

The Wax Cylinder

"Rod, I'd like you to meet my dear friend, Ward Jameison, Executive Director of the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society. Ward, this is Roderick Blake, Professor Emeritus of Psychology and Parapsychological Studies." Catherine Dennison smiled broadly as she introduced the scholars, clapping her little hands together and stopping just short of jumping up and down in anticipation.

"Pleased to meet you, Mr. Jameison," Blake said with warmth, though he castigated himself for taking an immediate dislike to the gangly gentlemen with effeminate hands, bald pate, and caterpillar mustache. Call it the gift of Christian discernment, a sixth sense, or simple intuition--the senescent professor simply did not trust the man.

It was the after-party of the widow Dennison's fabulous New Year's soiree, and four guests were all that remained, the caterers having departed amidst a growing sleet storm. The other persons in the two story library to whence the group had retired were both professors with Blake at Dunbar University: Emily Totter was a frumpy English professor specializing in Proust,

while Nick Fontaine was a newcomer to the psychology department known for trolling the undergraduate waters for willing co-eds.

The widow ushered them to several enormous couches with much pomp, and Blake wished their host would forego her aristocratic affectation and too-formal pretense--it was tiresome. Flames from a prodigious fireplace dappled the expansive chamber with an intimate shadow-play, and ice pellets scratched at the windows like little fingers desiring entry. All present, except the pensive Mr. Jameison, displayed expressions of avid curiosity: Blake was a world-renowned paranormal investigator who rarely failed to generate fanfare and discussion in his exploration of "outré phenomena."

Blake cleared his throat in the brief uncomfortable silence, and nodded thinly at Jameison to proceed. After some moments of pops from the fire and expectant glances amongst the bacchanalians, Jameison produced from a small wooden case he'd been holding an object belonging to a previous era. It was a little yellow tin tube that looked like it might hold something not much larger than a single cigar. Fancy calligraphy wound about the cylinder, and when Jameison handed over the object to Blake, the professor read that the contents were the product of the "Abbadon Recording Company, Erie, Pennsylvania." Below this

missive was printed the title of the recording: "ENTER THE
DEMON."