

Dragon Hunting

By Seth Ben-Ezra

for use with Key 20 Publishing's *Little Fears*

Dragons. They're everywhere. Big ones. Small ones. Mosquito-sized ones that buzz around your head and crawl up your nose. Red ones. Green ones. Blue ones. The varieties are endless. However, all dragons have two things in common.

Only children can see them.

And they love getting children in trouble.

And now, a plague of dragons has infested your home, breaking things and making a mess, and you are getting all the blame.

So grab your magic swords and your dragon-killing gear.

It's time to hunt dragons.

Dragon Hunting is an introductory scenario for *Little Fears*. In particular, it is an attempt to show how *Little Fears* can be run without any of the heavy issues that are normally associated with the game. *Dragon Hunting* is perfect for convincing new players to try out the game or as a break from a more serious campaign. Besides, it is based on the imagination of an actual three-year old. If Arianna can have hours of fun chasing dragons, then so should you.

The Setup

A rash of unexplained accidents has struck one of the character's homes. Nothing life-threatening, to be sure. Rather, they are annoying incidents. Perhaps a parent's car keys vanish. A special plate gets broken. A toilet is clogged with toilet paper and overflows. Someone scribbles on the wall using permanent magic markers. Someone sets fire to the cat's tail. Whatever the specifics are, the parents in these homes are getting fed up, and they assume that one of their children is responsible.

Begin play by choosing one character to be the victim of these incidents. Obviously he gets in trouble with his parents. However, in the middle of receiving his punishment, the child should see a dragon about the size of a salamander fly through the room, laughing maniacally. Of course the parents do not see the dragon, and attempts by the child to point it out only result in disbelieving looks and perhaps more punishment for making up stories.

The child will continue to get in trouble for petty disturbances and see dragons buzzing around his house until he decides to do something about it. Of course, he will probably want his friends involved, too....

At this point, the GM should improvise encounters with the dragons. Essentially, the PCs should be able to try to foil further pranks by the dragons. There is also the possibility that the dragons may counter-attack, launching some sort of assault against the PCs, particularly as they become successful in stopping the dragons. Like the pranks, this attack should not be life threatening but should cause fear or embarrassment to the PCs and ideally get them in more trouble with their parents or other authority figures.

Here are some possible encounters:

The PCs try to patrol the infested house for dragons. This could lead to parental intervention as they wonder why their child and his friends are all dressed in armor and marching in lockstep around the house.

The PCs set booby traps to catch a dragon. Of course, they had better not catch a parent or an older sibling!

A dragon follows a PC to school and gets him in trouble with a teacher or, even worse, a bully.

Dragons wait for a PC to go to bed and then make spooky noises and tie up the child in his blanket.

While dragons can be beaten about by physical objects, like a flyswatter or baseball bat, only Belief Magic or an appropriate

Hand-Me-Down can really hurt one. In addition, any Hand or Feet Quizzes that a PC rolls involving a dragon has an automatic negative die (as if the PC had a Negative Quality) because dragons are very quick and nimble.

Into the Dragon Lair

At some point, the PCs will figure out that they must stop the dragon invasion at its source. Of course, this requires that the PCs find the source of the invasion. They will have to get this information from the dragons themselves. Probably the easiest way to do this is to follow a dragon to see where it goes, although clever PCs may figure out a way to interrogate a captured dragon or tag a dragon to make following it easier. Whatever method is used, the PCs discover a small cavern in the basement of the infested house. (Alternately, you can place the cavern in a wooded area near the house if such a place exists.) This is the entrance to the dragon lair.

Upon entering, the PCs find themselves in a long, dark tunnel. Slime oozes down the wall and drips unpleasantly from the ceiling. The slime is somewhat phosphorescent, giving some light, but the children will soon be in the dark unless they bring some sort of light source. With a successful Smarts Quiz, the children can hear heavy breathing coming from down the tunnel.

As they proceed, they will eventually find that their tunnel joins a larger one. As they continue down this larger tunnel, they will find that many other tunnels join this main tunnel. If they explore these side tunnels, they will find cavern entrances in other parts of the world. Apparently the dragons that live here harass children across the world. In fact, the entire dragon lair is in Closetland.

Occasionally a dragon will fly by on some errand of mischief. Most are so hell-bent on their task that they will not notice the children unless they make absolutely no attempt to hide.

The breathing sound is growing louder and comes from further down the main tunnel.

Georgie

As they continue down the long tunnel, the PCs stumble onto a child, slumped disconsolately against the tunnel wall. An old sword lies on the floor next to him. When he notices them, he leaps to his feet, demanding to know their names.

The child's name is Georgie, and he is a ghost. He has been dead quite a long time and speaks like a medieval knight, complete with "thees", "thous", and "hasts". At first he thinks that the children are demons or dragons in disguise and wants to run away, but if they can calm him, he will talk with them and tell them his story. Long ago he entered these tunnels, trying to defeat the dragons. However, he became lost and ended up starving to death. Now he is doomed to wander, restless, until the dragons are finally defeated. He is more than willing to go with the PCs to help them, and he will give his sword to whichever PC he thinks is the bravest. If one of the PCs is dressed like a knight, then Georgie will give the sword to him. Otherwise, make a judgment call or give it to whoever has been acting like the leader of the group.

The sword is a Hand-Me-Down. Whenever it is in the presence of evil (i.e. Closetland or monsters), it glows bright red. Also, it can hurt monsters that cannot be hurt by normal weapons. However, it is so heavy that the PC must make a Muscle Quiz each time he wants to attack with it to see if he successfully lifts it. This is in addition to the Hands Quiz or Test that he must roll to see if he hits. Georgie's Sword does 5 points of damage when it hits. If ever the wielder of Georgie's Sword proves to be cowardly or evil, the Sword will leap from his hands and will not let itself be picked up by its former wielder again. "Cowardly" is defined as losing a Fear Check. "Evil" is left to the GM's discretion although actions that warrant a loss of Innocence would definitely qualify.

The Dragon Queen

As the children proceed, they find that the dragons are becoming more frequent. Soon, the occasional hum of a dragon passing overhead becomes a buzz and then a roar as more and more dragons stream overhead. Finally, the children enter a large cavern. It is teeming with dragons. They cover the walls, floor, and ceiling. Their wings are constantly in motion, creating a roaring buzzing that is almost painfully loud. In the center of the cavern, on a raised platform of stone, is a huge dragon about 15 feet long. This is the Dragon Queen. In order to stop the dragon infestation, the children must defeat her. The Dragon Queen is curled around a glowing quartz-like gem about as large as a grown man. This gem stores all the hurt, pain, and frustration generated by the children that are harassed and bullied by her dragons.

The Dragon Queen is unimpressed by the threat that the children pose to her reign. She will act haughtily towards the children, passing them off as insignificant creatures unworthy of her notice. So long as the children take no aggressive action, she will let them wander around the cavern untouched. If the children try to talk to her, she will answer in an

impatient tone, as if they are interrupting her from doing something more important. However, if the children try to approach her or attack her in any way or if she notices someone carrying Georgie's Sword, she will rear up and roar. Instantly all the dragons in the cavern will begin to swarm around her, attacking the children. Each child will take 1 point of damage for each minute spent in the cavern once the dragons are awakened. Additionally, the Dragon Queen will begin to attack the children. Whoever she attacks must make a Feet Quiz or take damage equal to the amount by which the Quiz was failed (e.g. a character with Feet of 2 rolls a 4, taking 2 damage). The Queen isn't really concerned with killing the children; she will be content with driving them from her cavern.

The Dragon Queen can be defeated by either of the following methods:

Weapons powered by Belief Magic will hurt the Queen, as will Georgie's Sword. Treat the Queen as if she can take 10 points of damage. A successful hit from Georgie's Sword does 5 damage, while Belief Magic does one or two points of damage, depending on the specifics of the magic and how well the player rolls for his Belief Magic. If the Queen is killed, the dragons will scatter.

Shattering the gem will release all the pent-up energy in it, causing an explosion. A single hit with Georgie's Sword or two successful Belief Magic rolls will shatter the gem. The resulting explosion will destroy both the Queen and the dragons. Children need to roll Feet Quizzes or take 5 points of damage. If the child shattering the gem needed to stand next to it, he automatically takes the damage with no roll allowed.

If Georgie joined the PCs, he can assist them by summoning an image of his father. This is just like a Belief Magic roll and succeeds on a 1 or 2. If successful, a blazing white knight on a white warhorse gallops into the cavern. This will temporarily stop the dragons from their assault and will distract the Dragon Queen, who will try to attack the white knight. If the knight attacks the Queen, he does 1 point of damage to her on a roll of 1 or 2. The knight only remains for a minute or two and then vanishes.

Once the Dragon Queen is defeated, the tunnels begin to crumble. The children will have to hurry to escape safely. An especially nefarious GM may require Smarts rolls to determine if the children remember the right cavern exit to use. Otherwise the children may wind up very far from home. As the children dive out of it the cavern mouth is sealed by falling rubble and then vanishes. The dragons never bother the children again.

A Final Word

As written, this adventure could easily be fatal to one or more children. However, if your group feels squeamish about dead children, just allow any children that "die" to wake up in their beds at the end of the adventure, all in one piece. They will never be sure if their wild adventure was real, or only a dream.