in the **Getty Art Museum** of Los Angeles, and in the displays of the **Catalina Island Museum**. The fragmentary descriptions of these things were bald and prosaic, but they hinted—to me—of an undercurrent of persistent strangeness. Something about them seemed so odd and provocative that I could not put them out of my mind. And, despite the relative lateness of the hour, I resolved to see the local sample—said to be a large, oddly proportioned thing, evidently meant as a sort of priestly **tiara**—that is, if it could possibly be arranged.

The Long Beach librarian gave me a note of introduction to the curator of the **Historical Society** Collections located at the **Aquarium of the Pacific**—a Miss Anna Tilton, who happened to live nearby. And after a brief explanation, that elder gentlewoman was kind enough to usher me into the now closed building, since the hour was not outrageously late. The local collection was a notable one, indeed; but in my present mood, I had eyes for nothing but that bizarre object—the revered tiara—which glistened in a corner cupboard, under electric lights.

It took no excessive sensitivity to beauty to make me literally gasp at the strange, unearthly splendor of the alien, opulent fantasy that rested there, on a purple velvet cushion. Even now, I can hardly describe what I saw, though it was clearly enough a sort of **tiara**, as the description had said. It was tall in front and had a large, and curiously irregular, periphery—as if it were designed for a head of an almost freakishly elliptical outline. The material seemed to be predominantly gold, though a weird lighter lustrousness hinted at some strange alloy, with an equally beautiful and scarcely identifiable metal. Its condition was almost perfect, and one could have spent hours in studying the striking and puzzlingly nontraditional designs—some simply geometrical, and some plainly marine—cast or molded in high relief upon its surface, with a craftsmanship of incredible skill and grace.

The longer I looked, the more the thing fascinated me; and in this fascination, there was a curiously disturbing element, hardly to be classified or accounted for. At first, I decided that it was the strange other-worldly quality of the art which made me uneasy. All other **art objects**, I'd ever seen, either belonged to some known racial or national stream; or else, were a consciously modernistic defiance of these streams or styles. This tiara was neither. It clearly belonged to some settled technique of infinite maturity and perfection, yet that technique was utterly remote from any other method—Eastern or Western, ancient or modern—which I had ever seen exemplified. It was as if this workmanship were that of another planet altogether.

However, I soon saw that my uneasiness had a second and perhaps equally potent source—namely, a strangeness residing in the pictorial and mathematical suggestions of their odd designs. The patterns all hinted of remote secrets and unimaginable abysses in time and space. And, the monotonously aquatic nature of the reliefs became almost sinister. Further, among these reliefs were fabulous monsters of abhorrent grotesqueness and malignity—half ichthyic and half batrachian in suggestion—which one could not dissociate from a certain haunting and uncomfortable sense of pseudo-memory—as if they called up some image from one's deep cells and tissues, whose retentive functions are wholly primal or awesomely ancestral. At times, I fancied that every contour of these blasphemous fish-frogs was overflowing with the ultimate quintessence of an unknown and inhuman evil.

In odd contrast to the tiara's fantastic aspect was its brief and prosaic history, as related by Miss Tilton. Apparently, it had been pawned for a ridiculously low sum at a local shop in Long Beach, during the early 1930's, by a drunken Avalon man: a man who, shortly afterwards, was seemingly murdered in a brawl or otherwise criminal encounter. The **Long Beach Historical Society** had acquired it directly from the pawnbroker—at once, giving it a display worthy of its quality. It was labelled as being of probable East-Indian or Indo-Chinese provenance, though the attribution was frankly tentative. It was, then, later displayed within the **Long Beach Aquarium's extended collection**. Miss Tilton, considering all possible hypotheses regarding its origin—and its mere presence in California—was inclined to believe that it formed part of some exotic **pirate hoard**, discovered by old Tom Robbins himself. This view was surely not weakened by the insistent offers to purchase—at a very high price—which the **Wrigley family** began to make, as soon as they knew of its presence. An offer which they apparently still repeat—to this day—despite the Society's unvarying determination not to sell.

**A Strange Cult—The Esoteric Order of Dagon:**

As the elderly lady led me out of the building, she made it clear that the “pirate theory” concerning the Wrigley gold was a popular one—especially, among the more educated people of the region. Predictably, her own attitude toward shadowed Avalon—which she had only seen a few times in youth—was one of disgust towards an overtly hedonistic community, which had slipped far down the moral scale. And, she assured me that the rumors of “devil-worship” were, at least, partly justified by a peculiar and secretive cult which had gained force over the island's residents. A cult which had infiltrated and gradually engulfed all other orthodox churches and fraternities. It was called, she said, “**The Esoteric Order of Dagon;**” and it was undoubtedly a debased, quasi-pagan thing—probably imported from the East, a century before, at a time when the Avalon fisheries seemed to be going barren. Of course, she said, its persistence among the decadent Catalina folk was—and still is—quite natural, in view of the sudden and permanent return of its abundantly fine fishing and bountiful kelp forests. However, this peculiar cult increasingly came to have a profound influence over the entire town—indeed, replacing **Freemasonry** altogether—and taking up headquarters within the old Pueblo **Masonic Hall**, next to the **Chimes Tower**, which perennially overlooks that shadowy port of Avalon. All this, to the pious Miss Tilton, provided an excellent reason for shunning this ancient town of moral decay and desolation. But to me, it was merely fresh incentive for a visit. Thus, to my exploratory anticipations was, now, added an acute anthropological zeal—and I could scarcely sleep in my small room at the local “Y”, as the night wore away.

## Exploring Catalina (I.A.):

### **Catalina Express Ferry Service:**

Shortly before eight the next morning, I eagerly stood with one small bag in front of Long Beach's **Catalina Landing** boat dock waiting for the **Catalina Express** ferry—soon scheduled to arrive from Avalon. As the hour of its arrival drew near, I noticed a general drift of the loungers towards the **VIP** line—or conversely, towards the **Catalina Bistro & Express Grill**, located across the terminal. Evidently, the ticket-agent had not exaggerated how much the Los Angeles crowd coveted this “preferred seating” whenever riding this popular ferry. Within a few moments, a beautiful, large catamaran-style ship sailed in to dock, as it confidently drew up along the slip beside me. I felt immediately that it must be the right one—a guess which the “Long Beach to Avalon” sign verified. There were a variety of passengers—but mostly upper-class vacationers, middle-class families, and a few Catalina islander folk. Finally, as the vehicle at last cleared customs, it silently slipped back out into the vast Pacific Ocean—moving steadily away from the mouth of the Los Angeles River, towards that shadowy port of Avalon, in an almost furtive fashion.

### **The Captain:**

The Captain made an obligatory intercom announcement, as we traveled the length of Long Beach; then he inevitably pointed the ship towards the deep, open ocean. The seasonal fog was still thick, so nobody could actually see Catalina yet. Subsequently, I carefully observed this **Captain** and realized that he must be the “**Joe Sargent**” mentioned by that informative ticket-agent. Before I noticed much detail, there spread over me a wave of spontaneous aversion—which could be neither checked nor explained. It suddenly struck me as very natural why the Long Beach locals should not wish to visit Avalon, despite the fact “Captain Joe” was such a friendly and jovial guy. Indeed, those in the know seemed not to visit Avalon any oftener than necessary, since Catalina Island was the natural habitat of such a man and his kin.

When Captain Joe was finally relieved from the helm by a fellow pilot, I examined him more carefully, trying to determine the exact source of my evil impressions. Especially, since this feeling contrasted so much with his outward demeanor and conduct. He was a thin, stoop shouldered man, not much more than six feet tall, dressed in a light blue uniform and, of course, wearing a distinctive Captain’s hat. His age was perhaps thirty-five, but the odd, deep creases in the sides of his neck made him seem older—that is, whenever one wasn’t looking directly at his youthful looking face. He had a rather narrow head and watery blue eyes—that rarely blinked—as well as a slightly receding forehead and chin, and somewhat undeveloped ears. His long thick lips and slightly greyish cheeks seemed almost beardless; and in places, the surface of his skin seemed queerly irregular, as if peeling from some subcutaneous disease. His hands were a bit large and they also had an unusual greyish-blue tinge. His fingers were strikingly short—especially in proportion to the rest of the structure—and they seemed to curl closely into his wide-open palms. As he walked around the boat, I observed his peculiarly shambling gait—oddly, more like that of a man twice his age. I also noticed that his feet were inordinately large. The more I studied him, the more I wondered how he could ever find shoes to fit them. Indeed, he looked almost like a circus clown; or perhaps more accurately, a comical caricature of an old “Sea Captain.”

And despite the fact that he was so likeable and funny, a certain greasiness about the fellow increased my subconscious dislike. He was, evidently, given to working the boats—or lounging around the docks—and he carried with him much of their characteristic smell. Just what foreign blood or, more likely, disease was in him, I could only guess. His oddities didn’t really look “foreign,” yet I could definitely see why some people found him so alien-looking. I, myself, would have thought more of biological degeneration, rather than foreign-born alienage.

### **The Commodore Lounge:**

Finally shifting my attention away from the Captain, I was a little disappointed when I realized that there weren’t any celebrity passengers on board this particular Catalina Express—except perhaps one, traveling incognito. Also, I didn’t like the idea of riding alone—with only the company of this aloof Catalina Islander crowd—but as we made our ocean crossing, a stewardess happily offered us all some champagne. I had decided, after all, to splurged on the more upscale **Commodore Lounge** for this rare adventure. I extended her a dollar for tip, and murmured something about just turning “eighteen”—the legal age for alcohol in California in those days. She looked curiously at me for a second as she returned the bill, whispering that no tips were necessary, as these were complimentary drinks. And though the lounge was almost full, I was still able to locate a window seat, since I desperately wanted to watch the ship’s steady approach to Catalina—namely, during this once in a lifetime ocean voyage.

### **Catalina Island:**

At length, the massive boat started to jerk, as it rolled amidst the choppy waters of the misnamed Pacific. Glancing at the people next to me, I thought I detected in them a curious wish to avoid looking at me—or at least, a wish to avoid seeming to look directly at me. Then, the boat turned to finally face this awesome and **majestic island**, which was now becoming more and more visible beneath the thick marine layer. The going suddenly became much smoother, as seagulls began flying overhead. And as the island finally came into full view, stately mansions beckoned and even more beautiful resorts emerged—in all their splendor—along its the rocky open shoreline and rolling Tuscan hills, resting above the azure waters of this amazingly beautiful **Catalina** island port.

The day was warm and sunny, guaranteeing that the afternoon would soon see crystal clear skies. The rocky landscape of sand, grass, and cultivated greenery, became more and more stunning as we proceeded ever closer. Out the window I could just see the bright blue water and tan sandy line of **Avalon**—as we drew very near Casino point, just north of Avalon’s main beaches. Finally, a narrow jetty abruptly veered past us, on our port side. We were now hovering very close to Avalon’s central boat dock—the so-called **Cabrillo Mole Terminal**, which stood just to the left, and little farther down from Avalon’s **Southernmost Beach**. There were no visible boats blocking our way, but I could tell by the crowding of yachts nearby, that we were about to make landfall. Large, weather-worn ropes were caught and then carried away by two competent deck hands, as we slid alongside the large landing platform. Not enough men, I thought, for a boat this size. Now and then lines crossed; but it was clear that the crew had done this a thousand times. They quickly anchored the massive ferryboat against the dock’s stout metal poles and wound the ropes, firmly securing the great vessel in place. I breathed a visceral sigh of relief, as we readied ourselves to disembark inland—towards adventure—thus doing our part to promote the general tourist industry within this beautiful, but isolated archipelago.



### **Avalon Harbor & Beaches:**

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As the ferryboat crowd walked expectantly ahead, I couldn't help but notice the scantily clad and nearly naked girls sunning themselves along the beach—though, from a distance, they looked more like harbor seals or stumps of lazy driftwood, scattered along the thin band of **Avalon's central beaches**. I thought about those ancient crumbling sea-walls, just above this shimmering thin line of sand, and about that ephemeral white beach, slowly but surely eroding away—forever drifting into that vast, open sea both surrounding and engulfing us—like mere flotsam in the sands of time. I recalled an old story quoted in one of Catalina's histories—one which I had just recently read. This particular area was once an ancient, fertile, and happily settled countryside. The big change, it was said, came simultaneously with the first Avalon epidemic of 1850—and was thought, by simple folk, to have a dark connection with evil forces lying just beneath the bay. Actually, it was more likely caused by the unwise cutting of woodlands near the shoreline, which robbed the soil of its best protection, and opened the way for waves and wind-blown erosion; as well as radical changes in flora and fauna.

Coming to my senses, at last I spied the **Green Pleasure Pier**—viewing its crowded expanse of stalls, packed full with a multitude of recreational activities—open now and eager for tourists. The popular pier stood just to the right of my peripheral vision, as I walked steadily towards the center of town. Then, the narrow course of sidewalk—running briefly along Pebbly Beach Road—turned sharply to the right. I felt a singular sense of adventure, gazing out upon at this wonderous crescent-shaped **Harbor**, as it opened up around me in all its European opulence. Here, aptly named Crescent Avenue gives way to **Middle Beach** and the calm waters of an azure bay, with low wispy clouds now dappling the clear blue afternoon sky. It was as if the paragliders—racing off in the distance—were about to keep on their ascent, leaving the sane earth altogether, and merging with the unknown arcana of upper air and cryptical sky. The smell of the sea—and of delicious seafood—took on wonderful implications, and the ominous stories I had heard about this place seemed less and less likely. But then, as I finally looked around at its inhabitants, I began to notice the strange look of Avalon's so-called “beautiful people.” Oh, so this must be what everyone's talking about—they almost look like overgrown children. Or more accurately, youthful but rich thirtysomethings, having already undergone unnecessary and rather excessive plastic surgery.

### **Avalon Canyon:**

Then, the crowded throng of ferryboat passengers reached the main road—at the foot of Mount Ada—and thereupon, finally beheld the great valley beyond, encircling the vast but cozy half-moon bay ahead. That special place where the land of **Avalon Canyon** famously joins the sea and surf of its famous harbor, below. Just to the north of Avalon harbor sits a long line of cliffs, which culminates in Sugar Loaf Spur and its perennially famous Chimes “Bell” Tower. Below, at the base of the precipice, Casino Walkway veers off towards Casino Point—and towards Descanso Beach, beyond. Looking up at the horizon, I could just make out the dizzy profile of Chimes Tower Road, topped by Zane Grey's ancient Pueblo-style House—that lodge of which so many legends are told. But for the moment, all my attention was captured by the nearer panorama in front of me. I had—I now realized—come face to face with rumor-shadowed Avalon.

**Avalon** was a town of epicurean intent and dense construction, but one with a portentous dearth of industrial life. Thus, from this rich tangle of houses and buildings, scarcely a wisp of smoke came. Yet, even taller and more spacious resort buildings loomed up Avalon Canyon and amidst Hamilton Cove, beautifully silhouetted against Catalina's seaward horizon. One of these Mansions—Wrigley's original House—perennially peered down from atop Mount Ada. And, at this place—and others nearby—there were blue gaping swimming pools, where entire houses could have stood. Indeed, this vast concentration of red tile roofs and peaked gables conveyed, with a startling directness, the idea of a luxurious hedonism and moral decay. And, as I now walked along its steeply ascending Chimes Tower Road, I could see that many houses were wholly private and fenced-in. There were large Resort Properties, as well—like **Hamilton Cove**—with stair-stepped roofs, patios, and spaciouly railed walkways. These stood well back from the water—and one or two seemed like the abode of millionaires. Stretching inland from among them, I likewise saw a luxurious grass-lined row of palms and eucalyptus trees lining the length of **Descanso Canyon**—with large leaning poles now converted into zip-line wires. From this vantage point, I could just see Descanso Beach, strewn with its lavishness deck chairs, located within the equally famous Descanso Beach Club. This decadent display of Catalina's luxury and wealth was especially concentrated along Avalon's Waterfront. Though, amidst these modern buildings, I could still spy the ancient white outline of a well-preserved brick structure. That memory-haunted location of Avalon's original factory—the place which I had already read so much about. A place deeply connected with the old Wrigley gold and silver refinery—that lone industry, which still supports Catalina's single remaining Art Colony.

**Catalina Casino & Casino Point:**

The harbor, which has long been clogged with yachts and fishing boats, was safely enclosed by an ancient stone breakwater; near which I began to discern the minute forms of a few intrepid scuba divers. And, at whose terminus was what looked like a massive cylindrical lighthouse or bygone Alexandrian temple; but what instead, proved to be the historically famous structure known as the **Catalina Casino**. Alongside this famous structure stood a sandy tongue which had formed on both sides, marking a long peninsular barrier. And directly next to the casino, I saw several decrepit cargo containers filled with diving equipment, wet suits, and variously scattered scuba tanks. Indeed, Catalina's watery depths were located immediately off the main stairs—directly in front of the **Casino Point** Dive Park—where an undersea shelf is home to a Giant Kelp Forest, which drops off precipitously just past the seaward edge of this mighty kelp bed. And, where a secret cave opening—allegedly formed by a mysterious underground river—poured out past the belfried structure, to join the deep ocean, at breakwater's end.

Here and there, docks jutted out along the shoreline—ending at intermittent lengths—within Avalon's placid Harbor; with those moorings farthest to the south appearing to be the most used. And far out to sea, I imagined that I glimpsed that long black line of inky depths, which seemed to carry such a suggestion of latent malignancy. This, I knew, must be those fabled “marine depths” that everyone seemed to fear so much. As I looked, a subtle and curious sense of beckoning seemed added to this grim repulsion; but oddly enough, I found this subtle overtone even more disturbing than my original impression.

Deciding to give my feet a rest, I briefly halted my explorations to rent a **bike** or, perhaps, even a **golf cart**. Already feeling a bit tired, I happily settled on the later—thus, a handy golf-cart was now my preferred choice of island transportation. As I travelled beyond the hoary streets of Avalon proper, I met only a few people betwixt and upon these remote island roads: narrow mountainous roads, hidden amidst Catalina’s rolling hills and deep valleys. Presently, I passed several desecrated houses, in varying stages of abuse. Then, I noticed a cluster of rental houses with rags stuffed into broken windows, various shells, and even some dead fish lying about their littered yards. I thought—hell—what a “party place!” These houses must have entertained one hell of a blowout. Indeed, once or twice I had even glimpsed listless-looking people drunkenly trying to work their gardens—and hungover golfers trying to finish a round, just outside the **Catalina Country Club**. And astonishingly, even a few naked girls lazily sunning their glistening clams along the rocky beach, just below Hamilton Cove. Hell, these sorry-looking drunkards, I chuckled, must have ALL visited that same wild “party”—the one I had just passed, earlier. Sadly, I also observed various groups of young children playing around unattended doorsteps—with no adult within sight or even earshot. Somehow, these drunken and irresponsible hedonists—and apparently, brazen nudists—seemed even more disquieting than the island’s obvious and blatant displays of wealth (not to mention the signs of conspicuous consumption, found nearly everywhere). Moreover, most of these folks had certain peculiarities, and odd motions, which I instinctively disliked—but, without being able to define or comprehend them. Damn, I thought, the people of Avalon were indeed a bizarre lot; but no one could have prepared me for this level of decadence or hedonistic display!

**Catalina Casino Mermaid Mural:**

In a moment, I thought that their seemingly detached manner and oddly naturist physiques suggested some well-known picture, or photo, that I had once seen—perhaps in some obscure book, under vaguely fleeting circumstances or even during some peculiar shock or melancholic episode. But, this pseudo-recollection passed quickly. Then, my mind instantly alighted upon that magnificent “**mermaid mural**” prominently placed above the main doors of the renowned **Catalina Casino**. Aha—that was it! This artist had certainly been gifted with a truly profound insight. He, or she, somehow managed to capture the quintessence of the so-called “Avalon look.” And more mysteriously, this picture also seemed to capture Catalina’s decadent inner psyche as well—that is, all within a single awe-inspiring wall mural. Undeniably, this celebrated Art Deco design was pure genius. Wow—it was right on the mark!

As my golf cart reached the lower valley of Avalon Canyon, skirting now rather close to shore, I seemed to catch a steady note of Catalina's rumored and legendary underground waterfall. The sound seemed to echo deep beneath the unnatural throng of street noises—or at least, that's what it sounded like, whatever it was. Then, the beautifully painted houses grew thicker—lining both sides of the road now—and they began to display more urban tendencies than did those upon the remote Catalina hillsides. The oceanic panorama, lying directly ahead, had gradually contracted down to a pedestrian only **boardwalk**. And in spots, I could see where the pavement and stretches of brick had given way to the sands which line this entire section of beachfront walkway. The **shops** were packed with people, but there were occasional gaps—between these popular shops—where excellent beachfront Restaurants and Hotels poked thru the prevailing wall of **glass**. And, rich accommodations could be variously found along the main **Storefront** Walkway, interrupted only by a few intersecting streets. Pervading this entire scene, was a sense of European opulence and causal luxury, as if the people of Avalon imagined that they had all the time in the world.

Along Avalon's **beachfront**, every street and junction appeared to meet up with Crescent Avenue—namely, that waterfront road which ran the length of Avalon Bay and, thus, along Avalon's main Beaches. Those on the right—along Pebbly Beach Road—led towards the shoreward realms of Lovers Cove and Abalone Point. While those on the left—along Casino Way and Chimes Tower Road—showed vistas of historical grandeur, associated with the area around the Catalina Casino and Descanso Beach. Residences and rentals, throughout the valley—as well as those clinging high upon the high cliffs—all showed some signs of habitation. Indeed, ubiquitous curtained windows appeared, here, there, and everywhere. And, even an occasional rare motor-car could be found hugging the curbs of a few of Avalon's richer streets. Unlike most beach areas, the pavement and sidewalks were well defined—especially, throughout the city of Avalon proper. And, though most of the houses were quite reasonable in size—and typically built just after the First World War—they were obviously unaffordable habitats for most Americans. Nevertheless, despite this pervasive air of luxury and obvious wealth, there was still the hint of a subtle fishy odor—that ubiquitous smell which is, unfortunately, often associated with most oceanside or beachfront communities.

## Avalon's "Inner" Psyche (IV.B.):

### Zane Grey Pueblo:

I was not to reach my destination without one particularly strong impression of a poignantly disagreeable quality. Consequently, I decided to take a closer look at this bizarre villa and temple-like structure—namely, the strange place, which I had hurriedly passed by during my earlier travels. Subsequently, I turned my vehicle up Chimes Tower Road for a **brehtaking view** of the Pacific. I eventually came to a sort of raised hillside concourse or focal point, with an odd Pueblo-like lodge and strange white pagoda-like shrine, located within mere earshot. Presently, I proceeded towards this large adobe hall, along the left-hand junction ahead—that is, just past the path the which abruptly ended with a one-way warning. This once tan structure was now painted an off-color white, and the now black and green sign identified this place as the "**Zane Grey Pueblo & Lodge.**" This structure, indeed, proved to be the former Masonic Hall. However, the original lodge was considerably expanded upon by that famous Western novelist, Zane Grey. Now, it was unfortunately given over to a degraded cult: the "Esoteric Order of Dagon." Specifically, that primitive pagan "church" which I had been explicitly warned about earlier. Rumor has it that ol' Zane Grey had been inspired by various primordial Indian legends—supposedly, concerning a "previous age" when the earth was ruled by demigods originating from the ocean depths. But in all fairness, I found this story to be entirely unsubstantiated and without much merit. Nevertheless, I began to wonder about these ancient tales, after looking more closely at this strange and disconcerting building—a mysterious lodge, entirely covered in odd pictographs.

### The Chimes "Bell" Tower:

As I strained to decipher the cryptic murals and odd inscriptions marking the Zane Grey Pueblo, my attention was at once distracted by the raucous tone of a Bell chime, coming from just up the road. I quickly turned to look in the direction of that lone cliff, which hauntingly overlooks the dark blue waters of the Pacific. This bell sounded from a squat-towered stone temple of a manifestly older date than even Avalon's oldest houses. It was built in an odd Mediterranean style—or possibly, even a Mesopotamian or some other "Art Nouveau" inspired fashion. Obviously, this was the famous **Chimes "Bell" Tower**, after which the road had been appropriately named. It had disproportionately tiered basement, with high open arches—intentionally exposing the bell, inside, to the raw natural elements of the Catalina coast. Some of the tiles upon its colorful roof were missing—at least, along the side I happened to glimpse. Indeed, I strongly suspected that they were the original tiles fabricated by the skilled ceramic workers of Catalina's once prominent art colony.

### **The Esoteric Order of Dagon:**

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Then, suddenly, all thoughts of time were blotted out by an alarming image of sharp intensity—and unaccountable horror—which had seized me, before I knew what it really was. Down the street, the back door of the Zane Grey Lodge had suddenly opened, revealing a rectangle of the black abyss inside. And as I looked, a certain object crossed—or seemed to cross—that darkened rectangle; burning into my brain a momentary conception of nightmare. An image which was all the more maddening, because cold analysis could not show a single nightmarish quality about it. It was a living object, to be sure. And had I been in a steadier mood, I would have found nothing whatsoever of terror in it. Clearly, as I realized a moment later, it was the Pastor—or the Lodge's Grandmaster—clad in some rather peculiar vestments. This strange pseudo-religious dress had doubtlessly been introduced since the **Order of Dagon** had modified the ritual of the local churches and fraternal orders.

The thing which had probably caught my first subconscious glance—and supplied the touch of bizarre horror—was the tall **tiara** he wore; an almost exact duplicate of the one Miss Tilton had showed me the previous evening, whilst visiting Long Beach Aquarium. This fact, obviously acted wildly upon my imagination; and had supplied that namelessly sinister quality to the indeterminate face and robed figure shambling beneath it. There was not, I soon decided, any reason why I should have felt this shuddering touch of evil pseudo-memory. Indeed, was it not completely predictable for a local fraternity or some mysterious cult to adopt, among its ceremonial garb, a unique type of headdress—perhaps made familiar to the community as coming from some rich, but unknown treasure-trove within?

## Re-creation & Beach Life (I.B.):

### **Descanso Canyon & Descanso Beach:**

A thin sprinkling of attractive youngish people now became visible upon the sidewalks—lone individuals and drunken knots of two or three. As I drove, I noticed that the lower floors of some houses seemed to harbor small boutique shops with handmade signs; and, I even noted a few trucks, as I traversed these Catalina hillsides. However, most people seemed to be heading down **Descanso Canyon**, moving in the direction of **Descanso Beach**. The barely audible flow of underground water became more distinct, as I approached from the north. And I couldn't help but notice the massive white Casino ahead, capped with its distinctive wide circular tile roof—and the prominent triangular peninsula jutting out just beyond. As I returned to the crescent-shaped port of Avalon, I attentively searched for that noteworthy hotel located at the edge of the bay, part way down—as this was the famed building I was looking for. The flowing water below suddenly became more apparent; but, it was quickly drowned out by the sound of the waterfront—now on both to my right and my left sides—as I surveyed a joyous tangle of boats and watercraft. Indeed, from this point on, the beachfront commotion was unescapable.

### **Hotel Vista del Mar:**

Then, I parked my vehicle as close as possible to Middle Beach, and approached the tall, balconied building with yellowish stone arches; and a large flag proclaiming it to be the eminent **Hotel Vista del Mar**. Although a little uncertain, I really wanted to stay the night—that is, if the cost wasn't too prohibitive. Either way, I was glad to finally get out and walk around. And once I decided to take the last available room, I proceeded to check my bag in the hotel lobby. There was only one person in sight—an elderly man, without what I had come to call the “Avalon look.” I decided not to ask him any of the questions (which bothered me); remembering the odd things that had been said about these hotels. Instead, I strolled out onto the boardwalk, where most of the people congregated, and then studied the beach minutely and deliberately.

### **Avalon Boardwalk & City Center:**

One side of this cobblestoned open space formed a curved line of beaches and docks; while the other was a long **galleria** of buildings, **shops, restaurants, and bars**. From here streets radiated to the southwest, west, and northwest—encompassing the entire valley floor of Avalon Canyon. Street lamps were few—all low-power incandescents—and I was glad that my plans called for sheltering before dark, even though tonight the full moon would beam brightly. The buildings were all kept in immaculate condition, even though a few seemed very old. Most buildings included shops in current operation: of which one was a **Vons** grocery, others where restaurants, a **Leo's Drugstore**, and various recreational **tour offices**. Also, representing the old business district at the southern extremity of Avalon, just past Abalone Point, I could even discern the office of the town's only major industry—the Wrigley Refining Company. Most nights, there were only a hundred or so people visible on Avalon's streets—including a few automobiles and many golf carts scattered about. But I did not need to be told that this was the main civic center of Catalina, as I had already learned that over ninety-percent of the Island's residents lived within these environs. Finally, from most points in town, I could reliably catch blue glimpses of Avalon's breathtaking Harbor, against which rose its signature structure—that distant lighthouse-looking Casino, standing as a permanent backdrop.

### **Vons Grocery Store:**

For good reason, I chose to make my first inquiries at the **Vons** “chain” **grocery** store—whose personnel were not likely to be native to Avalon. I found a solitary clerk (about my age) in charge, and was pleased to note his brightness and affability—which likely promised useful information. He seemed exceptionally eager to talk, and soon I gathered that he did not like the place much—its slightly fishy smell, its furtive atmosphere, or its exceedingly hedonistic people. Any word with an outsider seemed a relief to him. He hailed from San Diego—boarded with a family, who came over from Los Angeles—and went back home whenever he got a moment off. His family did not like him to work in Catalina either, but the chain had transferred him there and he did not wish to give up his job.

### **Avalon’s Streets:**

The tiny Avalon Library, he said, was not very helpful and neither was the Avalon Chamber of Commerce, but I could probably find my way about, easily enough, anyhow. The beachfront street, that I had just walked down, was **Crescent** Avenue—and Vons of course sat on Summer and Beacon Streets. The area west of Crescent made up **Avalon’s** main **grid**, marked by several fine old residential streets—**Marilla, Whittley, Metropole, Summer, Catalina,** and **Clarissa** Avenues. And south of Abalone Point, was the location of the shoreward slums known as Pebbly Beach Village. This wretched shantytown was, appropriately enough, located next to the power generation plant and the city dump. It was in these slums—along Pebbly Beach proper—that I would find the old industrial center; but most of these businesses were now abandoned and used for either storage, loading boats, or even as a heliport.

### **Avalon’s Special & “Sacred” Places:**

It would be well not to make oneself too conspicuous in Avalon’s local neighborhoods—especially, near the “Mermaid-muraled” **Casino** and up on **Chimes Tower Road**—since Catalina Islanders were very secretive. However, they were especially secretive regarding **Zane Grey’s** notorious “Masonic Lodge”—and thus, extremely protective of their ancient esoteric cult! Some strangers had even disappeared—that is, whenever they happened to probe too deeply into its secret doings. In fact, certain spots were considered nearly “sacred territory”—almost forbidden—as he had learned at considerable cost. One must not, for example, linger much around the Wrigley Refinery or around any of the still-used ritual or “ceremonial areas”—or around the adobe “**Order of Dagon**” **Pueblo**, next to the supremely revered **Chimes Tower**—already mentioned. These sacred structures were indeed very odd—accompanied with all kinds of aberrant ceremonies, bizarre ritual items, and odd clerical vestments as well. Their creeds were heterodox and mysterious, involving hints of certain marvelous “transformations,” leading to bodily immortality—sort of—on this our primal earth. Indeed, they claimed a sort of miraculous “rejuvenation” against old age—and even the ability to grow back missing limbs! The grocery clerk’s own pastor—a Reverend of the Fourth Church of Christ-Scientist, in La Jolla—had gravely urged him not to join any church or fraternal organization within the infamous port of Avalon (or incidentally, at any of other of those hallowed islands, lying off the California coast).



### **Avalon Natives & the Descanso Beach Club:**

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As for the Avalon natives—the Vons' clerk hardly knew what to make of them. They were as furtive, headstrong, and as hedonistic as animals living in the wild; and one could hardly imagine how they passed the time, apart from their constant **swimming, partying, boating, and sunbathing**. Perhaps—judging by the large quantities of wine and liquor they consumed—they lay, for most of their daylight hours, in an enjoyable alcoholic stupor. They seemed clandestinely banded together in some sort of “fraternal fellowship” or philosophic understanding—despising the world, as if they had access to other, more preferable spheres of existence. Their appearance—especially those staring, unwinking eyes, which rarely shut—was certainly shocking enough; and their voices and manners of speech were sometimes very peculiar. Indeed, it was awful to hear them chanting in their so-called “sacred halls”—especially at night—and particularly, during the infamous **Catalina Wine Mixer**. Or, at any of their parties or “revivals,” which were usually held at the **Descanso Beach Club**. Perhaps, one of the islander's most sacred “daytime rituals” was to rent one of the club's special **chaise lounges**—which lazily overlook **Descanso Beach**—and to simply lie there for hours, **sunning and drinking** themselves into an alcoholic daze. In fact, natives would sometimes pay over seventy-five dollars a day, just for continual access to one of these “sacred seats.” And, some of them would hardly budge from this place—like a beached whale—until well after sunset.

### **Casino Point Dive Park & Descanso Beach Ocean Sports:**

They were also very fond of the water, **swimming** a great deal—and also **snorkeling and scuba diving**—within and around Avalon Harbor. Especially, at the world-famous **Casino Point Dive Park**, which offers “the best shore diving in California.” Swimming and Boat **races**, as well as **free-diving** contests, were very common, and everyone living on Catalina Island seemed willing and able to share in these arduous—and potentially dangerous—water sports. Indeed, these activities took on almost a “religious” zeal among Catalina folk. And of course, any necessary equipment could always be easily had, found either next to the grand Casino—at the **Catalina Divers Supply** cargo container shop—or at **Descanso Beach Ocean Sports** rentals.

### **The “Avalon Look” & Catalina Sex Life:**

When one came to think about it, it was only rather **young people** who were seen about in public; and of these, the oldest were apt to be the most tainted-looking. When exceptions did occur, they were mostly persons with no trace of aberrancy, like the old hotel clerk at the Vista del Mar. One wondered what became of the bulk of the older folk, and whether the “**Avalon look**” was not a strange and insidious disease or genetic phenomenon, which increased its hold as the years advanced. Only a rare affliction, of course, could bring about such vast and radical anatomical changes in a single individual, after maturity—indeed, changes involving osseous factors as basic as the shape of the skull. But then, even this aspect was no more baffling and unheard-of than the visible features of the malady as a whole. It would be hard, the grocery clerk implied, to form any real conclusions regarding such a matter; since one never came to know the natives personally, no matter how long one might live in Avalon. To add credence to the idea that this was caused by some sort of STD or virial transmission, the clerks' Pastor insisted—brusquely, and strictly “off the record”—that one must, under no circumstances, ever participate in one of Avalon's infamous orgies, as this is where “the great abomination” occurs. The clerk once pressed him to expound upon this, but the Pastor claimed that he had already said far too much.

### **Underground Caverns & Tunnels:**

The youth was certain that many **specimens**—even worse than the worst visible ones—were kept locked indoors, in various places. People sometimes heard the strangest kind of sounds within the extended city of Avalon. Much of this commotion seems to come from someplace underground—allegedly, from a hidden **cave**, very close to Casino Point. However, the tottering waterfront hovels south of Avalon Bay, and Abalone Point, were also reputedly connected by hidden **tunnels**—being thus a veritable warren of unseen abnormalities. What kind of foreign blood—if any—these people had, it was impossible to tell. They sometimes kept certain especially repulsive characters out of sight—particularly, whenever prying California government officials or federal agents, from the outside world, visited Catalina.

### **The Green Pleasure Pier & the Town Drunkard:**

It would be of no use, my informant said, to ask these “natives” anything about the place. The only one who would talk was a very aged but normal looking man, who lived at the poor southern rim of Catalina—in Pebbly Beach Village—but, who spent much of his time walking about or **lounging** around the **Green Pleasure Pier**. This hoary character, **Zadok Allen**, was a surprisingly fit centenarian who was a bit touched in the head—that is, besides being the **town drunkard**. He was a strange, furtive creature who constantly looked over his shoulder, as if afraid of something—and when sober, could not be persuaded to talk at all with strangers. He was, however, unable to resist any offer of his favorite poison; and once drunk, would furnish the most astonishing fragments of whispered reminiscence. Though, little useful data could be gained from him; since his stories were insane, fragmented hints of impossible marvels and unfathomable horrors—which could have no source, save within his own disordered mind. Nobody ever believed him, but the natives did not like him to drink and talk with strangers. And, it was not always safe to be seen questioning him. It was likely from him that some of the wildest popular whispers and delusions were derived.

### **Boating & Fishing Charters:**

Also, after **chartering** some **fishing boats** with **Catalina Coastal Tours** and **Afishinados**, several non-native residents—and a few terrified tourists—have reported monstrous glimpses of strange marine life, from time to time. But, between old Zadok’s tales and misinformed denizens, it was no wonder such illusions were current. However, none of the non-natives ever stayed out late at night; there being a widespread impression that it was not wise to do so. Besides, the streets are loathsomely dark. Once or twice, a **Catalina Adventure Sailing** charter was inexplicably capsized, while harboring peacefully overnight, within the bay. The unstated message was clear enough—from midnight to morning, Avalon Harbor belongs to the natives.

### **Flying Fish Voyages & Eco-Tours:**

As for business, the abundance of fish and marine life was certainly uncanny; but the natives were taking less advantage of fishing and opting instead for **Coastal Eco-Cruises**, nowadays. One of the biggest tourist attractions is an evening “**Flying Fish Voyage**,” aboard the super-fast **Cyclone** boat. This Catalina favorite uses intense spotlights to highlight schools of bizarre flying fish, for lucky passengers. Moreover, as fish prices fall—with growing competition from the large fleet ships—**eco-tourism** has provided Catalina Island with a way to capitalize on its **marine preserve**: A vast nature sanctuary, residing just off the coast of greater Los Angeles.

Of course, the town's real business was still the somewhat clandestine gold and silver **refinery**; whose storefront office was located on the square, only a few doors south of where I stood. Of course, Old Man Wrigley died way back in the thirties; but sometimes, one of his heirs would arrive at the works in a closed, curtained car. And as expected, there were all sorts of rumors about how the **Wrigley family** members had come to look. All of them had once been fine dandies—and some people say they still wear the frock-coated finery of the Edwardian age, curiously adapted to certain deformities. His sons had, formerly, conducted business in the downtown office; but lately, they had been keeping out of sight and leaving the brunt of affairs to the younger generation—as well as to a rather ubiquitous organization known as the **Catalina Island Conservancy**. Unfortunately, in their later years, the sons—and their sisters—had all come to look very odd indeed, especially the eldest ones. And, it was said that their health was failing as well.

One of the Wrigley daughters grew to become a repellent, almost reptilian-looking woman, who wore an excess of weird **jewelry**—clearly, of the same exotic tradition as that to which the **tiara** belonged. My informant had noticed it many times, and had heard it spoken of as coming from some secret hoard—either of pirates or even from “daemons.” The clergymen—or priests, or whatever they were called nowadays—also wore this kind of ornamental headdress; but one seldom caught glimpses of them. Other specimens, the youth had not seen, though many were rumored to exist within the **Catalina Art Colony**, at the far end of town. The **Wrigleys**, together with the other gently bred **families** of the town—the **Robbins**, the **Licks**, and the **Shattos**—were all very retiring. They lived in immense houses, along the bayside cliffs. And, several of these homes were reputed to harbor—in concealed underground vaults—certain living kinsfolk, whose personal aspect forbade public view, and whose deaths had even been reported and recorded. Naturally, all of these families were big supporters of the original **art colony**, whose surreal “marine-inspired” artwork had made Catalina Island so famous—and yet, so infamous as well.

## Interior Exploration (I.A.):

### Trans Catalina Trailhead & Hiking Trails:

Warning me that many of the street and trail signs were unmarked, the clerk drew, for my benefit, a rough—but ample and painstakingly drawn—sketched map of the island’s most salient features. After a moment’s study, I felt sure that it would be of great help and pocketed it with profuse thanks. During my brief sojourn on Catalina Island, I definitely wanted to see more than just Avalon’s boardwalk. Despite the fact that I had already driven up the coast—to see the beautiful resort properties within Hamilton Cove—I still wanted to see more of the island. But now, I decided to try on my **hiking** boots instead. Subsequently, I made my way to the **Catalina Island Conservancy Trailhead** and Visitor Center. After grabbing a quick bite to eat at **Toyon Grill**, I headed for the hills—specifically, trying to see as much of the Catalina countryside as I could before sunset. Catalina Island has over 42,000 acres of open space and roughly 62 miles of amazing shoreline—I’d be happy if I could only hike a few of those miles, just to get a feel for the larger island environs. I started up the **Trans Catalina Trail**, taking time to enjoy the view, while simultaneously looking out for **buffalo**. Interestingly, Catalina as a large buffalo herd, freely grazing the land. However, I had been warned to stay well back from these beasts, lest I be gored or trampled to death—or both. On the ferry ride over, I had even heard that the mayor of Avalon had recently been gored, so I gathered that animals still don’t like the natives much. The trails were magnificent, but I decided to call it quits after **Hermit Gulch**—that is, so I could “exercise” other sightseeing options.

### Exploring the Catalina Interior via Jeep, Hummer, & Safari Truck:

I was torn over whether to continue exploring more of Catalina’s interior, or whether to go back into town for some additional “cultural” sightseeing, instead. Interestingly, the **Catalina Island Conservancy** offers several Jeep **eco-tours** for more extensive inland journeys. And, the **Catalina Island Company** provides Hummer tours as well. In fact, if I wanted, I could even enlist a large open-air **safari** truck, for an in-depth eco-expedition of the island’s indigenous wildlife—courtesy of **Catalina Adventure Tours**. However, to me at least, the Catalina Islanders—themselves—seemed to be the “wildest” inhabitants on this shadowed isle, so I decided to head back and explore the “haunted” town of Avalon a bit more. Besides, I was getting hungry.

## The Catalina Art, Music, & Party Scene (V.):

### Catalina Food Tours:

The sandwich I had hurriedly ingested earlier wasn't nearly enough to satisfy my appetite, so I needed to find some additional food—and soon. Normally, I dislike the solitary feeling of being single and seen eating alone—especially, whenever publicly dining at fine **restaurants**. Typically, I just buy a fair supply of cheese crackers and ginger wafers, to serve as lunch—or as a quick something to eat, later on. However, Avalon truly has some great places to eat. And this time, I really didn't mind **dining** alone—just so long as I could find a seaside table. Before visiting, I had already made some inquiries aboard the ferry and thus came up with the following short list of Avalon restaurants: **Blue Water Avalon, Avalon Grille, Steve's Steakhouse & Seafood, Catalina Cantina, and The Lobster Trap**. I had even read that **Catalina Food Tours** provided **wine tastings** and **culinary walking tours** for both more “discriminating” customers and enthusiastic “foodies,” alike. However, my first choice was **Blue Water Avalon**, simply because this place provided optimal seafront patio seating—oh, and the food was good as well. In fact, dinner was great; but I polished it off too quickly, as I was anxious to do some more investigating before nightfall. Although, having spied the **Lloyd's** of Avalon Confectionery, I simply had to stop in and get in a quick ice-cream, for the road.

### Wrigley Refinery Tour & Silver Canyon Pottery:

Now, if I hurried—racing against an impending sunset—I could still see a little more of the city before nightfall. My program, I decided, would be to thread the principal streets—talk with any non-natives I might encounter—and then catch the popular “**Twilight Tour**” at the famous Casino, afterwards. The town, as I had already seen, formed a significant and exaggerated example of communal decay; but being no sociologist, I would limit my serious observations currently to the fields of history, art, and architecture. Thus, I began my systematic, though half-bewildered, tour of Avalon's narrow, shadowed lanes. Crossing behind the beachfront, and turning towards the main Avalon Pier, I proceeded in the direction of Lovers Cove, thereby traveling along **Pebbly Beach Road**. Eventually, I passed fairly close to the **Wrigley Refinery** and **Silver Canyon Pottery**, which seemed oddly free of the noise of industry—then I realized that the workers had likely already left for the evening. Besides, there were actually two Wrigley business establishments in Avalon—however, this structure was the older industrial building, which stood on a shallow sea bluff near **Pebbly Beach**. It was located next to the slums—known as **Pebbly Beach Village**—which was really just an open confluence of streets, parking lots, and storage areas, which I understood to be the earliest industrial center. Unfortunately—or perhaps, fortunately—this area was largely displaced after the 1850 epidemic; that is, by the main port of Avalon just up the coast.

Doubling back, and re-crossing the harbor along Avalon's main boardwalk—namely, Crescent Avenue—I traversed most of **Avalon Bay**, finally reaching the region of alleged subsurface caves and underwater cascades (which—suddenly—made me shudder). Unmistakably, just ahead of me was the massive circular roof of the **Casino**, which formed a jagged and fantastic skyline above which rose the Chimes “Bell” Tower, forebodingly connected with that famous Pueblo of mystery and legend (which now harbored an ancient and ghoulish cult). A few of the houses along the main street—and major seaside boardwalk—were tenanted; but most were given over to crass commercialism and senseless pleasure seeking, long ago. Down paved side streets, I spied gaping windows of noisome party goers—many of whose occupants leaned out at perilous and drunken angels—thus, illuminating the sinking decline of island's moral foundations. Those within the windows stared out so spectrally, that it took real courage to turn eastward—towards **Casino Point**—and consequently, confront that “haunted” waterfront icon, yet again. Undoubtedly, because apparently this place served as the primary *epicenter* of Catalina's hedonistic degradation. And certainly, the revulsion of Avalon's fall swells in geometrical rather than arithmetic progression, as the houses multiply to form a city of such stark cultural desolation.

**Catalina's “Big Band” Ballroom, Jazz Festivals, & Wine Mixers:**

The **Catalina Casino** Ballroom was indeed *ground zero* for much of America's “**Jazz Age**” debauchery—with its popular CBS **Big Band** radio broadcasts, starting in 1934 and lasting well into the 1950's. In this spirit, it was now getting to be evening; so it was time to meet up for a guided **tour** of this notorious **ballroom** and subterranean **theatre**—called, appropriately enough, “**Twilight at the Casino.**” Nowadays, Catalina is largely well known for its famous **Jazz Festivals** and **Catalina Wine Mixers**; which are naturally all the rage with today's hedonistic “youth culture.” Catalina Casino is, thus, continuing this ignoble Hollywood tradition of debauchery. Tonight, I am told, that these same “lost youth” will most likely congregate within the confines of the **Chi Chi Club** or **Coyote Joe's**—or perhaps, **Luau Larry's** Tiki Bar (home turf to the sordid Tiki-Ti fraternal Society). Technically, these so-called “youth” were really my peers—or just a little older than I was—but, I've always felt much older than my generation, and probably much too serious for my years ...and for my own good, social or otherwise. Either way, I had planned on returning to my hotel, well before these drunken festivities began—recalling, as I did, that midnight supposedly belonged to this island's orgiastic cultists. But, you know what everyone says about “best made plans...”

## Catalina's "Island" Philosopher (VI.):

The sight of Avalon's decadent avenues of glassy-eyed vacancy and hedonistic depravity—and the thought of such brain-washed "**cultists**," linked to such infinities of black magic and dark, brooding sacrifices (and thus, completely given over to primitive irrationality and to the cobwebs and primeval memories of that conqueror deity, **Dagon**)—stirred up such instinctual aversion that not even the stoutest **philosophy**—or rationalization—could dispense with my feelings of disgust.

**Casino Way** was as dissolute as Crescent Avenue, though it differed in having a beautifully arched **pergola** and "Peripatetic" **walkway**, still in excellent shape. Avalon's Beaches were almost a duplicate of the Mediterranean, save that there were fewer sea gulls barraging the now barely visible wharves—namely, in the "shadowiness" of the setting sun. Not a sober living being did I see—except for some scattered fisherman upon that dusky Breakwater sometimes referred to as the "**Devil's Reef**." And, not a sound did I hear, save the deliberate tinkling of wine and champagne glasses, and the dull roar of **partying crowds**—and metaphorically, of the babbling fall of Western civilization. The town was getting more and more on my nerves—and I looked behind me, distastefully—as I worked my way back past tottering drunkards, who were just "hanging out" along **Middle Beach** and the nearby piers. One of the drunks subsequently vomited into its pristine sands, as I passed. Continuing to walk southward, referencing the clerk's map by lamplight, I noted that the old Avalon Boat Dock, according to the sketch, was subsequently replaced by the massive **Cabrillo Mole**—which, I had read, was a fancy name for a large earthen pier, anchored by rocks and dirt. However, according to my historical investigations, this was not the original docking area.

South of the bay there were also traces of squalid **nightlife**. Active fish-packing houses, lined the farthest way—along Pebbly Beach Road—with barely smoking incinerators, furnaces, and pottery kilns, discreetly working, hidden amidst shed roofed buildings. These businesses were hidden here and there within the industrial slum, south of beautiful Avalon Harbor. And occasional sounds, from indeterminate sources, and infrequent shambling forms, haunted the dismal streets and unpaved lanes of **Pebble Beach Village**. I seemed to find this even more oppressive than the previous desertion. For one thing, the people were more hideous and abnormal than those near Avalon's central Boardwalk; so that I was, several times, evily reminded of something utterly fantastic—which I could not quite place. Undoubtedly, the **alien strain** in the Avalon folk was stronger here than near the main Beachfront—unless indeed the "Avalon look" were a disease rather than a blood strain; in which case, this district might be used to harbor the more advanced cases.

One detail that annoyed me was the "distribution" of the few, faint sounds I heard. They ought, naturally, to have come wholly from the visibly inhabited houses and buildings—yet in reality, were often strongest inside the most rigidly boarded-up facades. There was creaking, and scurrying, and hoarse doubtful noises; and I thought uncomfortably about the **hidden tunnels** suggested by the grocery clerk. Suddenly, I found myself wondering what the voices of those denizens would be like. I had heard no speech—so far—around these dreadful quarters, and was unaccountably anxious not to do so.

Pausing only long enough to quickly observe two working structures—namely, a small factory and a larger power plant—at the far southern edge of Pebbly Beach; I hastened out of that vile waterfront slum as quickly as possible, returning northward to the luxurious harbor. My next logical goal was **Chimes Tower Road**. Unfortunately, it was located at the extreme, opposite end of town. Thus, I was sure glad that I had rented a vehicle earlier. Without it, I surely couldn't have covered so much ground. But even from a safe distance, seated in my trusty golf cart, I could not bear to re-pass the old **Zane Grey Pueblo**—in whose backdoor I had glimpsed the frightening form of that strangely diademed priest ...or pagan pastor? Besides, the grocery clerk had told me that some areas—especially, that of the Pueblo's "Order of Dagon" Hall—were not advisable neighborhoods for strangers.

Accordingly, I kept north along **Crescent Avenue** to **Marilla**, then turned inland, crossing **Casino Way**, safely south of Descanso Canyon—thereby, passing through the decadent older neighborhoods of **Third**, **Beacon**, and **Tremont** Streets. Though some of these older avenues, like **Third Street**, were ill-surfaced and a bit unkempt, their dignity had not entirely departed. House after house claimed my gaze, most of them degenerate rentals—offering room and board, amidst slightly neglected grounds. But one or two, in each street, showed signs of continuous occupancy. On Beacon Street there was a row of four or five in excellent standing, and with finely tended lawns and gardens. The most sumptuous of these—with a wide terraced garden, extending back the whole way to Tremont Street—I took to be home of Old Man Wrigley's grandson or perhaps great-grandson—that is, of the afflicted refinery owner, and his kin.

In all these shadowy streets, no sober person was currently visible; and I wondered at the complete absence of dogs and cats from Avalon. Another thing which puzzled and disturbed me—even in some of the best-preserved mansions—was the tightly shuttered condition of many third-story windows, terraces, and patio doors. Furtiveness and secretiveness seemed ubiquitous in this self-indulgent city of strange alienage and debauchery. And, I could not escape the sensation of also being watched—perhaps, for ambush—from every alleyway—namely, by sly, staring eyes that rarely shut.

I shivered, as the stroke of ten sounded from the **Chimes Tower** belfry atop that infamous hill. Too well did I recall that squat Temple structure, from which those haunting notes it had come. Now following **Whittley Avenue** towards the sea, I faced that former zone of Avalon's glory and hospitality, thus I gazing upon the famous **Hotel Metropole**—the one cautiously mentioned by the ferryboat agent. As I drove past, I noted the open seashore ahead, and saw others with golf carts awkwardly circling the large roundabout—precipitously close to the **Casino Way Pergola**, the area which precisely marked the fitting walkway ahead. Luckily, drunk drivers aren't as much of a problem when they're only driving small golf carts and such.

The uncertain Boardwalk now before me, was posted with a pedestrian-only sign, so I took the risk of parking my cart next to **Antonio's Cabaret**, and crossed **Crescent Avenue**, again—that is, towards **Middle** and **South Beach**—where traces of Avalon's "party life" reappeared. Furtive shambling creatures stared cryptically in my direction—and more normal faces eyed me coldly and curiously. The Avalon Beachfront was rapidly becoming intolerable, and I turned down **Catalina Avenue**, towards the **Golf Garden Square**, and ducked in the alley behind the **Vista del Mar**; with the hope of getting back to my hotel room, without being seen.



It was there, down the alley on my left, that I noticed a red-faced, bushy-bearded, and watery-eyed old man, in nondescript rags. He sat warming himself in front of a small dumpster fire—talking with a pair of unkempt, but not abnormal-looking locals. This, of course, must be **Zadok Allen**, the half-crazed drunkard, whose **tales of Avalon**—and its shadows—were so hideous and incredible.

It must have been some imp of the perverse—or some sardonic pull from dark, hidden sources—which made me change my plans as I did. I had long before resolved to limit my observations to sightseeing alone—and I was, even then, hurrying towards my hotel in the effort to get away from this festering city of degeneration and moral decay. But the sight of **Old Zadok Allen** set up new currents in my mind and made me slacken my pace uncertainly.

I had been assured that the old man could do nothing but hint at wild, disjointed, and incredible **legends**. And, I had been warned that the natives made it unsafe to be seen talking to him. Yet, the thought of this aged witness to the town’s decay—with memories going back to the early days of ships and factories—was a lure that no amount of reason could make me resist. After all, the strangest and maddest of **myths** are often merely **symbols**—or **allegories**—often based upon truth. And, old Zadok must have seen everything which went on around Avalon, within the last century. Curiosity flared up—beyond good sense and prudent caution—and in my youthful egotism, I fancied I might be able to sift a nucleus of real **history** from the confused, extravagant outpouring I would probably extract with the aid of raw whiskey.

I knew that I could not accost him then and there, for the other men would surely notice and object. Instead I reflected, I would prepare by getting some liquor at **Vons** grocery, where the clerk had told me that he would be working late. Then, I would loaf behind the hotel in apparent casualness—and thus, fall in with old Zadok after he had started on one of his frequent rambles. The youth said that he was very restless, seldom sitting anywhere—other than at the Green Pleasure Pier—for more than an hour or two at a time.

A quart bottle of whiskey was easily, though not cheaply, obtained at **Leo’s** drug store, which was located close by—along the boardwalk, on Summer Avenue, only one street over. The odd-looking cashier who waited on me had a touch of that staring “Avalon look”, but was quite civil in his own way; being perhaps used to the custom of convivial strangers—tourists, art-buyers, and the like—as were often visiting town.

Reentering the alley, I saw that luck was with me; for—shuffling out onto Summer Avenue, just around the corner of the **Vista del Mar** Hotel—I glimpsed nothing less than the tall, lean, tattered form of old Zadok Allen himself. In accordance with my plan, I attracted his attention by brandishing my newly purchased bottle; and soon realized that he had begun to shuffle wistfully after me, as I walked back into the alley, on my way to the most deserted region I could think of.

With the help of Avalon's dim streetlamps, I was steering my course by the map the grocery clerk had prepared. I was aiming for the wholly abandoned stretch of southern waterfront which I had previously noted, directly next to the **Cabrillo Mole**. The only people in sight had been a few fishermen on the so-called "**Devil's Reef**" Breakwater; and by going a few steps further south, I could get beyond the range of even these prying eyes. Accordingly, I considered reposing on a possible pair of seats next to the abandoned boat launch. I thought of anyplace where I might be free to question old Zadok, unobserved, for an indefinite amount of time. Before I reached the main dock, I could hear a faint and wheezy "Hey, Mister!" behind me; and I presently allowed the old man to catch up and thereafter pull a copious swallow from my quart bottle.

I began putting out verbal feelers, as we walked along the water's edge, and turned southward amidst the omnipresent desolation of **Lovers Cove**. But unfortunately, I found that his aged tongue did not loosen as quickly as I had expected. At length, I saw a grass-grown opening toward this small, southern bay—beyond a crumbling seawall—with the weedy length of a small earth-and-masonry wharf, projecting just beyond. Piles of moss-covered stones near the water, promised tolerable seats. And, the scene was sheltered from all possible view by a wall and a large terminal to the north. Here I thought, was the ideal place for a long **secret colloquy**; so, I guided my companion down Pebbly Beach Road, and picked out spots to sit among the mossy stones. The air of darkness and desertion was ghoulish, and the smell of fish almost insufferable; but I was resolved to let nothing deter me.

Only a few hours remained for **conversation**, if I were to avoid Avalon's—potentially hazardous—early morning hours. Thus, I began to dole out more liquor to the ancient tippler; meanwhile eating my own "midnight snack." In my donations, I was careful not to overshoot the mark—for I did not wish Zadok's vinous garrulousness to pass into stupor. After an hour, his furtive taciturnity showed signs of disappearing. But much to my disappointment, he still sidetracked my **questions** about Avalon and its shadow-haunted past. He would babble about current topics, revealing a wide acquaintance with newspapers, and a great tendency to **philosophize** in a sententious village fashion.

Toward the end of the second hour, I feared my quart of whiskey would not be enough to produce results—and was wondering whether I had better leave old Zadok, and go back for more. Just then however, chance made the opening which my questions had been unable to make. And, the old man's wheezing ramblings took a turn that caused me to lean forward and listen more alertly.

My back was toward the fishy-smelling sea, but he was facing it, and something or other had caused his wandering gaze to light on the low, distant line of the **Cabrillo Mole**; this showing plainly and almost fantastically above the soft sparkling waves. The sight seemed however to displease him, for he began a series of weak **curses**, which ended in a confidential whisper, and a knowing leer. He bent toward me, took hold of my lapel, and hissed out some hints that could not be mistaken.

"Thar's where it all began—that cursed place of all wickedness, where the deep water starts. **Gates of hell**—sheer drop down to a bottom most sounding-lines can't even touch. Ol' **Tom Robbins** did it, though—and it was he who found out more than was good for him in those South Sea islands."

"Everybody was in a bad way in those days. Trade was falling off, and the mills were losing business—even the new ones—and the best of our menfolk were often killed while privateering, or lost with the *Elizy* brig and the *Ranger Snow*—both of them Robbins' ventures. **Tom Robbins** had three **ships** currently afloat—brigantine *Columbia*, brig *Hetty*, and the bark *Sumatry Queen*. He was the only one who was keeping on with the East-India and Pacific trade (though Esdras Martin's barkentine, *Malay Pride*, made the venter as late as 'forty-eight or so)."

"There never was anyone like **Thomas Robbins**—old limb of Satan! Heh... Though, I kind of minded him preaching about foreign ports, and calling all the folks stupid for going to Christian meetings and bearing their burdens, all meek and lowly. He said, they should rather get better **gods**, like some of the **primitive tribes** in the Indies—gods that would bring them good fishing in return for their sacrifices, and would really answer folks' prayers."

"Matt Elliot, his first mate, talked a lot too, only he was against folks doing heathen things. He told about a mysterious **island**, east of **Tahiti**, where there were a lot of stone ruins, older than anybody knew anything about—kind of like those on **Ponape**, in the Carolines—but, with huge **stone carvings** of faces that looked rather like the large statues on **Easter Island**. There was a little volcanic island near there too, where there were other **prehistoric ruins**, with different carvings—ruins all worn away, like they'd been under the sea once, and with pictures of awful monsters all over them."

"Well Sir, Matt said that the **natives** around there had all the fish they could catch. And, these wretched tribes sported exotic **jewelry**—bracelets, armlets, and head rigs—made out of a queer kind of **gold**, and covered with **depictions** of monsters, just like the ones carved all over the ruins on that strange little island—sort of **fish-like frogs** or frog-like fishes, that were drawn in all kinds of positions, like they were human beings. Nobody could get anything out of them—particularly, about where they got all that bizarre stuff—and all the other natives wondered how they managed to find such plentiful fish, even when the very next island had such lean pickings. Matt said, he got to wondering about this too and so did Tom Robbins. Robbins noticed, besides, that lots of the handsome young folk would drop out of sight for good—that is, from year to year—and that there weren't many older folks around either. Also, he thought that some of the natives looked damned peculiar as well, even for **Kanakys**."

It took Robbins to get the TRUTH out of those heathen. I don't know how he did it, but he began by trading for the gold-like things they wore. Asking them where it all came from, and if they could get more; and finally, he managed to worm **'The Story'** out of the old **Chief—Walakea**, they called him. Nobody but Robbins would ever have believed that old **islander** devil, but Robbins could read folks like they were books. Heh, heh! Nobody ever believes me, now, when I tell them. And, I don't suppose you will either, young feller—though, come to look at you, you do have those sharp-reading eyes like Robbins had."

The old man's whisper grew fainter, and I found myself shuddering at the terrible and sincere portentousness of his intonation, even though I suspected his **tale** was nothing but drunken fantasy. However, I was starting to doubt my earlier suspicions.

"Well Sir, Robbins learned that there are **'things'** on this earth that most folks have never heard about—and wouldn't believe, even if they did hear! It seems these Kanakys were sacrificing many of their young men and maidens to some king of **'god-things'** that lived **under the sea**—and getting all kinds of favors in return. They met the things on the little islet, with the queer ruins, and it seems those awful pictures of **'frog-fish monsters'** were supposed to be pictures of those very things. Maybe they were the kind of critters that caused all the **mermaid** stories, and such, to get started. They supposedly had cities on the **sea bottom**, and this island was apparently heaved up from there. Seems there were some of those things actually **alive** in those stone buildings, when the island came up suddenly to the surface. That's how the Kanakys got wind that they were even down there, in the first place. They made some sort of **'sign-talk'** and, as soon as they got over being scared, even pieced together a kind of Devil's bargain, before long."

"Those things like **human sacrifices**. They had had them ages before, but lost track of the upper world, after a time. What they did with the victims, it isn't for me to say—and I guess Robbins wasn't too keen about asking. But it was all right with the heathens, because they'd been having a hard time, and were desperate about everything. They gave a certain number of their young folks to the sea-things twice each year—on May-Eve and Hallowe'en—regular as could be. They also gave them some of those carved kick-knacks they made. What the things agreed to give, in return, was plenty of fish—they drove them in from all over the sea—and gave them a few gold-like things now and then, as well."

"Well as I said, the natives met the things on the little volcanic islet—going there in canoes, with the sacrifices and such. And, bringing back some of those gold-like jewels, as they had coming to them. At first, those Demon things didn't ever go onto the main island; but after a time, they came to want to. Seems they hankered after **mixing** with the native folks, and even having communal **ceremonies** on big days—May-Eve and Hallowe'en, especially. You see, they were able to live both in and out of water—they're what we call **amphibians**, I guess. The Kanakys told them how folks from the other islands might want to wipe them out, if they ever got wind of their being there. But they said that they didn't care much, because they could wipe out the whole brood of humanity, if they were willing to bother—that is, any as didn't have certain **protective signs**, such as were used once by those forgotten **Old Ones** (whoever they were). But not wanting to bother, they would simply lay low when anybody visited the island."

“When it came to **mating** with those toad-looking fishes, the Kanakys kind of balked. But, finally they learned something that put a ‘new face’ on the entire matter. Seems that **human** beings have a kind of distant **relation** to these water-beasts—that everything alive, came out of the water once, and only needs a little change to go back again. Those things told the Kanakys that, if they **mixed** blood, there’d be children who would look human at first; but later, turn more into those fish things—till finally they’d eventually take the water, and join the main lot of those creatures down below. And this is the important part, young feller: Those that turned into ‘fish things,’ and went to live in the water, **wouldn’t ever die!** Those damn things never died, except whenever they were killed violently.”

“Well Sir, it seems by that time, Robbins knew that those **islanders** were already full of fish **blood**—namely, from all those strange deep-water couplings. When they got old, and began to show it, they would keep hidden until they felt like taking to the water, and quitting island life forever. Some were more touched than others. And, some never did change quite enough to leave. But mostly, those **hybrids** turned out just the way those things said. Those that were born most like those actual fish things, changed early; but those that were nearly human sometimes stayed on the island until they were well past seventy—though, they’d usually go down under for trial trips before leaving. Folks that had already taken to the water typically came back to visit, so that a man could often be found talking to his own five-times-great-grandfather—who’d already left the dry land hundreds of years earlier.”

“Everybody got out of the idea of **dying**—except in canoe wars with the other islanders—or as sacrifices to even stranger **sea-gods**, down below—or from snake-bites, or plagues, or sharp sudden ailments, or something before they could take to the water. But, they confidently looked forward to a kind of ‘change’ that wasn’t at all horrible after a while. They thought that what they’d got, in return, was well worth all they’d had to give up—and I guess, Robbins came to think the same way himself when he’d chewed over old Walakea’s story a bit. Walakea, though, was one of the few that didn’t have any **alien fish blood**—being of a royal line, that intermarried only with other royal lines from the neighboring islands.”

“Walakea had even shown Robbins secret **rites** and **incantations**, as had to do with the sea-things, and let him see some of the folks in the village who had already begun to change. Somehow or other though, he never would let him see one of those fish things from right out of the water. Nevertheless, he did give him an important **ritual object**—a thingamajig made out of lead or something—that he said would bring up the fish things from any place in the water where there was a nest of them. The idea was to drop it down with the right kind of **prayers**, and such. Walakea claimed that the things were scattered all over the world, so anybody that looked about might find a nest and ‘**bring them up**,’ if they were wanted on the surface.”

“Matt didn’t like these interactions at all, and wanted Robbins to keep away from the evil island; but Robbins was keen for gain and found that he could get those precious items so cheap that it would pay him to make a specialty of their trade. Things went on that way for years, and Robbins got enough of that **gold** stuff to start a **refinery** in that old run-down mill, south of Avalon Harbor. He didn’t dare sell the pieces as they were, for folks would—always—be asking questions. All the same, some deceitful crew members would occasionally steal an odd piece and dispose of it for cash, even though they were sworn to secrecy. Robbins also let his women wear those pieces that appeared more ‘human’ than the rest of his **alien treasure.**”

“Well, come about ‘forty-nine—when I was still a young lad—Robbins found the island people all **wiped out**, between voyages. Seems the other islanders had got wind of what was going on, and had taken matters into their own hands. I suppose they must of have had—after all—those old ‘**magic signs**’ that the sea-things mentioned; as they were the only things that the creatures were afraid of! No telling what any of those nearby Pacific islanders would chance to get a hold of, when the sea-bottom throws up some island, with ruins older than the deluge. Pious **curses** these were, indeed! And, they didn’t leave anything standing on either the main island or the little volcanic islet, except those ruins that were too big to knock down. In some places there were little stones strewn about—like good luck **charms**—with something on them like what we call a ‘swastika,’ nowadays. Probably, they were those **sacred signs** of the alleged ‘**Old Ones**’ that the Kanakys sometimes hinted about. Anyway, those fish-tainted islanders were all wiped out, with no trace of any their gold jewelry either. And, none of the nearby Kanakys would breathe a word about the matter. They wouldn’t even admit that there had ever been any people thriving on that wretched island.”

“That naturally hit Robbins pretty hard, especially since his more conventional trade was doing poorly. It hit the whole of Avalon too, because—in seafaring days—what profited the master of a ship, generally profited the crew proportionately. Most of the folks around town took the **hard times** kind of sheepish-like, but they were all in really bad shape—because the fishing was starting to peter-out too; worse still, the regular mills weren’t doing well either.”

“That’s the time Robbins began cursing at the folks for being dull sheep and praying to a Christian heaven—a heaven that didn’t ever help them. He told them he knew about heathen folks that prayed to gods that would actually give something that everyone really needed. And, he said that if a loyal bunch of his men would stand by him, he could perhaps get a hold of certain powers that could miraculously bring about an abundance of fish—and quite a bit of gold as well. Of course, those that served on the *Sumatry Queen*—and had actually seen that mysterious island—knew what he meant and weren’t too anxious to get close to those ‘sea-things’ that they’d heard so many horrid tales about. But, those that didn’t know what it was all about were swayed by what Robbins had said, and began to ask him what he could do to set them on the way to ‘**ye olde faith**’—moreover, what rituals could actually be done to bring real results.”

Here the old man faltered, mumbled, and lapsed into a moody and apprehensive silence; glancing nervously over his shoulder, and then turning back to stare fascinatedly at the distant black waters. When I spoke to him he did not answer, so I knew I would have to let him finish the bottle. The half-insane yarn that I was now hearing interested me profoundly—for I fancied that there was contained within it a sort of crude **allegory**. An allegory based upon the strangeness of Avalon—and elaborated by an imagination, both creative and yet full of scarps of real, but rather exotic **legend**. I didn’t believe that **the tale** had a truly substantive foundation; but never the less, the account held a hint of genuine terror—if only, because it brought up references to **strange jewelry**, jewelry clearly akin that malign **tiara** I had already observed in Long Beach. Perhaps, these abominable **ornaments** had actually come from some **lost island** or **ancient civilization**. Alternatively, these **wild stories** were quite possibly lies told by the long dead Robbins, himself—rather than merely tall tales invented by this ‘antique **philosopher**’ and supposed spinner of fantastic yarns.”

I handed Zadok the bottle and he drained it to the last drop. It was curious how he could stand so much whiskey, for not even a trace of thickness had come into his high, wheezy voice. He licked the nose of the bottle, and slipped it into his pocket, then began nodding and whispering softly to himself. I bent close to catch any articulate words he might utter, and thought I saw a sardonic smile behind the stained, bushy whiskers. Yes—he was really forming words, and I could grasp a fair proportion of them.”

“Poor Matt—he alas, was against it. Matt tried to line up the folks on his side, and had long talks with the village preachers. It was of no use. They eventually ran the Congregational parson out of town and that Methodist feller simply quit—never did see Resolved Babcock, the Baptist parson, either. Worthy of Jehovah—I was a mighty young critter then, but I heard what I heard, and saw what I saw—Dagon and Ashtoreth—Belial and Beelzebub—Golden Calf and **idols** out of Canaan—the Philistines—or even worse, those **primordial** Babylonian and Sumerian **abominations**—*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*—”

He stopped again and, from the look in his watery blue eyes, I feared he was close to a stupor, after all. But when I gently shook his shoulder, he turned on me with astonishing alertness and snapped out some more obscure phrases.

“Don’t believe me hey? Heh, heh, heh—then just tell me, young feller, why **Tom Robbins** and twenty other men, used to row out to the ‘**Devil’s Reef**’ Breakwater in the dead of the night, and **chant** things so loud you could hear them all over town—especially, when the wind was right? Tell me that, hey? And tell me why Robbins was, alas, dropping heavy things down into that deep water, on the other side of **Casino Point**; where the bottom shoots down like a cliff lower than anyone can sound? Tell me what he did with that funny-shaped **ceremonial** thingamajig that Walakea gave him? Hey, boy? And what did they all loudly howl on May-Eve, and again the next Hallowe’en? And, why did the **new church parsons**—fellows that used to be common sailors—start wearing those queer **robes** and cover themselves with those **gold-like ritual items** that Robbins brought back? Hey?”

The watery blue eyes were almost savage and maniacal now, and the dirty white beard bristled electrically. Old Zadok probably saw me shrink back, for he had begun to cackle evilly. “Heh, heh, heh, heh! Beginning to see, hey? Maybe you’d like to have been me in those days, when I saw things at night—out at sea—from the cupola, atop of my old house. Oh I can tell you, little pitchers have big ears, and I wasn’t missing anything of what was being gossiped about ol’ Tom Robbins—and especially, about those **alien folks** out on the breakwater! Heh, heh, heh! How about the night I took my father’s telescope up to the cupola and saw **Casino Point** bristling thick with strange shapes, that dove off the far side into the deep water and never came up. . . How’d you like to be a little lad all alone, up in that cupola, watching those shadowy shapes that were definitely NOT human? . . . Hey . . . Heh, heh, heh, heh . . .”

The old man was getting hysterical, and I began to shiver with nameless alarm. He laid his gnarled claw on my shoulder, and it seemed to me that its shaking was not altogether that of mirth. “Suppose one night you saw something heavy heaved off Robbin’s boat, just beyond Casino Point, and then learned the next day that a young feller was **missing** from home? Hey? Did anybody ever see hide nor hair of Harry Gilman, again? Did they? And Nick Pierce, and Lance Waite, and Adam Southerner, and Henry Garrison? Hey? . . . Hey, heh, heh, heh . . . Shadowy shapes, talking ‘sign language’ with their hands. . . those as had REAL hands! . . .”

## Tom Robbins' Legacy (VII.):

"Well Sir, that was about the time Ol' **Tom Robbins** began to get back on his feet again. Folks saw his three **daughters** wearing gold things, as no one had ever seen on them before. And, smoke started coming out of that refinery chimney. Other **folks** were **prospering**, too. Fish began to swarm into the harbor, fit to kill. And, heaven knows what sized **cargoes** we began to ship out to **Long Beach, San Diego, and San Francisco**. It was then that Robbins also got a ferry running to and from **Los Angeles**. Some **Newport** fishermen heard about the good catch and came up in sloops, but they were all lost—and nobody ever saw them again. And just then, our town folks organized the **Esoteric Order of Dagon** and rebuilt the **Masonic Hall**; now called the Pueblo, after ol' Zane Grey repaired it . . . hey, hey, hey! Matt Elliot was actually a Royal Mason, and he was much against it, but he soon dropped out of sight as well."

"However, I'm not saying that Robbins was having things just like they were on that Kanaky isle. I don't think he aimed—at first—to do any **mixing**, nor raising any younglings to take to the water, and turn into fishes with eternal life. He wanted the gold and silver and was willing to pay a heavy cost—and I guess, the others were satisfied for a while . . ."

"Come around the 'fifties, the town started looking and doing some thinking for itself. Too many folks going missing—too much wild preaching at the meetings on Sunday—too much talk about the **Devil's Abyss**. I guess I had done my bit, by telling Councilman Mowry what I saw from that cupola. There was a party one night of those who followed Robbins' crowd, out around the breakwater—and I heard shots between several boats. The next day, Robbins and thirty-two others were in **jail**, with everybody wondering just what was afoot, and just what charge was against him or could hold him. God, if anybody could look ahead a couple of weeks later, after nothing had been thrown into the sea for that long . . ."

Zadok was showing signs of fright and exhaustion, and I let him keep silent for a while—though I glanced apprehensively at my watch. The tide had turned and was coming in now, and the sound of waves seemed to arouse him. I was glad for that tide—for at high water, the fishy smell might not be so bad. Again, I strained to catch Zadok's whispers.

"That **awful night** . . . I saw them. . . . I was up in the cupola . . . **swarms** of them . . . hordes of them . . . all over Casino Point . . . and swimming into Avalon Harbor . . . and onto the beaches . . . God, what happened in the streets of Avalon that night . . . They rattled our door, but Pa wouldn't open it . . . then, he climbed out the kitchen window, with his weapon, in order to find Councilman Mowry and see what he could do . . . **Mounds of the dead** and the **dying** . . . **shots** and **screams** . . . shouting along the Boardwalk and at the Church Green . . . the jail was thrown open . . . proclamation . . . treason . . . Of course, they later **called it a 'plague,'** when folks came in and found half our people missing . . . Nobody was left; only those that would join in with Tom Robbins and those monstrous things, or else keep quiet . . . I never heard from my Pa, again. . ."

The old man was panting, and perspiring profusely. His grip on my shoulder tightened.

"Everything was cleaned up in the morning—but, there were traces . . . **Robbins took charge** of the city and said that things were going to change . . . others will **worship** with us at meeting-times, and certain houses had to accommodate new guests . . . They want to **mix** with us—like they did with the Kanakys—and he wouldn't stop them. Far gone was Robbins—like a crazy man—on the subject. He said that they brought us abundant fish and treasure, and that they should rightfully have what they hankered after. . ."



“Nothing was to be different on the outside, only we were to keep shy of strangers—that is, if we knew what was good for us. We all had to take the **Oath of Dagon**; and later on, there were second and third Oaths that some of us took. Those that would give special help would thereby get special rewards—namely, gold and such. No use balking, for there were supposedly millions of them down there. They’d rather not start rising up and wiping out humankind, but if their existence were given away and they were forced to, then they could do a lot towards just that end. We didn’t have those old charms to hold them back—like the Islander folks in the South Sea did—and unfortunately the Kanakys would never did give away that all important secret.”

“Yield up enough **sacrifices**, and savage knick-knacks, and communal harborage in the town—whenever they wanted it—and they would let well enough alone. We shouldn’t bother with any strangers though; as they might bear tales outside Catalina. And, all of us were to keep outsiders from prying too much into Avalon’s affairs. Thus, if all the **band** would remain **faithful**—within the **sacred bonds** of **Dagon**—then our children shall never die; but instead, will go back to their **Mother Hydra** and **Father Dagon**, from whence we all came originally—**la! la! Cthulhu fhtagan!** And thus, we were indoctrinated.”

Old Zadok was fast lapsing into stark raving gibberish, and I held my breath. Poor old soul—to what pitiful depths of suffering and hallucination has his liquor—plus his hatred of the decay, alienage, and disease, around him—brought that fertile, imaginative brain! He began to moan, now, and tears were coursing down his wrinkled cheeks and into the depths of his beard.

“God what I have seen, since I was a wee lad—*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin*—the folks that were missing, and those who killed themselves—those that told things at La Jolla, or Long Beach, or such places where everyone called us crazy—like you’re calling me now. But God, what I have seen. They would have killed *me* long ago, for what I know; only I took the **first** and **second Oaths** of **Dagon** from Robbins, himself—so I was protected, unless a jury of them proved that I told things knowing and deliberately. But, I wouldn’t take the **third Oath!** I’d die rather than take that....”

“It got worse around war time, when children began to grow up—some of them, that is. I was afraid—I never did any prying after that awful night, and I’ve never seen one of those THINGS up close in all my life. That is, never any full-blooded ones, that is. I went to war, and if I’d had any guts, or sense, I would never have come back; but instead, settle far away from here. But, folks wrote me that things weren’t so bad. I suppose it was also because of those damn Oaths: I feared that they’d just hunt me down, no matter where I went. After the war, it was just as bad again. The population began to fall off—mills and shops shut down—shipping stopped and the harbor emptied out. But they, they never stopped **swimming** in and out of those **caves**—and into Avalon’s **underground river**—from that cursed **abyss** of Satan. And, more and more attic windows got boarded up, and more and more noises were heard within these abandoned houses—houses that weren’t supposed to have anyone living in them. . .”

“Folks outside have their stories about us—I suppose you’ve heard them already, seeing what kinds of questions you ask. Stories about things they’ve seen, now and then, and about that exotic jewelry, which still comes in from somewhere and isn’t always melted down. But, nothing ever gets very definite. Nobody ever believes these far-fetched accusations, anyway. They call those gold-like art pieces pirate loot. And, they suspect that Avalon folk have foreign blood, or disease, or something else. Besides, those that live here shoo off as many strangers as they can; and encourage the rest not to get very curious—especially, around nighttime. Beasts balk at the critters—horses worse than mules—but when they finally got automobiles, they were all right.”

“Later, **Tom Robbins** took a **second wife** purportedly named *Pht’thya-l’y*, that no one in town ever saw. Some say he didn’t want to marry, but was made to by those things—the immortal beings he’d called in. He had three **children** by her—two that disappeared young, but one gal looked ordinary, and was spirited off to be educated in Europe. Robbins finally got her married off by a trick on an East Coast feller that didn’t suspect a thing. But, no **outsiders** will have anything to do with Catalina folk now days. **Barnabas Wrigley**, who runs the refinery now, was intimately connected with the Robbins family; but, I’m don’t know exactly how. However, his mother was another one of those that was never seen outdoors.”

“Right now, Barnabas has about changed—can’t shut his eyes anymore and is all bent out of shape. They say he still wears clothes, but he’ll take to the water soon. Maybe he’s tried it already—they do sometimes go down for little spells, before they go for good. He hasn’t been seen in public for nigh ten years now. Don’t know how his poor wife can feel—she came from La Jolla. They nearly killed Barnabas, when he courted her fifty odd years ago. Robbins supposedly died afterwards. And all the next generation is now gone, as well. The first wife’s children are dead, and the rest—well, Gods knows what?”

The sound of the incoming tide was now very insistent, and little by little it seemed to change the old man’s mood from weepy tearfulness to watchful fear. He would pause now and then, to renew those nervous glances over his shoulder, or look out towards the pier. And despite the wild absurdity of his **tale**, I could not help but begin to share his vague apprehensiveness. Zadok now grew shriller, and seemed to be trying to whip up his courage with louder speech.

“Hey you, why don’t you say something? How would you like to be living in a town like this, with so much decadence and hedonism, and monsters crawling, and bleating, and barking, and hopping around black cellars and attics, everywhere you turn? Hey? How would you like to hear the howling, night after night, from weird churches and that Order of Dagon Hall—and to actually know what’s doing that incessant howling? How would you like to hear what comes from beyond Casino Point, every May-Eve and Hallowmas? Hey? Think the old man’s crazy, eh? Well Sir, let me tell you, that’s not the worst of it!”

Zadok was really screaming now, and the mad frenzy of his voice disturbed me more than I care to own. “Curse you, don’t sit there staring at me with those wondering eyes—I tell you, Tom Robbins, he’s in hell, and he’s got to stay there! He, he . . . is in hell, I say! He can’t get me—I haven’t done anything wrong, nor told anybody THE TRUTH—until now!”

“Oh you, young feller? Well, even if I haven’t told anybody yet, I’m going to you now! You just sit still and listen to me, boy. This is what I’ve never told anyone . . . I said I didn’t do any prying after that night—but I did found things out, just the same!”

“You want to know what the real horror is, hey? Well, it’s this—it isn’t what those fish devils have already done, but what they’re going to do! Those fish-things know much more about biology, than humans do—and they’re bringing strange things up, out of where they come from, and into the town. In fact, they’ve been doing it for years, and only began slacking up lately. That canyon, north of Avalon Harbor, just beyond Casino Point, is full of them—that is, with those Devils and whatever *‘Things’* they brought with them. And, when they get ready. . . I say, when they get ready . . . Well, ever hear of the **Shoggoth**? . . .”

“Hey, do you hear me? I tell you, I know what some of those things are—I saw them one night, when . . . EH—AHHHH—AH! E’YAAHHHH. . .” The hideous suddenness, and inhuman frightfulness of the old man’s shriek almost made me faint. His eyes, looking past me towards the malodorous sea, were positively bulging from his head; while his face was a mask of fear worthy of Greek tragedy. His bony claw dug monstrously into my shoulder and he remained motionless, as I turned my head to look at whatever he had glimpsed.

There was nothing that I could see. Only the incoming tide, with perhaps one set of ripples more pronounced than the long-flung line of breakers. But now, Zadok was shaking me, and I turned back to watch the melting of that fear-frozen face into a chaos of twitching eyelids and mumbling gums. Presently, his voice came back—albeit as a trembling whisper.

“Get out of here! Get out of here! They’ve seen us—get out, for your life! Don’t wait for me—they know, now. Run for it—quick—get out of this hell hole!”

Another heavy wave dashed against the loosening masonry of the bygone wharf, and thereby changed the mad old man’s whisper to another inhuman and blood-curdling scream.

“E—YAAHHHH! . . . YHAAAAAAA! . . .” Before I could recover my scattered wits, he had relaxed his clutch on my shoulder and dashed off wildly—running inland to the road, and reeling southward towards the warehouses.

I glanced back at the sea and it was only then that I saw it—IT was plainly standing there amidst the dark waters of the breaking surf—a real, live **Deep One**! When I finally reached Pebbly Beach Road, I momentarily looked back towards the Cove—all the time running at a very appreciable pace. There was no trace of Zadok Allen, though. Still, I didn’t need any more proof of Zadok’s story than that ONE glimpse! I couldn’t believe it—hell, it must ALL be TRUE!

I had read **Lovecraft’s** alleged “**Tale**” of what happened before—specifically, to that **Olmstead** fellow, in that shadowy **New England** town of **Innsmouth**—and I wasn’t about to let all that happen again! So—to make a long story short—I quickly escaped into the Catalina **wilderness** and gradually worked my way northward. Eventually, I found my way into the port of **Two Harbors**. Once there, I quietly approached the docks and found a motor boat, with the keys still in the ignition. Not risking any noise close to shore, I paddled the boat out and into the middle of the harbor. Luckily, the engine started; and with enough gas to make it all the way to **Newport Beach**. Indeed, luck was truly on my side, as the clear morning sky—uncommon for that time of year—allowed a meager view of the **Los Angeles shoreline**. Thus, I finally made my way home—or rather, back to **La Jolla**—for my fateful visit to **Scripps Institute** of Oceanography. That is, the laboratory where my mother once taught. At least, I was alive—and I felt alive! And it was a good feeling, as long as it lasted. But, I was soon to learn that there was still more to this horrible tale—that is, more than I ever could ever have imagined!

## The Laboratory at Scripps (VIII.):

Old Zadok was certainly right about one thing. Those **Deep Ones** surely know much more about **biology**, than humans do. Not only were these “fish-things” related to human beings, but they also seemed to provide the “**missing link**” to our **evolution**. Consider the fact that we are nearly hairless and naturally buoyant, for example, and you just might see the obvious connection. Clearly, unlike most mammals we definitely spent part of our evolution in the water—no doubt, to avoid the many land predators of primeval Africa. But, that’s just the beginning of the explanation.

These Deep Ones, like some **Amphibians**, potentially reproduced in more than one way. Furthermore, these monsters also have the ability to **reproduce** through a process resembling infectious disease. Apparently—if they chose—they can “infect” a host carrier with an alleged disease, which actually looks a lot like syphilis. However, unbeknownst to us, this so-called “disease” unexpectedly forces certain **bio-morphic changes** in the infected host’s body—leading eventually, to gills and other such abnormalities. However, it’s not really clear whether this is Deep One bio-technology or simply a natural born ability. But, it’s probably safe to say, that their supposed love for “human sacrifice” was really for breeding purposes, rather than for food or ritual. After all, they usually dragged these “victims” off and into the water, and didn’t ever eat or ever kill any of them.

Also, apparently there aren’t nearly as many of these living creatures, as we were let on to believe. Nevertheless, due to their unbelievably **long lifespans**, and their potential ability to reproduce with our own species, they still provide a lasting threat to humanity. So, the question remains—why haven’t they asserted their supremacy over us already. The answer is actually quite startling. These beings have, instead, been **manipulating** human **bloodlines** for countless millennia, and seem to have a vested interest in our survival. Even more shocking, some of their **advanced DNA** remains **disguised** and hidden amongst our own, so we might not even be aware that we are much closer to them than, perhaps, our neighbors.

Finally, speaking to the issue of **motive** and **temperament**, the Deep Ones are actually not nearly as aggressive and violent as we have been made to believe. With plentiful food resources, and all the time in the world, they are actually rather **placid** creatures—and you might even call them a bit **lazy**. Either way, they certainly don’t war with each other, like humans do—but, they may be capable of exterminating us all, if the need ever arises. Again, if it wasn’t for their **lack of drive**, they probably would have taken over long ago. So, although they remain a human threat, it’s quite possible that humanity could come to some sort of mutually beneficial arrangement with them. In fact, there’s evidence that this has already happened in the past—and even today, within certain clandestine branches of our government. In fact, it is quite possible that the Deep Ones possess a superior **quality of life** than our own. And this, in the final analysis, may be the only reason we even exist today in the first place. They simply don’t fear us—at all! And, they seem to have several biological weapons, that humans would never wish to see or experience first-hand—the alleged **Shoggoths**, for example. Not to mention, whatever **Mother Hydra** and **Father Dagon** are—and whether they actually exist as corporeal entities or not.

So, this about covers my belated lecture at Scripps laboratory. Only, I wasn't the one giving the lecture. Rather, this explanation was what I *finally* learned from my mother's former Graduate Assistant. And this was—in fact—part of the “secret” that she and my mother wanted to reveal to me, long before my fateful journey to Shadowed Catalina ever took place. Ironically, I was later informed that the **Scripps Institution** was primarily founded to covertly study the Deep One phenomenon to begin with. Hell, I should have guessed this when I realized that the Scripps address was actually **9500 Gilman Drive**! Really, I'm not joking—and of course, this is exactly what they study there! Hell, there's nothing like hiding the truth in plain sight.

### Lab Results:

As for me though, the remaining bit of her lecture came as quite a surprise. Unbeknownst to me, the real point of my visit to Scripps Laboratory, was simply to test my **DNA** for a particular **marker**—which ironically, indicated whether or not “**transformation**” was imminent, within certain family **bloodlines**. Hence, our deep, dark “family secret!” Apparently, the **test** was positive. The good news is that I'm immortal. And, that I can basically choose to transform into a “Deep One,” at any time, during my long life. That is, simply by spending an inordinate amount of time wallowing around within that damned ocean harbor. The “bad news”—much to my chagrin—is that I guess I'll be attending that F#@king **Catalina Wine Mixer** after all. And, listening to Catalina Breeze mix tracks, while drinking “Rhythm & Blueberry” flavored Catalina Coolers ...FOR THE REST OF MY DAMNED LIFE!

### My Philosophy—For the End of Days:

In retrospect, I guess it wasn't such terrible news, after all. In my dotage, I've finally come to realize that so much in life depends on one's mental **attitude**. So, after long consideration, my **philosophy** now—regarding this rather bizarre matter—is F#@K IT, if you can't beat them, join 'em!

So, I'm not sure if I even need to bring my swimming trunks—perhaps, everybody's a nudist—but tomorrow morning, I'm planning to ride along in the luxurious **Captain's Lounge**, aboard that perennially famous **Catalina Express**. I'll finally be returning to sunny Catalina; after suffering unnecessarily for all these many despondent years. And, I hear that they've even picked out a **Chaise Lounge** for me, overlooking lovely **Descanso Beach**. Like “the Dude,” in the film *The Big Lebowski*; I guess it's going to be White Russian cocktails—or Catalina Coolers—until I turn, quite literally, into a sort of “beached whale.” I guess that's not such a bad way to go, after all.

I seem to be meandering now, drifting in and out of consciousness. Although I'm quite fit for my age, I still frequently doze off ...now and then. And while recently napping, I recalled having an extremely vivid dream—coupled with certain primal longings. In fact, I realized today that I've been dreaming about that Cyclopean undersea realm of *Y'ha-nth Wes-taria*—and Mother *Hydra*—all my life. She—like the alien god *Cthulhu*—is “*the goddess of little dreams and fancies*” who sends revelations out of the depths, to please her lost children. And in that lair of the Deep Ones, I dreamt that I shall dwell amidst wonder and glory ...forever.



**H.P. LOVECRAFT'S**  
**THE SHADOW OVER CATALINA:**

A Modern Update on *The Shadow over Innsmouth* (Parts I – III)

Rewritten by T. Christopher Kurth





# PEOPLE, PLACES, THINGS (and Ideas) about CATALINA:

A Traveler's Appendix to H.P. Lovecraft's THE SHADOW OVER CATALINA:

A Modern Update on Lovecraft's The Shadow over Innsmouth;

Rewritten by T. Christopher Kurth.

## The Clandestine History of Catalina (0.i.):

- \_\_ **WW II:** "*Commandos & Anti-Aircraft Guns: Catalina's Top-Secret WWII History*," N. Masters 1/2013/kcet.org
- \_\_ **Santa Catalina Island (Catalina):** Catalina Island Visitor Center, (310)510-1520 / CatalinaChamber.com
- \_\_ **Avalon:** Cabrillo Mole Terminal, 120 Pebbly Beach Rd., Avalon, CA 90704 (310)510-0220 / cityofavalon.com
- \_\_ **Casino Waterfront:** Catalina Casino, 1 Casino Way (888)510-3300

## The S.S. Nautilus (0.ii.):

- \_\_ **S.S. Nautilus:** Catalina Adventure Tours, "*Nautilus: Submersible Vessel*," (562)432-8828 / (877)510-2888
- \_\_ **Devil's Abyss:** "*The Truth Behind the Malibu Underwater 'Alien Base'*", Leo Speigel 6/2014 / HuffPost.com
- \_\_ **Casino Point: Casino Point Dive Park** (310)510-8558 / divingcatalina.com
- \_\_ **Ferry:** Catalina Express (800)464-4228 / CatalinaExpress.com
- \_\_ **Avalon Harbor:** Cabrillo Mole Terminal, 120 Pebbly Beach Rd., Avalon, CA 90704 (310)510-0220 / cityofavalon.com

## Santa Catalina & the Channel Islands (0.iii.):

- \_\_ **California** (U.S.A.)
- \_\_ **Los Angeles** (i.e., The Greater LA Metropolitan Area)
- \_\_ **Long Beach:** Catalina Landing, 320 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA 90802 (800)481-3470 or (800)464-4228 / CatalinaExpress.com
- \_\_ **Catalina:** WWW.CatalinaChamber.com
- \_\_ **Channel Islands**
- \_\_ **June Gloom & LA Smog**

## Avalon & Two Harbors (0.iv.):

- \_\_ **Two Harbors:** Catalina Adventure Tours, "*Enchanted Island Tour: Avalon Up Close*," (562)432-8828 / (877)510-2888

## Scripps Institution of Oceanography (0.v.):

- \_\_ **California Coast & Pacific Ocean:** See **Santa Barbara & La Jolla**
- \_\_ **Scripps:** Scripps Institution of Oceanography / UCSD / 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037 (858) 246-5511
- \_\_ **Marine Biology & Birch Aquarium** (at Scripps) / 2300 Expedition Way, La Jolla 92037 (858)534-3474

## Transportation via Catalina Express (I.A.):

- \_\_ **Pacific Ocean:** LA, San Pedro, Long Beach, & Dana Point
- \_\_ **Catalina Express: Ferry Service** (800)464-4228 / CatalinaExpress.com
- \_\_ **Port of Avalon:** Cabrillo Mole Terminal, 120 Pebbly Beach Rd., Avalon, CA 90704 (310)510-0220 / cityofavalon.com

## & The Airport in the Sky:

- \_\_ **Airport in the Sky:** CatalinaConservancy.org / For More Information: (310)510-0143



## Hollywood Avalon & Catalina's Art Culture (IV.A.):

### Hollywood's Playground:

\_\_ **Hollywood & Avalon:** "*Catalina: Hollywood's Magical Island*," Blue Water Entertainment (DVD)

### Avalon Art Colony:

\_\_ **Art Colony: Silver Canyon Pottery** (310)499-8799 / SilverCanyonPottery.com

### Real Estate, Vacation Rentals, & Lodging:

\_\_ **Catalina Vacations.com** (310)510-2276 or (855)294-2487 / **Catalina Properties.com** (877)392-0790

## William Wrigley—The Brainchild Billionaire (III.):

\_\_ **William Wrigley Jr.** / Wikipedia

\_\_ **Chicago, Illinois**

\_\_ **Wrigley's Business Interests**

\_\_ **Wealth & Power:** Plutocracy, Oligarchy, Aristocracy—Aristocratic **families** & family '**Bloodlines**'

### Wrigley Memorial & Mt. Ada:

\_\_ **Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden** / CatalinaConservancy.com / Open Daily 9am to 5pm

\_\_ **Hermit's Gulch**

\_\_ **Wrigley Mansion: The Inn on Mt. Ada** 398 Wrigley Rd, Avalon, CA 90704 (877)778-9395

## Catalina Island "History" Museum (II.):

\_\_ **Catalina Island Museum**, 210 Metropole Ave. (310)510-2414 / CatalinaMuseum.org / Open Daily 10am to 5pm

### The Devil's Abyss & Underwater Cave Complex:

\_\_ **Devil's Abyss:** "*The Truth Behind the Malibu Underwater 'Alien Base'*," Leo Speigel 6/2014 / HuffPost.com

\_\_ **Underwater Caves:** *The Catalina Islander: 'Underworld'—Part 1*, Jim Watson / thecatalinaislander.com

### Tom Robbins & Pirate Treasure:

\_\_ **Pirate Loot: Catalina Room Escape "Catalina Pirate Challenge"** (310)510-ARRR / CatalinaRoomEscape.com

### The Catalina Epidemic of 1850:

\_\_ **Epidemic:** Catalina Island **Medical Center**, 100 Falls Canyon Rd. (310)510-0096 (or Local 911 Emergency) / CIMedicalCenter.org

### Catalina Island & Foreign Influences:

\_\_ **Catalina & Avalon Folks:** Care for Catalina / CareForCatalina.com

\_\_ **Natives: Tiki-TI 'Spirit' Society**

\_\_ **Luau Larry's** Islander Tiki Bar, 509 Crescent St. (310)510-1919 / www.luaularrys.com

### The Hotel Metropole:

\_\_ **Hotel Metropole**, 205 Crescent Ave. (800)541-8528 / www.Hotel-Metropole.com

## **The Wrigley Refinery & Art Colony:**

\_\_ **Art Colony & Refinery:** See **Silver Canyon Pottery** (310)499-8799 / [SilverCanyonPottery.com](http://SilverCanyonPottery.com)

## **Catalina's Antiques & Native Jewelry:**

\_\_ **Strange Jewelry:** See **Catalina Island Museum Shop**, 217 Metropole Ave. (310)510-2414 / [CatalinaMuseum.org](http://CatalinaMuseum.org)

## **The Wrigley Family & Catalina Islanders:**

\_\_ **Catalina Society:** Care for Catalina / [CareForCatalina.com](http://CareForCatalina.com)

\_\_ **Elites & 'Elite Society'**

## **Catalina Fish, Marine Life, & The Jacques Cousteau Connection:**

\_\_ **Boating & Fishing:** "*The Log: California's Boating & Fishing News,*" Nina K. Jussila Nov 23, 2017

\_\_ **Lovers Cove:** Swarming Fish

\_\_ **Casino Point Dive Park** (310)510-8558 / [divingcatalina.com](http://divingcatalina.com)

\_\_ **Jacques Cousteau:** The Founding of the Casino Point Dive Park

## **Catalina Elites & California Tourists:**

\_\_ **Catalina Island Company** (800)446-0261 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Adventure Tours** (562)432-8828 / (877)510-2888

## **Long Beach Locals & LA Natives:**

\_\_ **Long Beach & Shoreline Village** [www.visitlongbeach.com](http://www.visitlongbeach.com)

## **A Very Short History of Catalina Island:**

\_\_ **Catalina Island Museum**, 210 Metropole Ave. (310)510-2414 / [CatalinaMuseum.com](http://CatalinaMuseum.com) / Open Daily 10am to 5pm

## **Catalina Fine Arts & Jewelry:**

\_\_ **Getty Center Art Museum**

\_\_ **Catalina Island Museum Shop**, 210 Metropole Ave. (310)510-2414 / [CatalinaMuseum.org](http://CatalinaMuseum.org) / Open Daily 10am to 5pm

\_\_ **Catalina Art Gallery**, 303 Crescent Ave. (310)510-2788 / [CatalinaArtGallery.com](http://CatalinaArtGallery.com)

\_\_ **Afishinados**, 205 Crescent Ave. #102 (310)510-2440 / [AfishinadosGallery.com](http://AfishinadosGallery.com)

## **Historical Society Collection & Long Beach Aquarium:**

\_\_ **Aquarium of the Pacific**, 100 Aquarium Way, Long Beach, CA 90802 / [AquariumOfPacific.org](http://AquariumOfPacific.org)

## **A Strange Cult — "The Esoteric Order of Dagon":**

\_\_ **The Cult of Dagon** / [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

\_\_ **Freemasonry: Masonic Hall & Chimes Tower** / [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

## Exploring Catalina (I.A.):

### Catalina Express Ferry Service:

\_\_ **Catalina Landing**, 320 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA 90802 (800)481-3470 or (800)464-4228 / [CatalinaExpress.com](http://CatalinaExpress.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Express** Ferry Boats / [CatalinaExpress.com](http://CatalinaExpress.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Bistro & Express Grill**

#### The Captain:

\_\_ **Captain's Lounge** (310)519-7971 ext. 4 Monday-Friday

#### The Commodore Lounge:

\_\_ **Commodore Lounge** (800)481-3470 or (800)464-4228 / [CatalinaExpress.com](http://CatalinaExpress.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Landing**, 320 Golden Shore, Long Beach, CA 90802 (800)481-3470 / \$15 upgrade / [CatalinaExpress.com](http://CatalinaExpress.com)

### Catalina Island:

\_\_ **Cabrillo Mole Terminal**, 120 Pebbly Beach Rd., Avalon, CA 90704 (310)510-0220 / [cityofavalon.com](http://cityofavalon.com)

\_\_ **South Beach**

### Avalon Harbor & Beaches:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Visitor Center: Green Pleasure Pier** (310)510-1520 / [CatalinaChamber.com](http://CatalinaChamber.com)

\_\_ **Middle Beach**

#### Avalon Canyon:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Maps**: 1 Green Pleasure Pier (310)510-1520 / [CatalinaChamber.com](http://CatalinaChamber.com)

### The Port of Avalon, Descanso Canyon, & Hamilton Cove:

\_\_ **Descanso Beach Club**, 1 Descanso Ave. (888)510-3300

\_\_ **Hamilton Cove** / [hamiltoncove.com](http://hamiltoncove.com)

### Catalina Casino & Casino Point:

\_\_ **Catalina Casino**, 1 Casino Way (888)510-3300

\_\_ **Casino Point Dive Park** (310)510-8558 / [divingcatalina.com](http://divingcatalina.com)

### Catalina Island Golf Cart Rental & Catalina Country Club:

\_\_ **Catalina Transportation Services** (310)510-0342 / [CatalinaTransportationServices.com](http://CatalinaTransportationServices.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Golf Cart Rentals & Tours** (310)510-0369 / [CatalinaIslandGolfCart.com](http://CatalinaIslandGolfCart.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Country Club** 1 Country Club Dive (888)510-3300 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

#### Catalina Casino "Mermaid Mural":

\_\_ **Catalina Casino**, 1 Casino Way (888)510-3300

### Avalon's Boardwalk & Shops:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau** [WWW.CatalinaChamber.com](http://WWW.CatalinaChamber.com)

## **Avalon's "Inner" Psyche (IV.B.):**

### **Zane Grey Pueblo:**

\_\_ **Zane Grey Pueblo Hotel**, 199 Chimes Tower Rd.

### **The Chimes "Bell" Tower:**

\_\_ **Chimes Tower** [CatalinaChimes.org](http://CatalinaChimes.org)

### **The Esoteric Order of Dagon:**

\_\_ **Esoteric Order of Dagon** / [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

## **Re-creation & Beach Life (I.B.):**

### **Descanso Canyon & Descanso Beach:**

\_\_ **Descanso Canyon**

\_\_ **Descanso Beach**, 1 Descanso Ave. (888)510-3300

### **Hotel Vista del Mar:**

\_\_ **Hotel Vista Del Mar**, 417 Crescent Drive, Avalon, CA 90704 / [hotel-vistadelmar.com](http://hotel-vistadelmar.com)

### **Avalon Boardwalk & City Center:**

\_\_ **Leo's Drug Store**, 401 Crescent Ave., Avalon, CA 90704

### **Vons Grocery store:**

\_\_ **Vons Supermarket**, 240 Sumner Ave., Avalon, CA 90704 / (424)334-3221

### **Avalon's Streets:**

\_\_ **Catalina Island Maps**, 1 Green Pleasure Pier (310)510-1520 / [CatalinaChamber.com](http://CatalinaChamber.com)

### **Avalon's Special "Sacred" Places**

\_\_ **Catalina's Special Places & Community Spaces**: (800)242-4969 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

\_\_ **Overlook Hall**, 209 E. Whittley Ave. (310)427-2450 / [OverlookHall.com](http://OverlookHall.com)

### **Avalon Natives & Descanso Beach Club:**

\_\_ **Descanso Beach Club**, 1 Descanso Ave. (888)510-3300 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

## Casino Point Dive Park & Descanso Beach Ocean Sports:

\_\_ **Casino Point Dive Park** (310)510-8558 / [divingcatalina.com](http://divingcatalina.com)

\_\_ **Descanso Beach Ocean Sports**, Descanso Beach (310)510-1226 / [KayakCatalinaIsland.com](http://KayakCatalinaIsland.com)

### The “Avalon Look” & Catalina Sex Life:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Medical Center**, 100 Falls Canyon Rd. (310)510-0096 (or Local 911 Emergency) / [CIMedicalCenter.org](http://CIMedicalCenter.org)

### Underground Caverns & Tunnels:

\_\_ **Caves & Tunnels: *The Catalina Islander: ‘Underworld’—Part 1***, Jim Watson / [thecatalinaislander.com](http://thecatalinaislander.com)

## The Green Pleasure Pier & the Town Drunkard:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Company** (800)446-0261 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Island Visitor Center**, 1 Green Pleasure Pier (310)510-1520 / [CatalinaChamber.com](http://CatalinaChamber.com)

\_\_ **Joe’s Rent-A-Boat/Avalon Boat Stand**, Pleasure Pier (310)510-0455 / [JoesRentABoat.com](http://JoesRentABoat.com)

## Boating & Fishing Charters:

\_\_ **Catalina Coastal Tours & Fishing**, 114 Catalina Ave. (626)290-2888

\_\_ **Afishinados Charters & Tours**, 205 Crescent (888)613-7770 / [www.iCatalina.com](http://www.iCatalina.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Adventure Sailing** (310)569-9843

## Flying Fish Voyages & Eco-Tours:

\_\_ **Cyclone** / Catalina Island Company *‘Flying Fish Voyage’* (800)446-0261

\_\_ **Catalina Adventure Tours w/ *‘Coastal Eco-Cruise’*** (877)510-2888 / [CatalinaAdventureTours.com](http://CatalinaAdventureTours.com)

## Catalina Island Conservancy & the Catalina Art Colony:

\_\_ **Catalina Island Conservancy** / [CatalinaConservancy.org](http://CatalinaConservancy.org)

## Interior Exploration (I.A.):

### Trans Catalina Trailhead & Hiking Trails:

\_\_ **Trailhead** / Catalina Island Conservancy, 708 Crescent Ave. (310)510-2595 / [CatalinaConservancy.org](http://CatalinaConservancy.org)

\_\_ **Tonyon Grill** / Catalina Island Conservancy, 708 Crescent Ave. / [CatalinaConservancy.org](http://CatalinaConservancy.org)

## Exploring the Catalina Interior via Jeep, Hummer, & Safari Truck:

\_\_ **Catalina Conservancy Eco Tours** (310)510-2595 / [CatalinaConservancy.org](http://CatalinaConservancy.org)

\_\_ **Catalina Island Company** (800)446-0261 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Adventure Tours *‘Safari Island Adventure’*** (877)510-2888 / [CatalinaAdventureTours.com](http://CatalinaAdventureTours.com)

\_\_ **Journey Catalina** (310)510-0342 / [www.JourneyCatalina.com](http://www.JourneyCatalina.com)

\_\_ **Catalina Adventure Tours *‘Inside Adventure Tour’*** (877)510-2888 / [CatalinaAdventureTours.com](http://CatalinaAdventureTours.com)

## The Catalina Art, Music, & Party Scene (V.):

### Catalina Food Tours:

- \_\_ **Catalina Food Tours** (424)226-9443 / [catalinafoodtours.com](http://catalinafoodtours.com)
- \_\_ **Bluewater Avalon**, 306 Crescent Ave. (310)510-3474
- \_\_ **Avalon Grille**, 423 Crescent Ave. (310)510-7494
- \_\_ **Steve's Steakhouse & Seafood**, 417 Crescent Ave. (310)510-0333
- \_\_ **Catalina Cantina**, 313 Crescent Ave. (310)510-0100
- \_\_ **The Lobster Trap**, 128 Catalina Ave. (310)510-8585
- \_\_ **Lloyd's of Avalon Confectionary**, 315 Crescent Ave. (310)510-7266

### Wrigley Refinery Tour & Silver Canyon Pottery:

- \_\_ **Wrigley Refinery: Silver Canyon Pottery** (310)499-8799 / [SilverCanyonPottery.com](http://SilverCanyonPottery.com)

## The Casino & the Catalina Party Scene:

- \_\_ **Catalina Casino**, 1 Casino Way (888)510-3300

## Catalina's "Big Band" Ballroom, Jazz Festivals, & Wine Mixers:

- \_\_ **Catalina Casino**, 1 Casino Way (888)510-3300 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)
- \_\_ **Catalina Casino Tours**, 1 Casino Way (800)626-1496 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)
- \_\_ **Movies** at **Avalon Theatre**, Catalina Casino, 1 Casino Way (310)510-0179
- \_\_ **Catalina Wine Mixer** 9/6 thru 9/8 @ Descanso Beach Club (888)510-3300 / [VisitCatalinaIsland.com](http://VisitCatalinaIsland.com)
- \_\_ **Catalina JazzTrax Festival** 10/10 thru 10/13 & 10/17 thru 10/20 @ Descanso Beach Club (866)872-9849 / [JazzTrax.com](http://JazzTrax.com)
- \_\_ **Chi Chi Club**, 105 Sumner Ave. (949)872-4432
- \_\_ **Coyote Joe's Restaurant & Bar**, 113 Catalina St., Green Pleasure Pier (310)510-1176
- \_\_ **Luau Larry's**, 509 Crescent St. (310)510-1919 / [www.luaularrys.com](http://www.luaularrys.com)

## Catalina's Philosopher (VI.) / Tom Robbins' Legacy (VII):

### Zadok Allen—Avalon's "local" Historian & "village" Philosopher /

- \_\_ **Catalina Room Escape: "Catalina Pirate Challenge"** (310)510-ARRR / [CatalinaRoomEscape.com](http://CatalinaRoomEscape.com)

### Zadok Allen's Tale:

- \_\_ **The Original Ghost Tour 'Weird Tales'** / [GhostToursOfCatalina.com](http://GhostToursOfCatalina.com)
- \_\_ **'Dagon'** by Stuart Gordon (Film) [2001 Horror Film] / [Wikipedia](http://Wikipedia)

## The Laboratory at Scripps (VIII.):

### Lab Results

- \_\_ **Scripps Institution of Oceanography/UCSD/9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92037 (858) 246-5511**
- \_\_ **Catalina UFO Tours** (310)510-9635 / [www.cataliaufotours.com](http://www.cataliaufotours.com)



## HEMINGWAY'S QUEST PROMO

Regarding my new story, **HEMINGWAY'S QUEST: A Political Murder Mystery** (in Three Acts): The material that must be 'disclaimed' is a rather old H.P. Lovecraft story, now in the public domain. In fact, it was originally published in 1921—over a hundred years ago! This short story was entitled *The Quest of Iranon* and it was only five pages long. Today, I have radically changed and expanded this fantasy tale—which allegedly takes place in some imaginary 'Dreamland'—into a mostly **true biography** about the famous writer Ernest Hemingway.

While this 1921 story about the 'archetypal quest' of every true artist is—indeed—an inspirational Lovecraft tale, I have radically revised this five-page story into a completely new narrative. That is, a 32-page account of **Hemingway's** own personal **quest**—so, I'm definitely the author of this quasi-fictional retelling. I just make the fantastic claim about Lovecraft somehow "channeling" Hemingway's life as a promotional gimmick—I don't think that Lovecraft really knew much about Hemingway's life.

Actually, I wrote all this just so I could smuggle some real information about this important writer into my kid's reading material. Towards this end, I have also included an extensive four-page '**Hemingway Reading List**' and a six-page '**Hemingway Travel Itinerary**' as an appendix to this controversial true-life murder mystery. Incidentally, the very first paragraph and introductory note prefacing this story tries to make this clear to the unwitting reader—that is, before they even start to read this scandalous biography—which by the way, reads more like a disguised History Channel **documentary**, with only the 'feel' of a weird Lovecraftian tale.