



LOCK, STOCK, AND THREE SMOKING SOULS

BY MIKE MONTESA

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Ages ago, a brood of dragons failed to accomplish a task set to them by the fae. Duped by another fae, they unwittingly gave up a great treasure, the Soul Box. The members of the brood fell to petty infighting, dishonoring themselves, and eventually coming to blows. Each time they have re-incarnated, they come together. But as they re-connect with their previous lives, they remember their ages-old failure (and falling out), begin arguing, and again fail to complete their original task. Sometimes they even destroy each other.

The Soul Box has changed hands many times over the eons. The fae within the box can grant the person who possesses the Soul Box great power to influence other mortals, for good or ill, by making him or her a sort of nexus point for karma. The current owner is Damian Locke, a powerful member of the Gehenna Consortium. He keeps the box in his townhouse in Richmond upon Thames.

Now the great wheel has come around again, and the scions are reborn in the modern age. Once again, the brood comes together, to share their dreams and remember, and maybe this time, finish the job they started so long ago!

Lock, Stock, and Three Smoking Souls is an adventure for six starting scions, and can be played at conventions or to kick off a Fireborn campaign (see “Raw Recruits”, pg 19 of the *Fireborn Gamemaster’s Guide*).

The tone is meant to be somewhat tongue in cheek, but the adventure can easily be played as serious as you want it to be.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Scene 1: A Copy of A Copy—In which the scions discover they are sharing the same dream, and that they really need a group hug.

Scene 2: Not my Fault!—In which the scions experience a flashback, remember past failures, and make lousy excuses.

Scene 3: A Bird with a Beef—In which a snotty fae messenger tells the scions where to stick it.

Scene 4: Petty Crimes, Petty Criminals—In which the scions rob a house, remember uncomfortable truths, and discover the differences between guard dog breeds.

Scene 5: Who Let The Dogs Out?—In which the scions discover the difference between guard dogs and skinhead werewolves.

Scene 6: Compound Interest—In which the scions make delivery, tangle with the Brothers of Cernunnos, and discover that when you borrow from the karmic loan shark, you never really get out from under.

INTRODUCTION

This adventure assumes starting characters who are just beginning to “wake up” to their memories of their previous lives as dragons. Each is tormented by a vivid and disturbing dream whenever they fall asleep. The scions don’t know this yet, but they are all having the same dream, and furthermore, their dreams are “in synch,” seeming to always play in a continuous loop that picks up in different spots in the “tape” depending on when they sleep. This means that if two of the scions crash at midnight on Tuesday evening, they both enter the dream at the same spot in the story.

This dream is bad enough for these particular scions that they suffer from insomnia. So although they are exhausted and walk around in a fugue, they can’t keep their eyes closed for more than 30 minutes before the nightmare comes again, and they wake up. The most common images they can remember from the nightmare is found in Player Handout #0A. Give one copy to all but one player; the final player receives Player Handout #0B. Tell them to read it and keep it secret, then give it back to you.

The trick here is that one of the PCs, chosen by you after characters have been selected and given Player Handout #0B, is actually a ringer, a Brother of Cernunnos who happens to also be a seer (has some ability to sense and latch onto the group mind communications of others). He or she accompanies the other PCs and acts for all intents and purposes like a normal scion, but betrays them in the end.

SCENE 1:

A COPY OF A COPY

Read or paraphrase the following aloud.

It started two months ago. Two months? Maybe. You’re not sure. Looking at the calendar just reminds



you how long it's been since you had a good night's sleep. You tried everything—exercise, herbal remedies, sleeping pills, maybe even narcotics, but that just seemed to make things worse, made the dreams more real.

It wasn't so bad at first; just weird dreams of ancient cities filled with strange people. Then it all turned. Every time you closed your eyes the nightmares came. No, the NIGHTMARE came, the same one again and again and again and . . .

Yeah, you tried everything. Almost. The community center you pass every night on the way home offers group counseling on Tuesday nights. Group therapy? Spill your guts in front of a bunch of strung out strangers (like yourself)? Well, it is free, after all. And who knows, it might work. Nothing else has.

But there is something else compelling you to go. A feeling that if you do this you just might find a solution to your problem. There is also a strong sense, almost a memory, that you have done this all before . . .

This scene is intended to give the players an opportunity to introduce their scions, do some role-playing and character building, and then provide the impetus for further events with a flashback that kicks off Scene 2.

The scene opens with the scions at the community center for their group therapy session. You can start with everyone already in the room, or have them waiting around in the lobby. The room to be used for counseling is usually used for arts and crafts for the elderly, and the place is stocked with balls of yarn, wood glue, colored paper, pinecones, ribbon, and boxes full of odds and ends. Oh, and glitter. The whole place smells a bit like mothballs.

The therapy session is led by James Hoggins, a local med-school intern. James wants to become a psychiatrist, and doing this kind of social work is part of his program. He only does it because he has to, and treats his "patients" like slow-witted little children. Although he really doesn't care about the people who come to his sessions, he puts up a good front. The giveaway is that he tends not to really listen to what anyone is saying, and just goes through the session checking off items he's supposed to cover on his list:

1. Get the subjects to introduce themselves. (James does this every time, even if everyone in the group is a repeat visitor.)
2. Get the subjects to describe their problem.
3. "Crying time" Get the subjects to cry and release their tension.
4. Feedback.
5. Group hug. (He's supposed to always finish the session on a positive note with a group hug.)

The introductions proceed without incident. Play James any way you like but try to show what a fake he is. There should be a sense of irony in the fact that the scions are quite serious about their problem, but James doesn't care.

When the first scion describes his problem, the oth-

ers quickly realize they've all had the same dream! Let the players talk about this all they want (in character). They may retell parts of it for each other. Some things might be remembered inaccurately (don't correct them) James "mmms" and "ahs" and scribbles on his notepad.

When they seem to be reaching some sort of crescendo, James steps in again. "All right, all right, everyone calm down," he says, seeming almost oblivious (or at least dismissive) of any of the scions insisting they've had the same dream. "Crying time, people. Crying time. Pair off. Pair off!" he says looking at his watch. "Give your partner a hug and just let those feelings go. It's okay to cry." Whether anyone actually cries or not doesn't matter (nor does James care). But as each scion embraces the other, each somehow knows they have met before.

James calls a halt to "crying time" and everyone sits down again. The scions look at each other and can feel the connection. It's like an electric charge, and it's building up.

James gives feedback on each person individually. This is usually in the form of "You need to embrace your own pain," or "There's a great new medication you should try. The side-effects are minimal," or "I think this has to do with your childhood. When's the last time you had a heart-to-heart with your father?" Feel free to make his comments as absurd or jargon-filled as you like.

Finally, with a glance at the clock, James announces the close of the session. "OK people, good work today. We've unloaded a lot together, so let's say goodbye with a group hug. Group hug, people. Come on." James motions for everyone to come together. As they do, the scions feel something building, something very powerful. The moment they all come together in physical contact they experience a flashback. At this point Scene 2 begins.

SCENE 2: NOT MY FAULT!

All of the scions in the brood coming together physically after such an intense outpouring of psychic energy provides a touchstone for a major flashback. It starts with the nightmare they know so well. Read or paraphrase the following aloud.

You throw up your hands to ward off the flames, but when you look again you are standing next to a river running through a forest. The colors are vivid but suffused. Two impossibly beautiful beings, faeries, in glowing white robes stand before them, one is male, one is female, but it is difficult to tell which is which. One holds a beautifully carved wooden box. A golden glow shines from within.

"We entrust the River Daughters, the emissaries from Avalon, to you," says the being, and gives the box to one of you.



The other fae continues. "They may travel only by moonlight, so begin your journey promptly at dusk and only with every member of your brood present. As the Daughters are bound to each other, so are you bound to your broodmates, and only those with such ties may bear the Daughters hence. Each night, when the moon is at its apex, allow them to partake of the waters of their home," he (she?) says holding up a flask of crystal clear water. A few sprites pick it up out of his (her?) hands and give it to one of you.

Now the first fae speaks again. "On the second night of your journey, allow them to refresh themselves in the waters of Neamsathan." You nod, quickly trying to remember where the lake, whose name means Mirror of Heaven, is located.

"You must bear the Daughters all the way to your destination and deliver them with your own hands. We know that they are safe in your care. Now, go with our blessing."

The scene then shifts through several events. Throughout the scenes, it is impossible for the scions to figure out which of them is which . . . in these dreamlike memories, they can't tell who is the active one and who is the "failure." Let them respond, play it out, come up with excuses, and hopefully laugh a bit about it. The ringer will pick up the same flashback as one of the others, but will only get vague impressions.

One of you strides up a mountainside, anger and impatience threatening to overwhelm you. It is long past time for your broodmate to have met you and the rest and begun your journey with the Soul Box. Eventually you reach the cave in which your broodmate makes his home. Something is amiss, however, as a horrendous snarl thunders out of the cave, buffeting your wings and almost knocking you out of the air! Your broodmate has delayed the mission, but from the sounds of it he had no choice in the matter. Summoning the might of magic and readying your weapons, you streak into the cave to save your kin.

Let two of the PCs choose to be the "participants" in this flashback. They should elucidate for the rest of the table what they think occurred, perhaps describing the ferocious battle with the beast that had taken one of them captive or the draining ritual to close the rift that was accidentally opened into another world.

Shift.

It is time to give the Daughters of the River the waters of their home. He who has been entrusted with the Soul Box looks up from building the campfire to find he who was entrusted with the crystal flask bearing their sacred waters. He starts up in shock as he realizes that his broodmate is not yet back from hunting . . . but he left hours ago! Tradition dictates that dragons passing through this land remain in their human forms out of respect for the nature gods . . . could he have been attacked or harmed while in that more vulnerable form?

He who was entrusted with the Soul Box grasps his healing herbs and a torch and ventures out into the savage woods. In a few minutes he has picked up his broodmate's scent and is on the trail. A few minutes after that he encounters the sight that he dreaded: his broodmate, lying face down on the ground, the soft pink flesh of his arm covered in blood.

Shift.

Two figures crouch above a dried-up pond, little more than a puddle, with something fallen in the middle. You circle above them in the darkness. Then you, the bodiless dream observer, descend, until you realize that the figures are dragons, immense reptilian creatures . . . and that means that the dried-up pond is actually a lake. Lying in the middle of the once pristine body of water is a corpse of some horrific winged beast, a vile creature of darkness with blood like tar. Blood that even now spills into the crystalline water, polluting it forever. As soon as you realize this, two of you also realize that these behemoth creatures are you, that you're all dragons, or were in a previous life. As the realization sets in, you both shake your reptilian heads in dismay.

After all players have experienced one of the flashbacks, it shifts a final time.

You stand before a large stone menhir near a river. It looks like mission accomplished. Then from the river, a beautiful fae emerges and says, "I am the Queen of the River. Present my Daughters unto me and fulfill your oath." You all look at each other, and realize that each of you is quite distinctly empty-handed. One of you sheepishly asks the River Queen if she has any sons. The majestic faerie allows a puzzled look to cross her face and says, "No. Why?"

The flashback ends.

SCENE 3: A BIRD WITH A BEEF

The flashback ends. The scions all stagger back, falling into or over their chairs. James Hoggins isn't quite sure what just happened, but it was pretty weird. He doesn't have much more to say except "Goodnight," and he leaves.

The scions can stay there and try to put it all together, or go somewhere else, a pub perhaps, to sort things out. Or maybe they want to go home and think things over. Let the players talk, in character, about what they think it all means. If they start blaming each other for what happened, that fits very nicely in with upcoming events!

Whatever they do, before they split up again, Eolande pays them a visit. Eolande is a fae messenger, one of the



Noble Sidhe. Eolande doesn't look all that noble however, dressed as she is like a cross between a goth and a punk rocker. If the scions decide to just go home after the meeting, she's in the lobby waiting for them. If they decide to head for a pub, she approaches them there (and they may catch a glimpse of her following them to their chosen watering hole).

Eolande is generally pretty snotty and obnoxious. She's quite beautiful underneath her makeup, but has a sharp, piercing, nasally voice, an affectation she picked up to annoy other more regal fae. She's even more uppity with the scions because she's done this many times before – met the reborn scions to fill them in on what they are supposed to do – and for her, the novelty wore off a long time ago.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when they meet her.

The woman in front of you looks like she escaped from a Siouxsie and the Banshees fan club meeting—spiky black hair, dark makeup around her eyes, black bolero jacket, big lacy purple skirt, and clunky leather boots laced up to her knees. But in her eyes you see something timeless, and you instantly feel that she is far more than what she seems. She's even attractive, in an ethereal sort of way. Then she starts talking and you wish she hadn't.

"It's about time you lot sorted yourselves out!" she says. "Enjoy your group hug? I've been waiting for a long time!" (about 50 years in some cases she says, if asked, though she doesn't look a day over 19)

"Right, so are you ready?"

The PCs will probably respond: "Ready for what?"

To finish what you started you nob! For someone who's had SOOOO many bloody chances to get it right and bugged it up SOOOOO many bloody times, you'd think you'd feckin' remember!?"

Again, time to respond.

"Remember what? Remember what happened last time you sods tried to get this cosmic cock-up sorted out, that's what. Lemme spell it out for you. You all got killed. Well, not exactly. You did die though. And it was 'cause o' each other. Wasn't the first time, either. Last time 'round, you and you (she points at two of the PCs) were crooks, and you got all upset and started shooting. Any of you geezers got weapons on you? I hope not. Leastways don't go at it until I leave."

By this time the PCs are likely to want to interrupt, barrage her with questions, and so on. Use the following as talking points to respond to the PCs' questions.

PCs: I don't get it.

Eolande: Don't just look at me like you were born yesterday, because you weren't, and neither was I for

that matter. Right, now I've got an appointment and the sooner I get this over with the sooner I can leave you to your own fates.

PCs: What do we need to do?

Eolande: If it isn't plain as the nose on your face, you need to get the Soul Box back and deliver it, to the right people this time! Not to Bloody Baron High Unseelie Bastard, and no that isn't his real name.

PCs: Who's the Baron you're talking about?

Eolande: The bloke that ONE of you sells out to, every damn time!!! And know, I don't know who the ringer is. I bet even you saps don't know, till you turn on the others.

PCs: What's the Soul Box?

Eolande: Bah. If you can't remember I'm not goin' into it. Just get it and give it, got it?

PCs: Why should we get it for you?

Eolande: You gotta finish what you started. It's karma. You accepted a geas from the Arcadian Court but you cocked up. So, you have to keep going round and round 'til you finish it.

PCs: What the feck are you talking about!?!?!? This is nuts.

Eolande: <Blank stare; she's dealt with newly awakened mythic agers too often to have the patience for 'the big talk' anymore. She'll just let them cope with the absurd impossibility of it all on their own time>

PCs: Where's the Soul Box?

Eolande: The Soul Box is in the possession of a man named Damian Locke. Locke is mortal, rich, and some kind of occultist. He's hooked up with some people who have a lot of juice, supernatural juice, and he's headed for the top in his organization, the Gehenna Something-or-other. Those tits-up secret societies never last long enough to remember. Anyways, he's got it and you need to get it. Lives in a big feck-off town house in Richmond upon Thames. Here's the address. Very upscale.

PCs: What do we do once we get it?

Eolande: "Get the Soul Box and drop it into the Thames from the middle of the Tower Bridge when the moon is at its apogee. That means its highest point, you wanker. That's it. Then your karma is yours again. Hell, mine too, because once you do this, I'll never have to wait around to give you this message again!

PCs: We're not much for breaking and entering. Isn't there something else we can try?

Eolande: He's sure not gonna sell it or trade it! No, there's no other way to break the cycle. And you can't just say 'Sorry, I'd like to cancel the geas I accepted.' That's what a geas means. It's Irish for 'you're



screwed.' I don't care, but it's your karma that will be bugged up til the day you die. Right, here's Locke's address. Get to it!

Eolande is in no mood to answer any other questions about their past lives, their origins, details on Locke, or anything else. If pressed, she says, "It'll all come back to you eventually." With that she leaves. If the scions try to follow her she uses her alternate form power to lose herself in the crowd.

SCENE 4:

PETTY CRIMES AND PETTY CRIMINALS

Damian Locke, CEO of Locke International Trust, has a large house in the upscale Richmond upon Thames. Locke keeps the Soul Box in his safe in the room he uses as his office. However, despite being an accomplished sorcerer, he's never been able to remember things like computer passwords or combinations, and has the bad habit of writing them down. He keeps a little notebook in his desk (which is far easier to break into than the safe), with the combination for the safe written in it (among other things, like the password for an internet porn site—something to do with clowns and cross dressing—his Amazon.uk account, and a few other fairly innocuous site passwords). When the scions attempt to get into his house, Locke is not home. Locke doesn't appear in this adventure.

The house is located in a maze of quiet cobblestone streets, some too narrow to drive a car through. Locke's house, however, is right on the road, although it does have a garage entrance. Pulling a B&E job in this neighborhood is tricky, given the likelihood that one of the neighbors may spot them and call the police. The least exposed way in would be over the wall that runs along side the house down a narrow lane off the main road.

The house does have electronic security, though it is no more severe than any of the other houses in the area whose owners have nothing to protect (nothing supernatural anyway). The real protection is in the form of three magically enhanced dogs (see Appendix) that have the run of the house and the grounds outside.

Getting into Locke's house isn't easy, but it isn't anything a skilled burglar can't handle. Of course, the scions may be neither skilled nor burglars. There is no one in the house. The doors have high-tech keypad locks on them, and the windows all have sensors. There are motion detectors covering each room and outside area (the driveway and garden). Everything is integrated and setting off an alarm causes a siren to blare and the house lights to flash. The various challenges the PCs will face, as well as the results of the PCs' success or failure in the

face of each challenge, are listed below. You may present and describe them however you choose.

The house itself is very stylish, and looks like something from the pages of Architectural Digest. It is also a source of Taint, given that Locke has cast more than a few spells here (Taint Rating 1). If anyone goes down into the basement they find the room Locke uses, complete with a pentagram drawn in inlaid gold on the marble floor.

The scions will not encounter the dogs immediately, but they may see signs of them (a dog dish in the kitchen or a doggie toy, very well chewed, on the floor).

While going through the house, dealing with the security systems, the dogs, or just picking things up (and perhaps pocketing the silver, which could be a good idea), the scions experience a few more flashbacks. Space these flashbacks out a bit (they can happen anytime after meeting Eolande, but should all have taken place before the scions recover the Soul Box from Locke's safe). One scion triggers the flashback, but all experience it, so all the players should be party to the flashback narration. By the time the PCs are done with the scene, they should have experienced flashbacks #4A–#4C.

LOCKE'S SECURITY

Alarm System (Bypassing): The alarm system can be bypassed with an Earth (Senses) 6 test to notice a second-story window that has been left cracked partially open; an Air (Knowledge: Street) or Air (Tech: Electronics) 2 test will reveal that an open window is already an open circuit, so opening it wider to sneak in wouldn't activate the alarm. A Fire [Athletics] 3 test is required to climb up to it.

Alarm System (Deactivating): Only the alarm on the front or back door can be deactivated externally. This requires a Tech (Electronics) 4 test. If it fails (or if the PCs resort to just smashing the box, ripping or cutting out the wires and circuit boards, etc., the silent alarm draws a security response within 15 minutes.

Doors and Windows: It requires a Tech (Mechanics) 3 test to pick the locks on the front or back door. Otherwise the doorknob and lock and be broken off by battering it, or a window can be smashed in. Unless the sound from either activity is muffled, they draw a manservant in his nightshirt to investigate.

MANSERVANT

Stats: Natural being; APL 0; Init 5; Aspects Fire 1, Water 3, Air 4, Earth 2; Health 2m; <3 / 3+ / 6+ / 9+ / 12+ / 15+ / 18+ / 21+; Size/Reach 0 / 2 ft.; Armor 0; Karma 6; Stride 20 ft. (Moderate)

Weapons: Priceless vase 2/L, range 10ft.

Skills: Craft: Housekeeping 4, Interaction 4, Knowledge: Art 3, Knowledge: High Society 4, Quickness 3, Stealth 2, Trickery 4.

Edges: Circumspect 3, Stealthy 2, Survivor 1

Traits: Human



The manservant is quite good at his job, but also tends to be quite nosy. He has learned to remain unseen and unheard unless asked for, and gets his kicks peeping in at Locke's secret rituals and seeing or hearing things he's not supposed to. In this case, he hears the PCs entering and thinks that it might be Locke returning with some exotic (and gossip-worthy) new friend. Unfortunately for him, it is far from it.

In this case, he eases forward down the hall toward the PCs using his Stealth skill; if he spots them without being spotted, he slinks back to his room and calls the security agency. If he is spotted, he utters a shrill, feminine scream and runs. There is no one else in the household to hear him, but if he gets to a phone, the PCs will rapidly run out of time. If he is not caught within 3 turns he bars himself in, of all places, Locke's study (A total of 10 successes over successive rounds needed at a Fire [Athletics] test to break the door down or shove the bookcase he knocked in front of it out of the way). After being in the room for 2 turns, the manservant will have called Locke's security team. His terrified babbling, along with the motion sensors tripped by entering the study, give the agents cause to hurry, arriving in 5 minutes.

Motion Sensors: The PCs can wander the house with impunity until they find Locke's study on the third floor. When they enter that room, an Earth (Senses) 4 test allows the PCs to spot the telltale red L.E.D. lights to either side of the door. Any PC entering the room must accompany each single action (moving, opening the desk drawer, opening the safe, etc.) with an Air (Stealth) test opposed by the motion sensor's Earth (Senses) test (they roll 3 dice for this purpose). Like the door alarm system, deactivating the sensors requires a Tech (Electronics) 4 test. Failing the test or destroying the motion sensor by smashing it, ripping out the wires, etc., brings the security response in 10 minutes.

LOCKE'S STUDY

This room is filled with a combination of elegant decore and gaudy occult paraphernalia. The most noticeable furniture are a green leather sofa with ashtrays built into the armrests, an elephantine oak desk, and behind that a curving bookshelf filled with all manner of legal and arcane texts.

Finding the safe hidden in the bookshelf here is easy, requiring an Air (Senses) 1 test. Those who think to search the desk find the notebook with the safe combination, so long as they make an Air (Senses) 3 test. If the scions don't turn up the safe combination after searching the room (or if they don't bother searching), getting the safe open is going to be very difficult without a lot of effort and a lot of noise. In any case, once the safe is open, the scions behold the Soul Box: an elegantly wrought container that seems both solid and ethereal at the same time, comprised of many overlapping and intertwined strings of silvery metal that inexplicably transform into some kind of ancient, smoothly carved wood, and back to metal. A light emanates from the

box's center, despite the fact that it seems completely closed in.

GETTING OUT

If the PCs manage to get the study without setting off any alarms, having the security group called on them, or having to break open the safe, they only have to deal with the dogs. If they fail at any of the above, they will run into the security agents as soon as the dogs have been dealt with or escaped from.

SCENE 5: WHO LET THE DOGS OUT?

Three guard dogs (Thunder, Lightning, and Chips) have the run of the house and grounds. They have all been magically enhanced by Locke. Thunder and Lightning are bull mastiffs, and Chips is a corgi (though no less fierce). When they attack, they tend to attack the same target together, using pack tactics.

The three guard dogs shouldn't appear until after the scions have the Soul Box, but it's up to the GM when exactly to bring them in. How the scions deal with these foul tempered and evil looking beasts is up to them. While the scions are in the middle of a finger-pointing argument (perhaps after witnessing the last of the flashbacks or while acting cocky about having gotten the soul box), would be a perfect time for the dogs to show up.

THUNDER, LIGHTNING, AND CHIPS

Stats: Enhanced animal; APL 2; Init 6; Aspects Fire 5(1), Water 3, Air 3(3), Earth 5; Health 5m; <3 / 3+ / 6+ / 9+ / 12+ / 15+ / 18+ / 21+; Size/Reach -1 / 1 ft.; Armor 2; Karma 9; Stride 30 ft. (Moderate)

Weapons: Bite: 9M

Skills: Athletics 4, Interaction 4, Melee 4, Quickness 4, Senses 4, Stamina 4

Edges: Aggressive 1 (Melee), Defender 2, Skill Specialty (senses: tracking)

Powers: Heightened Senses (hearing 1, scent 4), Group Mind, Swift (Stride 2)

The dogs should stalk out of the darkness with perfect confidence, snarling and drool dripping, and pause long enough for the PCs to crap themselves, then leap in for the kill.

RENT-A-COPS

Stats: Natural being; APL 1/2; Init 7; Aspects Fire 3, Water 2, Air 2, Earth 3; Health 3m; <2 / 2+ / 4+ / 8+ / 12+ / 14+ / 16+ / 18+; Size/Reach 0 / 2 ft. or 1 / 5 ft.; Armor 10 (Kevlar Vest 10/4/3); Karma 3; Stride 20 ft. (Moderate)



Weapons: Fist (2): 3/L, Kick (2): 4/M, Baton 5/M, H&K USP Tactical Pistol: 26 ~ range 100 ft. ~ reload 2/4; Sequences: Entrapping Defense, Street Fighting

Skills: Athletics 3, Interaction 4, Knowledge: Street 2, Knowledge: London 3, Melee 4, Quickness 1, Ranged 1, Senses 4, Stealth 3, Travel 2

Edges: Brutal

Traits: Human

Likewise, congratulating themselves over evading or outfighting the dogs would be an excellent time for the security guards to train their flashlights on the PCs and yell "Freeze!" Luckily for the PCs the rent-a-cops are terrible shots (being too green to think to aim first) and have no stamina whatsoever, meaning they're likely to take weariness dice before they get 100 yards after the characters. In fact, kind GMs may wish to make them take a weariness test before they even encounter the PCs in the first place.

Development: If the scions set off any alarms on their way into the house, they still have time to try to grab the Soul Box (if they can find the safe and open it). The incoming security guards and police are intended to pressure the scions to move quickly and make their escape. But if the scions want to stick around and actually confront and fight these guys, they can (though the eventual arrival of police and the scions' subsequent arrest should put them off this idea).

If the scions abandon their B&E attempt, they can try again later, although they shouldn't wait too long to have another go at it. They may come up with other schemes to get at the Soul Box, so feel free to develop these ideas if you have the time.

SCENE 5A:

GOOD OL' DAYS

If you feel like you will have extra time, this is a good spot to have the PCs delve into their draconic side and get a chance to kick some butt (instead of vice-versa). You'll need to go into some level of explanation regarding running a dragon, using its abilities such as its various powers and its legacies, explaining flight, and so on.

The scene is simple: the PCs are attacked by a troop of trolls and their trained pyrehawk hunting birds (see next page). Their goal: to claim the Soul Box. There should be one troll + pyrehawk pair per PC. If the PCs resort to flight instead of ground combat, the Trolls have slings that pack the power of siege engines, and they're pretty good at jumping high into the air, too . . .

Though the ringer/Brother of Cernunnos PC technically was not part of these flashbacks, her ability to piggyback onto others' group mind links allows her to insert a draconic character in the flashback, giving the

other PCs a false memory of her participation in the battle. In other words, she gets to be in the fight scene, too.

TROLL

Era: Mythic

Race: Supernatural being

APL: 5

Aspects: Fire 6(5), Water 5(5), Air 1, Earth 3

Initiative: 7

Health: 7m; <8 / 8+ / 16+ / 24+ / 32+ / 40+ / 48+ / 56+

Size/Reach: 2 / 10 ft.

Armor: 8

Karma: 15

Stride: 30 ft. (Slow)

Weapons:

—Fist 6/L

—Warhammer 15/H

—Boulder Slinger 12 ~1,000 ft. – reload 2

Sequences: Overkill

Agg—F12(5)/W3(5)/A0/E0—Power + Power + Power + Power + Weapon Strike: Damage +45 *or* Paralyze

Neut—F6(5)/W5(5)/A1/E3—Dash + Jump +

Warhammer: Additional damage +5, bleed *or* Daze

Def—F0(5)/W11(5)/A1/E3—*Block* sequence

Skills: Melee 6, Athletics 6, Ranged 4, Senses 4, Stamina 4, Will 4, Quickness 3, Trickery 2

Edges: Action Junkie 2, Brutal 3, Follow-Through 3, Freight Train, Resilient 4

Powers: Ferocity 3, Heightened Senses (scent 1), Mythic Leap 5, Skin of Stone 3

Traits: Giant

PYREHAWK

Era: Mythic

Race: Supernatural being

APL: 5

Aspects: Fire 6(6), Water 4, Air 6, Earth 3

Initiative: 12

Health: 3m; <4 / 4+ / 8+ / 12+ / 16+ / 20+ / 24+ / 28+

Size/Reach: 2 / 10 ft.

Armor: 10

Taint: 0

Stride: Fly 60 ft. (Speedy, mnv 4).

Weapons:

—Talons: 8/L

—Beak: 14/M

—Wing Buffet: 10/H

Sequences: Archangel

Agg—F12(6)/W4/A0/E3—Dash [Fly] + Spin + Power + Talon: Dismember extremity

Neut—F6(6)/W4/A6/E3—Dash [Fly] + Talon + Dash [Fly]: Damage +15

Def—F0(6)/W10/A6/E3—*Dodge* sequence

Skills: Athletics 6, Melee 6, Quickness 6, Senses 6, Stamina 3, Stealth 3, Will 2

Edges: Aggressive 1 (Melee), Follow-Through 2

Powers: Child of Fire*, Group Mind 1, Instinct 1, Heightened Senses (sight 4)

Traits: Mindless, tainted, unliving



SCENE 6: COMPOUND INTEREST

Once they have the Soul Box, the only thing left to do is carry out Eolande's instructions: drop the Soul Box into the Thames from the middle of the Tower Bridge when the moon is at its apogee and drop it in. Easy, right?

Read or paraphrase the following aloud.

You head for the Tower Bridge, under a bright full moon. Something about what you are doing feels right, like tension that has built up over so long about to be released.

Once on the bridge, it is a short stroll out to the middle. No one passing by is paying any attention to you as you reach the center of the bridge. The moon is huge in the sky and seems to be watching you. You reach the center of the bridge and stop for a moment, breathing with a sense of relief at the end of more than just the night's activities. But you also feel something more . . . that this isn't just an end, but also a beginning.

Then you realize that one of you isn't sharing that same look at all. As realization dawns <betrayers name> shrugs, smiles, and shows teeth that look far from human . . . but not quite like a dragon's, either. More like a wolf's. At the same time, you see two blokes in fatigues and cut-off T-shirts step out from the shadows, cricket bats in hand; at the same time, a battered beige van screeches around the corner and barrels along the bridge toward you!

These guys are newbie Brothers of Cernunnos. They found out about the PCs' dreams thanks to the ringer PC, a seer who lives in the flat beneath one of the PCs. They sent the ringer PC on the brood's trail, and he or she tracked them until it looked like a good time to take whatever they found. The Brothers have no particular info about the Soul Box or its uses, but they think it will impress their head honchoes if they snag it.

The van attempts to ram the scions standing on the sidewalk; luckily for them, the Brother of Cernunnos in the driver's seat had a few shots of whiskey to build up his courage before going after the scions. He doesn't hit anyone head-on, but each scion must make a Water (Quickness) 2 test or be clipped as it careens, flips, and rolls past them, taking 10 damage. The remains of the van string out along the bridge over several hundred feet, allowing for cinematic use of using various pieces of the wreck as cover, terrain obstacles, weapons, etc. The Tower Bridge is also a drawbridge, and having the bridge start to rise at an inopportune moment, perhaps sending everyone rolling or scrambling for a handhold, is another option.

BROTHERS OF CERNUNNOS (2)

Stats: Supernatural being; APL 3; Init 8; Aspects Fire 5(3), Water 5(1), Air 2, Earth 3; Health 3m; <5 / 5+ / 10+ / 15+ / 20+ / 25+ / 30+ / 35+; Size/Reach 0 / 2 ft. or 1 / 5 ft.; Armor 4; Taint 9; Stride 30 ft. (Speedy) or 40 ft. (Speedy)

Weapons: Fist 3/L, Kick 4/M, Club 5/M; Sequences: Barroom Brawling, Ravager

Skills: Athletics 6, Interaction 1, Knowledge: Street 4, Knowledge: London 2, Knowledge: Occult 1, Melee 5, Quickness 5, Ranged 2, Stamina 6, Stealth 3, Trickery 1, Senses 5, Stealth 5, Travel 2

Edges: Aggressive 1 (melee), Brawler, Daunting 3, Rapid 2

Powers: Alternate Form (size 1 wolf), Ferocity 2, Instinct 3, heightened Senses (hearing 2, scent 3, sight 2), Metabolic Control 3

Legacy: Undying Worm

Traits: Tainted

Possessions: Cricket bats, rusty, beat up beige van (treat as Volkswagen Bus)

THE RINGER

The non-scion PC should join in the fight on the side of the Brothers, using his or her normal stats.

CONCLUSION:

After the goons and the traitor are defeated, read or paraphrase the following aloud.

Time to finish the job! You hold up the Soul Box. It is warm and you can sense the fae inside are happy to be home. With a smile you toss the box over the side of the bridge, and it's done. But something's wrong . . . shouldn't there be a splash?

As the PCs look over, they see the dark shape of a garbage barge emerging from underneath the bridge. They've dropped the Soul Box right on the back edge of the barge, which has already cleared the bridge. The box sits, quite clearly visible, on top of a mound of trash.

The adventure ends here, perhaps with the scions leaping over the side of the bridge, or perhaps with them watching the barge sail away down the Thames and cursing their lungs out. The karma wheel goes 'round and 'round . . .

Player Handout #0A

THE DREAM

“It’s YOUR FAULT,” says a disembodied voice. The surroundings are disorienting, like visual static. There is a sense of being in different times and different places. “YOU LIED!” says the voice again. There are shapes on the ground. Bodies. They have been shot, some of them stabbed, others look burned. Suddenly the blackened corpses sit upright, their eyes burning with fire, and you realize the source of the voice. “YOU CONDEMNED US!” they hiss as one, standing up before you. There is an image of an ornately carved box of pale wood and silvery metal. Suddenly, the savaged corpses surround you. You know they speak the truth. It is your fault. You did lie. You try to run but can’t. The corpses begin to burn, the flames searing your skin. You look into their eyes and you know them; they were your brothers and sisters. “YOU MUST PAY!” As they open their mouths, the burning, blackened flesh cracks and bleeds. Then you are engulfed in a wave of flame.

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Player Handout #0B

THE DREAM

When the strange things began to happen in London, you were terrified . . . but then you slowly became curious. Eager. You started doing things you normally wouldn’t have, getting into fights, having one-night stands. Eventually they found you, if due to nothing else because you were thrashing their gang members. The Brothers of Cernunnos. Fancy name for a simple thing: werewolves. And it turns out you’re one of ‘em.

If that wasn’t enough, some other latent powers (you think you got ‘em from your grandmother, who always claimed to be able to talk to angels) have come up. You can share peoples’ dreams, and you don’t know the bloke in the flat above yours, but his are doozies! And even weirder, he seems to share them with other people . . . you can sense them on the edges of the dream. Your pack leader told you to stake them out. He says he doesn’t know what they are, and they probaly don’t know either, but he gets the feeling they’re important. Your mission: to pretend to be one of them until further orders. Learn what you can about them, and if they end up having or finding some treasure, some important item that the pack can use to make an impression on the elder Brothers, so much the better.

Player Handout #4A

As you wait for one of your companions to get you into the fortress-like house, you stare off into the night sky. The stars look familiar, so familiar you could almost lose yourself in them. The way the trees close around you and reveal only a part of the night sky seems familiar, as well, and then your mind makes the connection: it looks just like a cave. A cave you were in, once . . .

And then you're back in that cave, and so is one of your companions, only he's . . . different. It's dark, and you can't quite make him out as he storms through the cave toward you, but he seems . . . large, and alien. More animal than human. You hear a deep, unearthly roar issue forth from farther back in the cave, a sound that makes your spine tingle with fear . . . and as your companion reaches you, you tense, waiting for whatever is issuing forth that horrible noise to strike.

Except the horrible noise is you. Snoring. Because you overslept. You delayed the departure of the ancient, all-important mission, not because you were captured by a horrible beast or because you were trapped by a magical ward, but because you overslept. You suddenly jump back to the present day, to reality, only to see your companions looking at you with a mixture of shock and disgust. You get the feeling that the embarrassing scene you just beheld was shared by everyone else.

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Player Handout #4B

As your groups moves stealthily through the house, your foot catches on the corner of a rug. You feel yourself falling, almost in slow motion, and your arms rocket out to the side to find something, anything, to catch yourself with. They find something solid, hard, and with a handle . . . and the priceless vase you grab follows you to the floor shattering beneath your weight and embedding its ceramic shards in your forearm. The pain and surprise stagger you . . .

And you remember another time, another place. Unused to taking human form, you stroll upon a rocky forest floor. You could have left the flask back at the campsite, but the fae creature entrusted it to you, and in your hands it would be safest. Smiling to yourself at the strange feeling of wind on fragile flesh, of legs that bend the wrong way and propel without wings, you pick up speed and begin to jock, joyfully springing from rock to root to patch of moss. One such leap is aborted, however, as you misjudge the shape of one of your strange new human foot, and it catches on a root. You feel yourself falling and , calmly extend your wings to catch yourself and soar up into the sky.

Err. Except you don't have wings in this form. The realization strikes you at about the same time that your body strikes the ground, and you feel the crystal flask in your hand shatter into dozens of slivers. As the strange red blood begins to flow from your hand and forearm, mixing with the pure waters the fey in their box will even now be thirsting for, you see one of your broodmates striding toward you through the forest. She stops and kneels down to tend to the blood, only to cry out in anger and shock when she sees the shattered crystal in your hand.

Which is pretty much the same sound made by the companion who had knelt to help you up from the carpet; and it's that sound that makes you realize: as ridiculous as your escapades in that previous life must have seemed to your earlier self, they felt even more embarrassing now that everyone in the group knew about them too.

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Player Handout #4C

While looking around the house, see a door at the end of a hallway, stately and imposing. A feeling in your gut tells you that, even if the Soul Box isn't in there, something *very* valuable is. You can feel it, as sure as you've felt anything in your life. You lead the rest of your companions forward, ignoring the other rooms, and warily push open the door . . .

Which opens into a broom closet precariously stacked with boxes, electronics, and antiques. With the release of pressure from the door, the amalgamation of objects comes crashing down upon you, making a good bit of noise and battering your in the process. A combination of disgust and defensiveness rises up in your gut, and you can sense disappointment and surprise in your companions. It's not a new feeling. All of you flash back to a time and place long ago. Upon the shores of the great Lake of the Mirror, you behold the moon in the lake's pristine surface. Then you see something on the lake's edge . . . a large stone door, built into the mountainside to look natural. Perhaps it hides magic, or treasure! Ignoring your companions' cautioning, you sink your claws into the stone, removing it. Peering into the cave revealed within, see nothing but darkness . . . and then the darkness *moves*. A strange beast boils out of the cave toward you, a living darkness with tentacles, wings, and countless eyes, all gazing with an alien hatred. The fight lasts only seconds, though it seems like an eternity. You are quickly being smothered, when your lashing draconic tail buries itself in the dark creature's form and finds something solid, a center, a heart. With a ferocious jerk and a mighty roar, you whip your tail outwards, battering your foe against the stone and feeling it go limp. A cry of triumph escapes your maw as your fling the foe away from you in disgust, heaving it over the trees and out into the valley. You stumble away from the opening and back to where your companions wait at the edge of the lake, that beautiful pristine mirror of light and water . . . which you realize, approaching your broodmates and their withering glare, is where the monster's body landed when you flung it away. The beast's oozing black shape rests almost exactly in the lake's center, it's tar-like blood spilling forth from its burst and battered corpse, spreading with inevitable tendrils through the once-beautiful lake.

As you look up from the mess you made opening the closet door, you realize it's not that dissimilar from the mess you made opening that door into the unknown, so long ago in the mythic age. You shrug, raise your eyebrows, and offer a look of apology that transcends race and time. The sighs of disgust from your companions are likewise timeless.