

Jack Brown has returned to college after flunking two decades earlier. Now he has a plan, the will, and the magic to succeed.

This adventure is designed for Freshman level characters, though it is easily modified for more experienced study groups.

BACKGROUND

Jack Brown is a man suffering from a mid-life crisis. He worked in middle management for Borden Chemicals for eighteen years but never advanced due to lack of a college degree. His wife of seventeen years recently left him and took their two kids with her to live in California. Jack quit his job, sold everything he had, and returned to East Texas University to win the college degree he failed to achieve two decades earlier.

During his first attempt at college Jack partied, played, overslept, and generally did everything that would lead to failure. It was really no surprise that by his third year he was still a freshman on academic probation. He dropped out, worked several odd jobs before hiring on with Borden Chemicals, and married Layla. Their marriage was always rocky as she wanted better than he was able to provide. Now, however, he has a second chance to start over. He is determined to be successful in college this time. He is older, wiser, smarter, and has sought the services of Maria Estella Ramirez, a bruja, who lives just north of the Burn in the Big Thicket.

Ramirez agreed to help him, taking most of his money and a claim on his soul. In return, she provided a witch's bag (*la bolsa de la bruja*) that she promised would make him not only smarter, but stronger, faster, etc. As they parted, she warned he must keep the bag on him at all times and to never open it or look at the contents, as this would "let the magic out."

So Jack returned to ETU as a freshman student to major in Petroleum Engineering and live in room 313 of the George Danford Dormitory. His roommate, Justin Turek, is a nineteen year old Education major from Houston. They have nothing in common and do not get along well.

By the fourth week of school, Jack is doing great, making straight A's in every class without even studying. However,

everyone else on the third floor of the Danford Dormitory is flunking. Most don't even have the energy to go to class.

EFFECTS OF LA BOLSA DE LA BRUJA

The witch's bag contains powerful *gris-gris* including dust from a demon's bones and drops of Jack's blood, and was created using a black magic ritual. Its mojo is very powerful and takes a few weeks to fully develop. The bag siphons Agility, Smarts, Spirit, Strength, and Vigor from those in fairly close proximity for extended periods. The victim's attributes decrease while Jack's become super human. In game terms, he has a d12 in every attribute and even gains specialized Knowledge skills from other student's skills and Common Knowledge.

After a week of exposure, victims make a Spirit roll. If failed, they lose one die in each attribute. They must make a roll every week thereafter at a cumulative -1 per week to a maximum of -3. Once all die types fall to d4 there are no further effects. Victims of the spell are perpetually tired and suffer from migraines and other body aches.

Nine rooms and 18 students are close enough to become victims of this vile talisman.

The black magic also produces other side effects. The powerful *gris-gris* has attracted several spirits to the third floor of the Danford Dorm and High Strangeness occurs daily (see ETU's **High Strangeness Tables**). Finally, Jack is also succumbing to the corrupting influence of the black magic he

wears close to his chest. This corruption grows hidden inside him, but it will eventually manifest through physical changes when he is backed into a corner.

THE INVESTIGATION

The study group may get involved if one of their members is a student in the Danford Dormitory and is a victim of the foul *la bolsa de la bruja*, or they could be friends with Justin Turek and noticed the change in him the past few weeks.

If all else fails, word of the third floor haunting has reached Professor Maclanahan. The professor asks the students to





perform a ghost hunt and lends them the equipment to do so. While on their investigation, allow the students to experience a High Strangeness event and perhaps even encounter a poltergeist or ghost (see *Creatures in East Texas University*). Although supernatural activity can occur anywhere on the third floor, spirits are more likely to appear closer to Jack's room.

As part of the investigation Professor Maclanahan also asks the students to interview the third floor residents for eyewitness accounts of supernatural encounters. The sleuths find the residents chronically lethargic, easily confused, and drained of all their vitality.

Jack, on the other hand, is the picture of perfect health. He begins friendly to the investigators, but quickly turns cold if he believes they suspect his involvement. Further, if he feels threatened he uses his reputation as a responsible adult to discredit the sleuths or make life difficult for them—anything to keep them from learning the truth.

Yet despite his newfound brilliance, Jack has not shed all his old mannerisms. He absentmindedly toys with the small pouch he wears around his neck, especially when he feels confronted. Any attempt to take the bag triggers Jack's corruption, changing him in an unnatural killer like a modern-day Mr. Hyde.

The only way to break the spell afflicting the dorm is by dumping out the bag's contents. This releases the *gris-gris*, nearly instantly restoring everyone's health and simultaneously draining all of Jack's attributes to d4. It's up to the Dean to decide whether or not Jack fights to the death.



JACK BROWN

Jack is in his late thirties, wears glasses, and has long hair and a beard. He generally wears a t-shirt and jeans along with Crocs™ or tennis shoes. He has few friends in the dorm since he has very little in common with the college kids of today. He prefers Stone Temple Pilots and early '90s grunge music to modern rap and pop.

Jack is an intelligent, perceptive enemy. He won't fall for obvious tricks and his exposure to black magic has suppressed what was left of his conscience. He'll do whatever it takes to keep "the new me."

If attacked Jack's corrupted—nearly demonic—side takes over. His eyes become pure black and he gains the Edges listed below as well as Razor Nails that do Strength +d4 damage. The easiest way to defeat him is to find the bag and open it. He wears it on a leather string around his neck. It takes a Called Shot at -6 to target the bag.

Attributes: Agility d12, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12, Vigor d12

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d8, Gambling d8, Healing d8, Intimidation d10, Investigation d10, Knowledge (varies) d8, Notice d10, Persuasion d10, Repair d10, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Streetwise d8, Swimming d8, Taunt, d10, Throwing d8

Charisma: —; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Edges: Berserk, Quick, Combat Reflexes

