

***“Imbued”* – Campaign Outline**

Final update: 5 September, 2010

The full campaign, including character write-ups, handouts and session logs can be found at:
<http://rpg.sandcat.nl/imbued2010/>

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Introduction

There is one big shadowy organisation behind it all: \$SHADOWY. They are lead by one big bad guy: \$VILLAIN. They try to gather four (or more) relics from ancient times to summon an evil ur-deity, like Azatoth or some other Elder God. \$SHADOWY does not do this directly, but through various branches, off-shoots and proxy organisations, all lead by various lieutenants.

The party has to stop the gathering of the relics, identify the branches involved, and through them aim for \$SHADOWY. We'll try to have \$VILLAIN make appearances.

Project Silhouette has some (or all) of these relics under surveillance. Unfortunately, the Project is highly regimented and the \$Centurions don't exactly know what they're guarding.

Four mythologies:

South-American indians / Aztec

Egypt

Norse / Gaelic

Greek / Roman

(North-American Indians)

(Sumerian)

Schedule

4-5 branches of each 4-5 sessions. Build-up & grand finale another 2-3 sessions. About 25 sessions, so realistically about 30.

(This was later adjusted to 4 branches of fewer sessions. We abandoned the idea of 25-30 sessions pretty early to aim for 20 sessions.)

Arc 1: The *was* of Seth

Seth: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Set_%28god%29

The party is summoned by Maureen Wyndham, the New York branch Centurion (Centuria?). She had indications that there would be a heist at the Brooklyn Museum. By the time the characters have arrived, the heist had already taken place: the was-sceptre of Seth is stolen from the Brooklyn Museum.

Maureen was warned before the fact by Justin Prescott, an employee of the Museum. The party's job now is now to retrieve the sceptre instead of guarding it.

Brooklyn Museum has a world-famous collection of Egyptian art. Part of it has been retrieved from the Tomb of Tutankhamun after its 1922 discovery by Howard Carter.

Strangely enough, this splendid specimen was now in a New York museum... Why?

Maureen doesn't know exactly, but perhaps rummaging in the Project archives might shed some light. This will take time though, and the party doesn't have this right now!

(Captain) Maureen Wyndham

35 years old, very much a New York woman. Took this position about 3 years ago, with

little preparation.

She's rather young for her position in the Project, and a woman to boot.

Has an office on the 27th floor of the Empire State Building as part of Black Real Estate. BRE is a front for Project Silhouette.

Her secretary is a young black woman.

The museum

The museum is guarded by its own security force, which are clad in red/black uniforms.

Starts, of course, at the Brooklyn Museum. Get there by car or by tram

<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a4/HCRY-Peter-Witt-TTC-2984.jpg>

Arrival at museum:

http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/df/Brooklyn_Museum_June_2008_sunset_jeh.J

PG

Talk to curator, Professor Sebastian Featherstone.

Sebastian Featherstone

Rather tall guy (1m90) wearing a nice suit.

Nervous and a bit unworldly.

Academics

Strangely enough, the sceptre is hardly the most impressive or most expensive piece in the collection, and nothing else was taken.

Investigate crime scene.

- either they use their BoI connections

- or they interrogate the guard

BoI waltzing

They can flash their BoI badge or use Magnus' connections in the NYPD to get their hands on the evidence. Most revealing (besides some footprints that lead nowhere, both literally & figuratively) is a piece of a white robe with part of a black symbol.

(<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/KKK-symbol.jpg>)

Art, Academics, Mysteries, or in the long run, Subskill Research of Academics.

Guard interrogation

Guard is named Toby Kettle. He tried to stop a figure in a white robe and got a piece of it, stuck between a door that was slammed shut (and into dear Toby's face). He describes the fragment. Let party draw it IRL.

Toby Kettle, museum security guard

Alertness 2

Intimidate 2

Guns 3
 Resolve 2
 Weapons 2

Ku Klux Klan

The meagre evidence points towards the KKK. The Imperial Wizard of the clan (Hiram Wesley Evans) has been instructed by \$VILLAIN to steal the sceptre in exchange for a large sum of money, which the declining KKK needs badly. The wizard instructs and plans the stealing of the sceptre which is carried out by his brother, John Evans. However, before the party can get the details of the handover, it has already taken place and the sceptre is brought to Ellis Island.

Lead: KKK 'HQ' in a bar

One of the ways the party can investigate is to go to the local 'headquarters' of the KKK, a sleazy speakeasy in Queens, the White Biker. Here they can meet some KKK-aligned people and random assorted thugs. Intimidate, Rapport, or just plain old Might, Fists/Weapons or even Guns.

KKK/Thug minions

Quality: Fair
 Quantity: 3 for every PC

1 x Guns, 2 x Weapons, 3 x Fists skill

In a back room, John Evans can be found and interrogated, spilling the details of the heist and the handover when pushed enough.

Finale & cliffhanger

The handover is at Linden Avenue at the harbour (near Ellis Island). The party can get there by taxi or driving themselves, but they arrive too late:

- The KKK gives chase. Car chase of value 8.

Starting off with 2 fair bikers, 1 with a shotgun.

A Good-quality Cadillac comes in as a Road block near the harbor which acts as a Last Pursuer and has either +1 Drive or Armed, depending on who is driving the PC vehilce.

- If any time is left, a fight at the harbor with some leftover KKK thugs / hired harbor dudes

They see a large ocean steamer, the *SS Juliette* disappear towards the horizon.

Further investigation reveals that it is headed towards Europe (based on the amount of fuel stocked and/or provisions), but the exact destination is unknown. Or *can* be determined by digging into the harbour's papers: Cairo! Which matches the original place of retrieval of the sceptre. But the *Juliette* never docks there: The ship continues towards Athens.

Interlude: Maureen points towards Scythe

The group is summoned by Maureen on the next day. She has found some clues regarding the was. Amongst them is a very old book written in Greek, semi-Macedonian and Latin. In it is a picture of a shadowy figure wielding the was and various other implements. The scythe that is pictured is from the Greek god Thanatos (see below for more information).

The group investigates the book by visiting the New York University. They meet Professor Ford, expert in ancient stuff. He is very interested in the book. He tells them that he knows of no religion/mythology that combines all the artefacts depicted in the picture. The necklace could be Meso-American, the scythe would have to be that of Thanatos. Infodumps a lot of the info below. The mask is unknown to him.

(Note: he is promised a look in the archives/store rooms of the Brooklyn Museum by Christoph.)

Arc 2: The Scythe of Thánatos

The next artifact is the Scythe of Thánatos.

Thánatos

Thánatos (*Θάνατος*, "death", Mors) is a rather obscure Greek god of Death. Not to be confused with Hades, who is ruler of the Underworld, Thánatos is more like our modern idea of the Grim Reaper. Hades has a more hands-off, remote personality, Thánatos is direct. He does not judge himself, he must follow the Fates' (Moiras) judgement.

Death is hated by mortals, who call him black, evil, and grievous. For they think that darkness will enfold them when Death lays his heavy hands on them. Although Thánatos may come first in Old Age, mortals still call him swift, and his arrival is often regarded as unannounced or sudden, causing even surprise. Yet there are no doubts about Thánatos' coming, and no man knows for certain whether he will still be living the next day.

(<http://homepage.mac.com/cparada/GML/Thánatos.html>)

Thánatos has a younger twin brother, Hypnos (*Ύπνος*, "sleep", Somnus), the God of Sleep and Dream. Their mother is Nyx (*Νύξ*, "night", Nox), their Father is Erebus.

Erebus

Erebus (*Ἔρεβος*, or "deep darkness" or "shadow") is the brother *and* husband of Nyx. Erebus' father (and therefore Thánatos' grandfather) is Khaos, the primordial darkness. Erebus' name is used interchangeably with Tartarus and Hades since Erebus is often thought of as part of the underworld. Erebus married his sister Nyx (goddess of the night) and their children included Aether (male: upper sky, space, and heaven), Hemera (male: day), Nemesis (female: divine retribution against those who succumb to hubris), Charon (male: ferryman of the death).

The Scythe

The artefact is millenia old and even predates the concept of Thánatos. The first record of it was in a

description of statue of Thánatos though. The statue was made around 450 BCE, but has since been lost to the ravages of time. Note, however, that the Scythe was a separate part of the statue. Since the Hellenic times it has popped up at various times and places throughout history.

Its most recent appearance was in a statue called "Death and the Maiden" by the Danish sculptress Elna Inger Cathrine Borch (1869, will die in 1950). Made in 1912, it was purchased by Carl Jacobsen for the Ny Carlsberg Foundation at an auction in Berlin, 1913. The Ny Carlsberg Foundation then donated it to its museum, the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek. The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen was founded by the brewer Carl Jacobsen (1842-1914) who created one of the largest private art collections of his time. It was named after his brewery, Ny Carlsberg, with the addition of "Glyptotek", meaning collection of sculpture.

The statue is currently standing outside in the garden of the museum. The scythe it's holding is a replica, however.

Copenhagen, Denmark

The group moves to Copenhagen and arrives at the Glyptotek. Here they meet Freya

Freya

niece of Carl Jacobson, bartender at the brewery / bar at the Glyptotek
 long-haired blonde
 blue eyes
 Stereotypical Aryan / Scandinavian girl

She introduces the group to Carl Jacobson. Carl & Freya are very suspicious of the admittedly vague story of the party. They do admit though that the Scythe as seen in the park is indeed a replica, and that the original is stored in the store rooms of the museum. No, they won't allow the party to visit them.

Nazi scout

Magnus and Mike spot a German guy (who's been in the War) that's checking out the statue "Death And The Maiden".

(He's a German scout, member of the Nazi party offshoot "*Thule-Gesellschaft*" originally the *Studiengruppe für germanisches Altertum*), scouting out the Scythe.)

Helmut Schonbrau, Nazi scout

Weird dreams

The next time the characters sleep, they are troubled by dreams. When they wake up, they can't quite remember them and impressions of a big battle (Ragnarok/Gotterdammerung?), Asgard and a sort of chessboard are all that remain.

Game impact: the characters gain a new Stunt. Also, when they use their +4 or +5 / defining Skills/Stunts/Aspects, they feel elated and 'in the zone'. Maybe give rudimentary knowledge of Danish.

The party can help Jacob to set up the security measures around his store room. Perhaps there are some books/hints to books about the origin of the statue, or the statue's Scythe?

Option A: The Nazis break into the museum

The scenario is not very complicated, but Freya & Carl are very reluctant considering that the story the party tells them is very vague.

The Nazis, helped by the reconnaissance done by Helmut, break into the museum's storerooms and capture the Scythe. The party can't exactly stop them, but they *can* pursue them as they travel towards Arc 3

Option B: The party nab the Scythe themselves

Bad idea! The police will pursue them (suddenly the police is capable for a change), when informed Maureen is stunned and must inform her superior, international relations between the States and Denmark are brought up, etc. etc.

Option C: visit Elna Borch, sculptress

The party can also investigate the creator of the statue, Elna Borch, She lives conveniently near, just outside of Copenhagen.

She tells the party, after some good Rapport / Empathy rolls, that she was inspired by a very old book, a family semi-heirloom, by the 16th century occultist John Dee, astrologer to Queen Elizabeth I. She still has that book, which, when read, gives the following infodump:

- vague reference to the *was*, as a sceptre that ruled over "Khaos", and it needing to be "snapped and broken in twain".
- the Scythe of Thanatos, it needing to "sever the thread of Life" of "a pure soul".
- a necklace, "sapphire and emerald and gold"

- a dagger, "with a ruby inset in silver"

The Nazi's are comprised of three groups:

The first group under lead of Helmut (see above) has kidnapped Elna Borch and is responsible for obtaining relevant data (photographs) of the Scythe. The plan of the Nazi's is to make a replica of their own and replace the original scythe with that. His group consists of three (?) others next to Helmut. They have been dealt with by the party and taken to the local police. The party has left Elna there as well to press charges. The group has 'borrowed' the Mercedes of Helmut's group and erased the Nazi signs on it.

The second group is responsible for making the scythe, they are located in a secondary hideout where they await Helmut with the pictures. They comprise of a grand total of 5 Nazis. This group drives a white Mercedes that has very recently been borrowed by the third group (see below) The party has travelled there and found an anvil on which the replica is being made. Combat is about to ensue. This group obviously knows the plans of group 3, since they have been informed of the borrowing of the car.

The third group is at the Nazi stronghold a bit outside Copenhagen and contains their leader Heinz-Jorgen Dunkelschmerz. This group learned of the capture of group 1 earlier and immediately planned the kidnap of the niece of Jacob Carlsson. They used their own white Mercedes and borrowed the one from group 2 to kidnap Freya and simultaneously bring the note to Jacob. They want to trade the Scythe (the real one) for Freya.

The party can either try to trade the replica scythe for the girl or don't try to trade at all and just bruteforce the party. Either way, they most likely need to safeguard the real Scythe afterwards since the Nazi heads will learn of the failure and retaliate / chase the party all over town. In the paperwork of Heinz-Jorgen the party can find all the specific details of the Nazi assignments, including plans (if they roll very very high) to steal a ring (see below).

Arc 3: Necklace of Huitzilopochtli

During step 3, the party has the Scythe and the Nazi are still pursuing it. Expect fights!

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Huitzilopochtli> & <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coatlicue> & <http://www.crystalinks.com/aztecgods.html>

Huitzilopochtli

Huitzilopochtli (Classical Nahuatl: *Huitzilopōchtli*, "Left-Handed Hummingbird") is Aztec god of War and the Sun and the son of Coatlicue.

His temple on the Main Pyramid was the focus of fearsome sacrifices of prisoners captured by Aztec warriors. Victims' heads were strung as trophies on a great rack, the Tzompantli, erected in the precinct below.

The derivation of his name may have come from the ancient Chichimeca "Tetzauhteotl", possibly meaning "Omen-God".

Iconography

In art and iconography, Huitzilopochtli was represented as a hummingbird (or with just the feathers of such on his head and left leg), a black face, and holding a scepter shaped like a snake and a mirror. In the great temple his statue was decorated with cloth, feathers, gold, and jewels, and was hidden behind a curtain to give it more reverence and veneration.

Origins

According to Aztec legend, Coatlicue, goddess of the earth had given birth to the moon and stars. The moon, Coyolxauhqui, and the stars called, Centzonhuitznahuac, became jealous of Coatlicue's pregnancy with Huitzilopochtli. During his birth, Huitzilopochtli used the "serpent of fire" and the sun's rays to defeat the moon and stars. Every day the battle continues between day and night. The Mexica saw the sunrise as a daily victory for this deity over the forces of darkness.

Huitzilopochtli can only be fed by "Chalchihuatl", or the blood of sacrifice, to sustain him in his daily battle. He resides in the seventh heaven of Aztec mythology. The seventh heaven is

represented as blue. His temple on the great Pyramid in Tenochtitlan was called Lihuicatl Xoxouqui, or "Blue Heaven". Over 20,000 victims are thought to have been ritually killed at the opening of his great temple in Tenochtitlan during a four day period.

Alternate version

The legend of Huitzilopochtli is recorded in the Mexicayotl Chronicle. His sister, Coyolxauhqui, tried to kill their mother because she became pregnant in a shameful way (by a ball of feathers). Her offspring, Huitzilopochtli, learned of this plan while still in the womb, and before it was put into action, sprang from his mother's womb fully grown and fully armed. He then killed his sister Coyolxauhqui and many of his 400 brothers. He tossed his sister's head into the sky, where it became the moon, so that his mother would be comforted in seeing her daughter in the sky every night. He threw his other brothers and sisters into the sky, where they became the stars.

Coatlicue

Coatlicue, also known as Teteoinan (also transcribed Teteo Inan) ("The Mother of Gods"), is the Aztec goddess who gave birth to the moon, stars, and Huitzilopochtli, the god of the sun and war. She is also known as Toci, ("Our Grandmother"), and Cihuacoatl, ("The Lady of the serpent"), the patron of women who die in childbirth.

The word "Coatlicue" is Nahuatl for "the one with the skirt of serpents". She is referred to by the epithets "Mother Goddess of the Earth who gives birth to all celestial things", "Goddess of Fire and Fertility", "Goddess of Life, Death and Rebirth" and "Mother of the Southern Stars".

She is represented as a woman wearing a skirt of writhing snakes and a necklace made of human hearts, hands and skulls. Her feet and hands are adorned with claws (for digging graves) and her breasts are depicted as hanging flaccid from nursing. Coatlicue keeps on her chest the hands, hearts and skulls of her children so they can be purified in their mother's chest.

Almost all representation of this goddess depict her deadly side, because Earth, as well as loving mother, is the insatiable monster that consumes everything that lives. She represents the devouring mother, in whom both the womb and the grave exist.

According to the legend, she was magically impregnated while still a virgin by a ball of feathers that fell on her while she was sweeping a temple. She gave birth to Quetzalcoatl and Xolotl. In a fit of wrath her four hundred children, who were encouraged by Coyolxauhqui (her daughter), decapitated her. The god Huitzilopochtli afterward emerged from Coatlicue's womb fully grown and girded for battle and killed many of his brothers and sisters, including decapitating Coyolxauhqui and throwing her head into the sky to become the Moon. In a variation of this legend, Huitzilopochtli himself is conceived by the ball-of-feathers incident and emerges from the womb in time to save his mother from harm.

She represents the pain of life, has a serpent skirt (poverty), claws and heart necklace (pain of life).

Temple of Huitzi/Coatlicue

Trek through jungle, with all the obligatory dangerous local wildlife. Panthers, monkeys, snakes, you name it.

Traps and temple layout: *D&D* rip-off.

First sleepy-time

The characters get another vague shared dream, this time based on the Aztec 'End of the World' sagas:

Most Mesoamerican beliefs included cycles of suns. Usually, our current time was considered the fifth sun, the previous four having been destroyed by flood, fire and the like. Quetzalcoatl allegedly went to [Mictlan](#), the underworld, and created fifth-world mankind from the bones of the previous races (with the help of [Chihuacoatl](#)), using his own blood, from a wound in his [penis](#), to imbue the bones with new life.

(Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quetzalcoatl>)

The Aztecs had an extremely complex calendar system based on the stars. They used this calendar not only to create holy days and times, but also to determine the course of human life on earth. The Aztecs believed in the Legend of the Five Suns, the times of which coincide with periods in their history. Each sun is a period of time wherein there is peace and life. Once a sun dies, however, the world is absorbed in chaos as the gods destroy the world and renew it. There are only five suns, and we are presently on the fifth. The first sun was the Sun of Precious Stones, destroyed by Tezcatlipoca in its entirety with jaguars. The second sun was the Sun of Darkness, where life was destroyed by a large hurricane sent by Quetzalcoatl. The third sun was the Sun of Fire. Life was destroyed by a rain of fire created by Tezcatlipoca. The fourth sun was the Sun of Water, destroyed by a large flood of Tlaloc. The final sun that now exists is the Sun of Movement, Tonatiuh the Rising Eagle, destined to end in 52 years by a large earthquake that will tear the earth apart.

(Source: <http://library.thinkquest.org/03oct/00875/text/AztecA.htm>)

Because the Aztec adopted and combined several traditions with their own earlier traditions, they had several [creation myths](#); one of these, the [Five Suns](#) describes four great ages preceding the present world, each of which ended in a catastrophe. Our age – *Nahui-Ollin*, the fifth age, or fifth creation – escaped destruction due to the sacrifice of a god ([Nanahuatl](#), "full of sores," the smallest and humblest of the gods) who was transformed into the Sun.

(Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aztec_mythology)

Also see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Suns

Malvir

The villain is called "Malvir" and has an androgynous quality (ref. Tilda Swinton in *Constantine*): its voice is neither male nor female, its appearance is 'unisex'. S/he represents the innate Evil of Man and was brought into the world by the Devil/Satan/Shaitan/etc (Fall of Eden and all that good stuff). She cannot be destroyed permanently as she is an primordial force, not a person. However, Malvir is its physical representation (avatar) and s/he *can* be vanquished. Malvir is very patient and was wakened by the horrors of the Great War (maybe Mike recognizes some aspects of it, maybe

she triggers flashbacks?) Malvir has teleportation powers (real or very good legerdemain, let the party make of it what they will) and very strong 'psi' powers. S/he will try to avoid a physical confrontation, preferring to let its minions do the dirty work.

Capture & worship

At the end of the temple there's a big room with lots of treasure. However, the artefact is a small inconspicuous necklace and can easily be overlooked. They can use the Scythe as a detector though, as the two artefacts start to hum/light up if they're in each other's vicinity.

The room is guarded by small guys & girls who fight mainly with spears, poison darts and other ranged weaponry. They're angry because the party have invaded their holy places. The party will lose the fight (hand out a Fate Point to compensate) and are captured.

However, the little people mistake one of the party (Mike?) for one of their gods, or at least mightier than their gods.

CONFUSED: they get the necklace, but lose the scythe? How?

In any case, Malvir avoids capture (teleport/transmutation into smoke) and the temple starts collapsing. The party has to run to avoid being crushed beneath tons of stone.

Arc 4: The Mask of Herne the Hunter

Herne represents the hunter, the predator.

First sleepy-time in Britain

TODO: Vision of the Gaelic 'end of the world', no idea what that is though :-)

Game effect: everybody gets 5 Skill points, maximum of 3 points added to a single Skill, new maximum is 6?

Herne

See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herne_The_Hunter

Herne is said to have been a huntsman in the employ of King Richard II (reigned 1377-1399) in and around Windsor Forest. He saved the King's life when he was attacked by a cornered white hart, but was mortally wounded himself in the process. A local wizard brought him back to health using his magical powers, which entailed tying the dead animal's antlers on Herne's head. In return, however, Herne had to give up his hunting skills. The king's other huntsmen framed him as a thief. As a result he lost the favour of the king. He was found the next day, hanging dead from a lone oak tree. That same oak tree is in the Home Park at Windsor Castle.

The ghost

The earliest written account of Herne comes from Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in 1597:

Sometime a keeper here in Windsor Forest,

Doth all the winter-time, at still midnight,
 Walk round about an oak, with great ragg'd horns;
 And there he blasts the tree, and takes the cattle,
 And makes milch-kine yield blood, and shakes a chain
 In a most hideous and dreadful manner.
 You have heard of such a spirit, and well you know
 The superstitious idle-headed eld
 Receiv'd, and did deliver to our age,
 This tale of Herne the Hunter for a truth.
 — William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

This records several aspects of Herne's ghost which is said to have haunted Windsor Forest (covering all of East Berkshire and parts of south Buckinghamshire, northeast Hampshire and northwest Surrey) and specifically the Great Park ever since his death. Further details have entered local folklore from reported sightings, such as those in the 1920s. He appears antlered, sometimes beneath the tree on which he was hanged, known as "Herne's Oak", but more often riding his horse, accompanied by other wild huntsmen and the captured souls of those he has encountered on his journey. He is thus a phantom of ill omen, particularly for the country and, specifically, the Royal Family. He has a phosphorescent glow and is accompanied by demon hounds, a horned owl and other creatures of the forest.

Setup

This is a horror/investigation story with no outside interference. The PCs are on their own clock and left to their own devices. Emphasize the loneliness of the mission, even if they're smack dab in the middle of civilization.

- Windsor Park is about 40 kilometres from central London.
- Windsor Castle is beautifully preserved and is next to Eton (see handouts). Maybe there's an eccentric English lord there? Motifs from hunting are everywhere in paintings, statues and tapestry.
- They can get information about the legend in the local libraries and universities (frefx, The London Library at 14 St James's Square).
- Herne's Oak is found in Windsor Forest. It's a gnarled old tree, with twisting branches that seem to reach towards you. During the day, it's just impressive. During night, it's creepy, reeks, and there are weird light effects. (See handouts.)
- To build on that, nights in Windsor Park/Forest and surroundings are cold, dark and have a gothic creepiness to them. Maybe they see ghosts as described above under "The Ghost".

How to solve this

The spirit of Herne is restless. As long as the ghost has not properly passed on, the Mask is incorporeal. (This is one of the reasons why the bad guys haven't taken it yet -- they're not very inventive and have no clue on how to tackle this.) The party has to placate the spirit. One way to do this by enacting the circumstances of his death, particularly the framing of him. Let the party come up with different theories and solutions to them.

Once this is done, the ghost passes on, the tree will become healthy, the Mask will appear in the grave of Herne.

Arc 5: The Ring Draupnir

The ring symbolises love, "that whiche conquers alle" "if thou art true ande pure of hearth".

Draupnir

See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Draupnir>

In Norse mythology, Draupnir (Old Norse "the dripper") is a gold ring possessed by the god Odin with the ability to multiply itself. Draupnir was forged by the dwarven brothers Brokkr and Eitri (or Sindri). Brokkr and Eitri made this ring as one of a set of three gifts which included Mjöllnir (Thor's hammer, "capable of leveling mountains") and Gullinbursti ("a boar which had bristles in its mane that glowed in the dark"). They made these gifts in accordance with a wager Loki made saying that Brokk and Eitri could not make better gifts than the three made by the Sons of Ivaldi. In the end Mjöllnir, Thor's hammer, won the contest for Brokkr and Eitri. Loki used a loophole to get out of the wager for his head (the wager was for Loki's head only, but he argued that, to remove his head, they would have to injure his neck, which was not in the bargain) and Brokk punished him by sealing his lips shut with wire.

The ring was placed by Odin on the funeral pyre of his son Baldr:

Odin laid upon the pyre the gold ring called Draupnir; this quality attended it: that every ninth night there fell from it eight gold rings of equal weight.
-- from the *Gylfaginning*.

The ring was subsequently retrieved by Hermóðr. It was offered as a gift by Freyr's servant Skírnir in the wooing of Gerðr, which is described in the poem *Skírnismál*. The symbolic meaning of this is quite clear: from bragging rights to money, all is conquered by love.

Skírnismál

The prose prologue to the poem says that the god Freyr, the son of Njörðr, sits in Odin's throne, Hliðskjálf and looked over all the worlds. On looking to Jötunheimr, the land of the giants, Freyr sees a beautiful girl and is immediately seized by love. Fearing that the object of his heart's desire is unattainable, gloom settles upon him.

The poem itself starts with the wife of Njörðr, bidding Skírnir to ask of Freyr why he is so sad. Skírnir, fearing his master's wrath, nevertheless does as he is bidden. Freyr's response is sullen, yet he pours his heart out. Skírnir agrees to undertake a journey to woo Gerðr, and Freyr furnishes him with his magical steed and sword.

Skírnir duly fetches up in Jötunheimr, at the hall of the giant Gymir. Gerðr, the daughter of Gymir bids him enter the hall; without further ado, Skírnir tries to woo Gerðr on Freyr's behalf, offering first gifts then threats. Eventually, Gerðr succumbs.

Events

Maureen arrives in London to provide an infodump on the Ring Draupnir and the grand scale of events, the whole shebang. She brings the real Scythe to have this destroyed in the Big Ol' Final Ritual by the party. (Something with a portal to another dimension?)

The day after features volcano eruptions, earth slides, tsunamis etc. Include something straight from Revelations.

-> The group moves to Iceland, to the site where Draupnir is supposed to be. This spot has been razed.

There are clues towards a raging chasm of doom. They have to pass through a village with mind numbed guardians to save Mike's son and Frank's father from a deathtrap (balance of death).

The place of the Grand Finale place has been tattooed on the bodies of the two family members. (Note: half sentences per body.)

Info gathered from the Library of Alexandria

The earliest forms of the artefacts probably pre-date human history. The exact number is unknown. The more somebody possesses, the more power they can wield. Most of the artefacts are sinister in origin and goal:

- the Was of Seth represents the judgement of the mortal soul and is linked with Chaos/Khaos.
- the Scythe of Thanatos represents the passing from the mortal world to the great beyond.
- the Necklace of Huitzilopochtli represents War, but as it was also worn by Coatlicue, there's also a link to femininity, childbirth and fertility.
- the Mask of Herne represents masculinity, The Wild Hunt and the predatory aspects of mankind.

Various other artefacts exist but their exact meanings are unknown -- probably a torc, a blade (dagger or sword, that's unknown).

To unlock the full power of the artefacts, one must wield the Ring of Love, representing wholeness and completeness. It also "controls the Mind or Soul", draining a human of free will. The Ring is known to Westerners as Draupnir. However, proximity of Draupnir to any of the other artefacts causes natural disturbances -- referenced in the Book of Revelation as the breaking of the Sixth Seal.

The destruction of the artefacts is rather hard as well. Several options exist:

- when multiple artefacts are together, they are more powerful but also more unstable and brittle.
- the primal forces of nature can possibly damage the artefacts.
- none of the artefacts can truly be broken with the Ring.
- the artefacts represent primordial forces inherent in mankind and can never be erased permanently.

Family ties

Familiebanden:

Magnus: revenge for his wife, son has left for Europe

Mike: 14-year-old son

Frank: Son of Marie Dillinger and Joseph Mackley.
 Christopher: sibling of the Burwell family -- his older sister?
 Thomas: his wife
 Roger: -

Final session

Christopher airdrops into the village just as the party starts to leave. Very pulpy, let Christopher come up with the explanation why he is here. Then move on. The characters can bring Christopher up to speed, which also clues Christopher's player in.

Malvir is at his hideout. He has several family members of the party with him: Magnus' 27-year-old son, Frank's mother (Marie Dillinger), Christopher's crush Holly (the daughter of the Irish immigrant cleaning lady), Thomas' wife.

Situation sketch

Windy plateau in the middle-of-nowhere. A winding, curving path leads up to the plateau.

Malvir has several minions along with him:

- KKK-dudes
- Nazi/Thule Gesellschaft
- Meso-american pygmys
- Icelandic inhabitants - Greenlandic inuit

The sky changes rapidly: looks like a fast-forward motion picture of the day/night sky cycle. The day is sickened, desaturated. Stars fall during the night. Strange colours erupt, the ground around the plateau erupts in volcanic explosions. Avalanches fall from the mountain higher up. The four captives are lying chained to a large altar in the center of the platform. The ring is located in the center of the altar. Blood from intricately carved wounds in their living and writhing bodies is slowly flowing towards the center of the altar, feeding the ritual.

Malvir

He tries to complete some sort of ritual to bring his physical self into the world consisting mainly of the destruction of the ring (primal force of love) by the was (primal force of chaos). This can be strengthened by destroying/killing the primal forces of man and woman (mask and necklace) with the scythe. The ritual can be stopped, of course, but not easily. Let the party try various ways, let the more inventive ones succeed. Grabbing the ring and uniting it with the necklace and the mask (the eternal love between man and woman) and by donning all 3 destroy scythe, was or both might be a good option.

Malvir him/herself can change shape but appears initially as the androgynous figure the party saw in South-America. S/he can project images from the party's subconscious. His/her avatar is effectively immortal: damage does not really register, he just *does not stop*. His physical attacks are weak, but that's balanced by his minions and his mental arsenal.

The party can enhance their mental defenses by using the various artefacts.

Symbols

- Ring → Love: heart, circle, yin/yang
- Mask/Necklace → Man/woman: wand/cup mirror symbol, spear/shield
- Was → Chaos: 8-pointed star, spiral
- Scythe → Death: skull, cross

These symbols emanate from the artefacts once they approach the site. Nice special effects here.

Things to do during the fight

- Stress the fact that Malvir is Mister X.
- Malvir makes rude comment towards Magnus about killing him in the same manner he killed his wife. He didn't do that (too much of a plot hole as to why and how) but Malvir's ritual feeds off of the rage and anguish of the characters.
- Let Christopher save his girl Holly in a dramatic fashion. Holly forgives his escapades and pledges her undying love.
- The artefacts represent the physical manifestation of the primordial forces. They can be destroyed by each other / other primal forces. Doing so will severely weaken Malvir, forcing him to "hibernate" and gather strength and also forces him to find the new physical manifestations of all primordial forces again. (After the ritual is either completed or stopped, all the items that are left will become nothing more than a set of expensive antiques.)
- Malvir: "I'll be back!" but a bit more eloquent. "It may take me one century, or several millenia, but I will gather my strength and come back from the Netherworld."