# Evidence Table

Name: _____

Date: _____

Towards the end of Lovecraft's *Dagon*, the narrator questions whether his experience could have been "a pure phantasm" rather than a real experience. So did it really happen, or was it all in his imagination? Go through the story and fill in the table with as much evidence as you can to justify both sides of the argument.

| Really happened | All in his imagination |
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# Matching exercise

Name: _____

Date: _____

**1.** Match each phrase from the story with an image. Draw a line to join them.

1 *But neither ship nor land appeared, and I began to despair in my solitude upon the heaving vastness of unbroken blue.*

2 *The region was putrid with the carcasses of decaying fish, and of other less describable things which I saw protruding from the nasty mud of the unending plain.*

3 *Ere the waning and fantastically gibbous moon had risen far above the eastern plain, I was awake in cold perspiration, determined to sleep no more.*

4 *I felt myself on the edge of the world; peering over the rim into a fathomless chaos of eternal night.*

5 *I perceived beyond a doubt that the strange object was a well-shaped monolith whose massive bulk had known the workmanship and perhaps the worship of living and thinking creatures.*

6 *Vast, Polyphemus-like, and loathsome, it darted like a stupendous monster of nightmares to the monolith, about which it flung its gigantic scaly arms.*

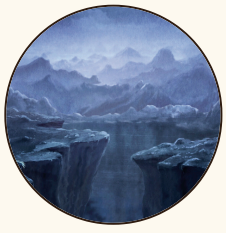
A 

B 

C 

D 

E 

F 

# Glossary

Name: _____

Date: _____

**Garret**: (n) a top floor or attic room

**Supercargo**: (n) a representative of the ship's owner, responsible for the cargo

**Hun**: (n) a derogatory word for a German used during the world wars

**Longitude**: (n) the distance of a place east or west of the Greenwich meridian

**Mire**: (n) a stretch of swampy or boggy ground

**Undulations**: (n) wave-like movements

**Homogeneity**: (n) the quality of being the same

**Gibbous**: (adj) between a half moon and a full moon

**Perpendicular**: (adj) at an angle of 90 degrees

**Declivity**: (n) a downward slope

**Stygian**: (adj) relating to the River Styx in Greek mythology; dark and gloomy

**Monolith**: (n) a large single upright block of stone

**Zenith**: (n) the highest point

**Cyclopean**: (adj) made with massive irregular blocks

**Hieroglyphics**: (n) pictures representing words

**Bas-reliefs**: (n) carvings that protrude slightly from a surface

**Polyphemus**: (being) a Cyclops from Greek mythology

**Thither**: (adv) to or towards that place

**Ethnologist**: (n) a person who studies the characteristics of different peoples

**Philistines**: (n) an ancient people described in the Bible

**Transient**: (adj) lasting only for a short time

**Surcease**: (n) ending, relief

**Obelisk**: (n) a tapering stone pillar

**Pandemonium**: (n) wild and noisy disorder

**Piltdown man**: (n) a human fossil found in Lewes, later shown to be fraudulent

**Neanderthal man**: (n) an extinct species of human

## BEFORE YOU READ

Have you ever had a dream or a memory so vivid that you could not be sure whether it was real? Describe it.

Why are stories told by a narrator we may not be able to trust so gripping? How do we decide whom to believe?



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# Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

Please choose the best option for each of the following questions.

**1.** What drug does the narrator say he relies on to make life bearable?

(a) Morphine
(b) Cocaine
(c) Paracetamol
(d) Laughing gas

**2.** Where does the narrator lose the packet for which he is responsible?

(a) In the Atlantic ocean
(b) In Germany
(c) Somewhere in his house
(d) In the Pacific ocean

**3.** Where does the narrator find himself when he awakes from his troubled and dream-infested slumber?

(a) Washed up on a sandy beach
(b) In a slimy black mire
(c) Back on board the ship of the German sea-raiders
(d) In his bed at home

**4.** What one theory does the narrator think can explain the position he finds himself in?

(a) The Germans have recaptured him
(b) He must still be asleep, and dreaming
(c) He must be dead
(d) A volcanic upheaval has exposed part of the ocean floor

**5.** Which way does the narrator travel in search of escape or rescue?

(a) Westward
(b) Eastward
(c) Northward
(d) Southward

**6.** Where does he find himself by the fourth evening of travel?

(a) At the shore of the sea
(b) At the bottom of a large hill
(c) Back where he started
(d) On the edge of a mysterious forested area

**7.** What does the narrator realise when he awakes beneath the gibbous moon?

(a) That he should have been travelling by night, rather than day
(b) That he cannot complete his journey alone
(c) That he no longer knows the whereabouts of his boat
(d) That he should never have begun this treacherous journey

**8.** What immediately catches the narrator's attention as he reaches the gentler part of the slope?

(a) A lone gnarled and ancient tree
(b) A gigantic, gleaming piece of stone
(c) The chattering of some living being
(d) The moonlight suddenly extinguishes, as if a mere candle

**9.** What distinguishable features do the human-like carvings have? Select all that apply.

[a] Wings
[b] Webbed hands and feet
[c] Wide and flabby lips
[d] An extra set of arms
[e] Glassy, bulging eyes
[f] Unnaturally long, sharp noses



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# Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

**10.** What does the narrator assume the human-like figures must be?

(a) Alien life-forms
(b) Mermaids
(c) Imaginary gods
(d) A figment of his imagination

**11.** What does the narrator suddenly see?

(a) The monolith cracks open, revealing an alien light within
(b) The sky fills with a flock of chattering winged creatures
(c) His own name, carved into the monolith
(d) A vast, loathsome creature rising out of the water

**12.** What does the narrator believe that he did while frantically making his way back to his boat?

(a) Screamed maniacally
(b) Recited the alphabet
(c) Sang and laughed
(d) Counted to ten and back to zero again repeatedly

**13.** Where does the narrator find himself when he comes out of the shadows?

(a) In his own bed at home
(b) In his boat on a calm sea
(c) Back on the German ship
(d) In a San Francisco hospital

**14.** What does the narrator amuse a celebrated ethnologist with?

(a) A detailed retelling of his terrifying tale
(b) Knock-knock jokes
(c) Card games
(d) Questions about an ancient Philistine legend

**15.** What happens to the narrator at night, especially when the moon is gibbous and waning?

(a) He begins laughing maniacally
(b) He can't sleep
(c) He sees the monster
(d) He smells the stench of rotting fish

**16.** What happens to the narrator's reflection in the window?

(a) It brings a revolver up to his head
(b) It screams
(c) It disappears
(d) It becomes the face of the monster

**17.** What does the narrator dream of?

(a) The day when his madness will come to an end
(b) The day when the ocean floor will ascend
(c) His life before he saw the monster
(d) The release of death

**18.** What does the narrator hear at the door?

(a) A chilling laugh
(b) A noise like an immense slippery body
(c) A strange chanting
(d) A loud knock



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# Quiz

Name: _____

Date: _____

### If you read it in the iClassics app

Answer these extra questions about what you discover as you read:

**1.** What happens when you tap the narrator's solitary boat?

**2.** What engravings can you make out by moving the light around on the strange monolith?

**3.** What happens when you tap the monster gripping the monolith?

**4.** What colour is the narrator's nightmare world that materialises when you tap him?

**5.** What is the last image you see at the end of the story?

# Think like a detective

Name: _____

Date: _____

Answer in full sentences. Support your ideas with evidence from the text.

**1.** The narrator tells us at the start that he relies on morphine and is about to end his life. What does this do to your trust in him? Find two other details that make you doubt or believe him.

**2.** The narrator first suggests a scientific explanation: a volcanic upheaval has raised the sea floor. Why might Lovecraft give a rational explanation first and then pile up strange details? What effect does this have?

**3.** Near the end the narrator hears something at the door and prepares to leap from the window. Does he seem to believe his own story? Use the last paragraph to support your view.



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# Writing

Name: _____

Date: _____

Was the narrator's experience in Dagon real, or did he imagine it all? Using the evidence gathered in your table, write a short essay answering this question. Make sure you:

**a.** State your view clearly in the first paragraph.

**b.** Use at least three pieces of evidence from the story (quote when possible).

**c.** Consider the opposite view, then explain why you still prefer yours.

