

# The Tale

*"Under the earth, in the deep. Older than any kingdom, older than any word. A voice in the dark, a shadow in the soul. Beyond the Night Sea, where gods are silent. The serpent coils, the dragon hides. Sleeping, dreaming..."*

## Description

The tale is older than the wisest elder, older than the greatest empire, older than the written word. It is a story told to countless minds who dared to listen. It is the tale of a giant serpent, some say a dragon, in the mountains far away. Treasure, power and glory await those who can outdo the monster. The tale is shared in many forms but only few who hear from it will someday follow the call to find out if there is any truth to it. The truth about the serpent is that it only exists in the collective unconscious. The limbic serpent can only be found in dreams and those who fail in the pursuit will dream again until they find what they where looking for or death ends all desire. You cannot take from the hoard. Take from it what you want and it will only add to your sorrows. Leave what burdens you and the serpent will take it back to its collection.

## Instructions

Read all events and decide which ones you want to integrate. Throw the bones of the tale to the players, either the same or according to their backgrounds. Then ask the questions to the players as you see fit but don't ask all questions to everyone. The fact that every character is experiencing their own version of the tale should be gradually introduced, built with inconsistent descriptions between characters. The fact that the dream is not bound to time should be introduced through people known to the characters (or themselves) who appear much younger or older. The fact that the characters are in a recurring and continuous dream could be introduced to the death of a character who will be the only noticing it and will forget it as soon as they wake up. The characters will continue their lives until another development or incident in life leads them back into the dream, changed but continuing where they left off.

## Questions

What was the event at where you first heard the tale? Who was the hero in the story? What was the simple morale? How did the hero best the serpent? What was their reward? Who was there with you to hear the story? What made you think it might be true? What do you wish the serpent's hoard would hold? What unjust, cruel or horrible development or incident brought you to the point of setting out to seek good fortune?

## Events

### The Brave

- Characters are introduced with a daily struggle
- The community prepares for an important event
- Some sheep are missing
- A kid sleepwalked into the night

### The Tale

- A travelling bard arrives and tells the tale of the giant serpent who dwells in the distant mountains with a hoard of riches. Once, a hero tried to fight it and could steal a powerful weapon from the hoard with their third attempt. The hero became immensely powerful and even dared to test the mighty weapon with its former owner which did not end well. The mountains are unusually cold and foggy which means that the serpent sleeps and the hoard is rather unprotected
- The elders confirm that others from the community had encountered the dragon
- There seem to be similar stories in every culture
- A pact is made

### The Journey

- A meeting in the fog but you are late and the others are gone
- Chased by those who killed the sheep (leaves ever-warming sheep skin)
- A waning moon, two moons, jaws of stars (leave teeth necklace to free oneself from blinking and sleeping)
- A sleepwalking kid is leading the way

### The Mountain

- You cannot reach it
- Mothmen are watching you (leave never-dwindling torches)
- A lusty ice elemental wants a character to stay (leaves never-melting heart of ice)
- The mountain opens and there are holes meant for each character

### The Serpent

- The mountain is deep, the serpent half-awake from the intruders, rustling like mice
- 1. Question: Am I still dreaming?
- 2. Question: Have you disturbed me before?
- 3. Question: Why would I give you what you seek?
- 4. Question: Have you decided to return what is mine?
- Tunnels with soot and bones, eventually a breath of old fire

### The Hoard

- Everything that is taken will cause only more anger, fear, lust or jealousy
- Things left from encounters in the dream can be given to leave and walk away from associated issues
- Things at the body when falling asleep with related significant can be left and associated issues thereby resolved when the characters wakes

### The Price

- Walking away from things hold dear will cause conflict in the short run
- All material treasures disappears but leads to immense motivation to pursue ill-fated goals
- The sleepwalker died from drowning in a river

