

Who Mourns the Lost?

A Nocturnum Episode by Jason Vey

QUICK SYNOPSIS

John meets his daughter, who is a chip off the old block, becomes convinced that William is, in fact, Nectanebus reborn, and joins the Resistance. He has important information: Nectanebus is planning to excavate the hospital where Cyan's body was buried. He doesn't know why, but thinks the Cast has to get to her first.

Meanwhile, John has been hearing a familiar voice calling to him from his dreams, telling him that things are wrong, that this whole future is wrong and that he can't return to his time until the breach is repaired. Drake has similar dreams, but his show him his deceased wife Katherine crying out in pain as Nectanebus tortures her soul. Anita hears the cries of Sandra, and Daniel suffers the pain of Jamie. After the Cast finds Cyan's body, John sees her ghost, and it comes to light that Nectanebus is feeding on the souls of the dead, and those close to the Cast are calling out to them. The only way to save them is to recover the Soul Orb, a glowing sphere that Amara learns is kept in Nectanebus' personal quarters...

CUT SCENE

"They took him!" William screamed, throwing his hand forth. A bolt of black energy blew Kristina back against the wall, hard. Her anger flashed in her eyes as milky white film oozed over her cornea and her skin became pink, mottled, and wrinkled. She stood, her full demonic visage revealed, and flexed her claws.

"What do you expect me to do about it?" she hissed. "You forbade us feasting upon his soul the moment he arrived. Their necromancer is more powerful than me, and no one could've foreseen the vampyre. What kind of creature even *has* that ability?"

"There are three, apparently," William murmured. "The other two, according to my studies, are Dracula and a creature named Drusilla, who is quite insane, and possibly long dead. I expect neither will be of much use to us, trapped as we are in this city."

"And what about that?" Thomas asked, slipping his arm casually around Carix's waist. "If we could get out of this town, that would give us a distinct advantage. And you did promise..."

"Silence. I know what I promised. I'm getting close. I need more time. In the thousands of years I have existed, I've never encountered a spell like this, which traps us here. It comes from a power greater than me. But that doesn't mean I won't find a way through."

"A power greater than you?" Carix smirked. "I thought there were none greater than you, *my lord*." That last, she spat with a sarcastic vitriol.

The bitter taunt was not lost on Nectanebus, who stretched his hand forth and cupped it. Carix gasped, and floated from the floor, grasping at her throat. "Do *not* mock me, little one," he said. He held her aloft for another moment, then casually hurled her aside like a rag doll, where she smashed against the wall and huddled on the ground, whimpering. Then he turned to Thomas. "Do you have anything to say?"

"Nope," Thomas said. "So long as I get a chance to gut Alexander Tudor, I'm happy. What he did to me outweighs everything else."

"So it does," William said, then turned back to Carix. "You, my dear, are lucky that I like you. It means you get to live. But don't question me again. Yes, there are beings more powerful than me. I'm not a god." He turned back to the window and gazed out over the devastated city. "Not yet, anyway."

ACT ONE: INTRODUCTION

RUNDOWN

John and Drake have a tussle, John learns the truth and meets his (very much alive) daughter.

ACTION

John very likely is going to attack Drake on sight. Resolve the combat as normal (no pulling punches; if Drake dies, so be it. Likewise, if John dies, resurrection is a possibility—Anita has the power to save a life, here, with Klaus adding his two cents' in.

If the battle lasts several rounds, the sounds of the fight will get through the walls, where the rest of the Cast is waiting outside. Whether or not Katherine knows about John is up to the Cast, but her entry should end the scuffle. Allow John to react to the news that his daughter is alive, and that his son lied to him. Hopefully that will enable him to calm down enough to hear the other side of the story.

Amara has been "punished" for becoming directly involved with the fracas; it seems that using her powers to gain information and for self-defense is fine by the Powers that Be, but actually using them to directly assist the Cast in kidnapping John was bad mojo; she's been stripped of the ability to shape shift and now has to rely on her skills at mundane disguise to get in and out of Nectanebus' camp.

Let the Cast share information as necessary, and allow John to become acquainted with the changes to his friends, and adjust to their natural reactions to his having been missing for 20 years. Make sure Matthew gets introduced during this time.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If anyone dies during the initial fracas, Anita and Klaus (or Father Bob) have the ability to resurrect them, so long as they act quickly.

ACT TWO: COMPLICATION

RUNDOWN

Dreams. Bad, nasty, evil dreams. A visit from an archangel. Recovering a body.

ACTION

That night as the Cast sleep, they all have troubling dreams, seeing former loved ones in horrible pain. All, that is, except Matthew. For everyone except Drake, John and Matthew, the dream is the same: loved ones in torture. John and Matthew get the definite sense that there is a breach in time that has to be repaired, and can only be repaired by stepping outside of time; Matthew is told to stick with the group. John gets the sense that he has to recover Cyan's body and spirit to gain the truth of what he needs. Cyan is trying to speak to him, but something is holding her back, and he keeps hearing her begging him to recover her body.

Drake, it is made known that Nectanebus has a dark plan that will merge John, Cyan, and Nectanebus into a single gestalt being which will then Ascend to true demonhood, defeat Leviathan, and return the Old Ones to the world. He also knows that Nectanebus is feeding upon the souls of the departed, which he keeps trapped in the Orb of Thessulah. If the Cast could find and destroy the Orb, the trapped souls would be freed, and Nectanebus' power would be reduced greatly.

The next day, everyone compares notes. The general consensus should be that there's a way to set all this right, but it's not as simple as taking the Orb back to 2006. Amara already has an "in" with Nectanebus' organization, as an old Gypsy Seer. She's willing to try and locate the Orb while the Cast goes for Cyan's body.

This is mostly going to be a "wing it" dungeon crawl through the hospital. Make rolls for random demon encounters; use judgment for the most part, but on any given roll a result of 1-3 indicates a demon encounter. There should be d10(5) demons per encounter. Some might be winged deadites or standard deadites as well. For standard Deadites, add Nanjin Adept Quality (they've adapted to subterranean life). Also allow the Cast to scavenge for supplies if they think of it (and whoever does think of it nets 2 Drama Points).

The choices here are obvious: make it a fight every damned step of the way so they have to *earn* Cyan's body, or make it ridiculously easy, so they are convinced it's a trap. When the Cast finds Cyan's body, they should be astonished to find it immaculately preserved, not aged or decayed a single day. Also, there is an aura of protection about her room, which the demons will not enter.

The trick now is to get the body out and back to their base, then find and destroy the orb.

TROUBLESHOOTING

John might insist on taking on Nectanebus by himself, or on trying to infiltrate his way back into the organization. If so, run with it. He's got to have figured out by now that he can't take the kid alone. If he dies, so be it. There are ways he can be brought back. Amara will be there to watch his back, and she will interfere if she must, but only if she must.

ACT THREE: CLIMAX

RUNDOWN

Time has been broken. The alternate timeline must be destroyed. Step one is to release the souls in the Soul Orb. To do that, they must raid Nectanebus' lair.

ACTION

By the time the Cast returns to base with Cyan's body, Amara will be back with information about the Orb, which is being kept somewhere on the top floor of Bruce Hall. An Intelligence + Knowledge roll reveals old stories about Bruce Hall being haunted. If it's true, things will be all the worse for Anita, who might be overcome by the spirits therein. On the other hand, if she can control just a few of them...

Dungeon crawl 2 follows here, as the Cast makes their way up through Bruce Hall fighting cultists, deadites, ghosts, demons, etc. to get to the Orb. Anita will be startled to note the utter lack of ghosts here, though she'll feel a **STRONG** spiritual presence (this is because Nectanebus has trapped every last one of them in the Soul Orb). Nectanebus himself may be present, but the Cast have three aces in the hole: He's not willing to kill John, because he needs him. He's not able (at least, not yet) to hurt Matthew. He has a hard time with the idea of killing Katherine; despite being Nectanebus reborn, he still feels a touch of kinship for his sister. Still, don't pull punches. Nectanebus is evil, cruel, vindictive and above all, powerful. Any one of the Cast can die here; don't worry about it if they do. They will be back once the time hopping starts.

TROUBLESHOOTING

It's possible for the Cast to deliver a killing blow to Nectanebus here. If that happens, spend a Plot Twist Drama Point for Nectanebus to fall, bloodied and dying, *into a shadow, where he vanishes*.

ACT FOUR: RESOLUTION

RUNDOWN

The spirits in the Orb provide cover for the Cast to escape, and their passed allies give them cryptic information about the breach in time and the Keys of Destiny.

ACTION

The Cast gets home with the Orb, or destroys it at Bruce Hall. Immediately upon destroying the Orb, the spirits are set free, and Cyan's spirit (visible only to John, Anita, and Katherine) hovers over her body for a moment, touches it, and the body crumbles to dust. She looks to Anita and her family and speaks (though Katherine can't hear her, and to Katherine's eyes, Cyan's spirit becomes more and more faint by the second), saying, "That's one thing set right. It took you long enough. Now to fix the breach in time."

She'll go on to explain that the breach in time created an alternate timeline that, unless repaired, can cross over with the real timeline (ours) and destroy the walls between worlds, erasing creation as we know it and returning the world to the dark age of the Old Ones. How exactly this can be fixed she doesn't know, but in conferring with the other spirits trapped within the Orb (while they weren't being tortured) she discovered that the rare books library at CMU survived largely intact. Between that, and the remains of Anita's library, some research might yield information that could help. She suggests they search for "keys," as that's the one term that kept coming up in her discussions with the other ghosts. Then she kisses John and Katherine good bye (John feels only a slight warmth where she touches; Katherine is no longer able to see or feel her at all) and fades from view.

TROUBLESHOOTING

Nothing to troubleshoot, here.