

Art for Art's Sake

**A One Round Call of Cthulhu Adventure using
Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu game rules**

by Robert Hobart

The cutting-edge California artist Michael Tey has invited you to a party at his Los Angeles mansion. A shame that violent thunderstorm is dampening the festive atmosphere. A cinematic-style adventure. Characters provided.

CALL OF CTHULHU is a registered trademark of Chaosium, Inc. RPGA is a registered trademark of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Scenario detail copyright 2002 by Robert Hobart. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Pass out the player characters based on class, gender, and/or race. Instruct the players either to prepare their characters now, or wait until you read the introduction, depending on the requirements of the scenario as described below. When they have prepared their characters, you may continue with the game.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other

text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in *bold italics*. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

Adventure Background

This scenario takes place in southern California in 1969, during the height of both political unrest and the modern "pop art" movement. The investigators are a group of artists and writers, many of them politically active, invited to a cocktail party held at the coastal mansion of Michael Tey. Tey is a hugely successful cutting-edge artist who has been lighting up the California artistic scene with his bizarre, avant-garde creations.

What the PCs do not know, and cannot know, is that Tey is actually completely insane and plans to use them all (along with the other guests) as victims in a terrible ritual. Tey was driven mad many years ago, while still a teenager, by a reading of the Revelations of Glaaki, and has since degenerated into a mad worshipper of Azathoth, the Daemon Sultan who writhes endlessly at the center of the universe. Tey longs to recreate that first youthful moment of transcendent madness, the glare of primal horror blasting away the comforting shroud of sanity, the merging of the weak and paltry Self into the powerful and terrible Other. This obsession has powered his unconventional art and driven him to prepare, at last, this grand supernatural ritual. His broken, fragmented mind, tainted with the essence of Azathoth, believes that this will be the "ultimate artwork," which will enshrine him for all time as the world's greatest artist. Indeed, even before his insanity, Tey viewed art as something that transcended all moral values and, indeed, life itself – art as the only true eternal value.

Michael Tey has arranged the party at his mansion to be one gigantic eldritch ritual, in which the guests will participate without even realizing it. The ritual will break down the walls of reality, allowing entities from Azathoth's court into our universe, and will ultimately culminate in the invocation of the Outer God itself. The key to the ritual is the latent psychic power found in the souls of three of the guests: two PCs, Tabitha Conrad and Linda Waite, and an NPC, Agatha Symcox. The sacrifice of their bodies and devouring of their psyches will trigger each step of the ritual, leading to the manifestation of Azathoth himself in the physical world. The PCs will have to figure out what is happening before this irrevocable step is reached.

It is intended that this adventure evoke the spirit of horror films like "House on Haunted Hill" and "The Haunting" in which the characters are trapped in some

malign place and nothing they do seems to work. The scenario deliberately drops lots of movie-style “hints” early on that something untoward is happening, but the story rolls on regardless, and the characters will have to struggle very hard to take control of their own fates.

CREDIT where it is DUE: This scenario was inspired by a variety of sources, including movies, books, and a Call of Cthulhu session run by a personal friend, Parvez Yusufji. All borrowed elements are intended as homages, not thefts.

KEEPER’S INTRODUCTION: EVOKING the SPIRIT of the EVENING

This adventure is laid out in three sections: an introduction to the people at the Tey Mansion, a description of the Tey Mansion itself, and a sequence of events that occurs once the PCs arrive for the evening’s entertainment. The Keeper should read all sections thoroughly before trying to run the scenario.

Tone and feel are important for this adventure. Once the PCs arrive at the Tey mansion, they will be part of the elaborate “play” which Tey has created to invoke the awful powers of the Outside. The growing power of this ritual will tend to bend reality to force the characters to follow their “script.” The Keeper should reflect this in play by continually throwing obstacles in the paths of PCs who try to deviate from their assigned roles as helpless victims. Things will continually go wrong for the PCs – typically in frustrating or spectacular ways, like in a horror movie.

For example, a PC who tries to unlock a door will break off the key (or lockpick) in the lock. Then, if the PC tries to kick or break the door down, the blows shake a light fixture loose from the ceiling, which falls with a loud crash, perhaps hurting one or more PCs with shattering glass or flying parts. Only if the PC is extremely persistent, or escalates the level of action severely (by improvising a battering ram, for example) will the door finally, suddenly, give way (perhaps causing the PCs to fly through violently and trip/collide with each other).

It is important to remember that it is NOT IMPOSSIBLE for the PCs to break out of their roles – only extremely difficult.

Players’ Introduction

(Before starting play, hand out **HANDOUT #1**, “**What You Know About Michael Tey**,” to the players. Make sure they have read it before launching the scenario.)

Rain spatters the windshields of your cars as you drive up the curving seaside road north of Los Angeles. Ahead, emerging from behind the shoulder of a lightly-wooded hill, you can see the huge, unconventional mansion of Michael Tey. The controversial, award-winning artist has invited each of you to attend a party at his home, and you’re sure your own careers will get a boost from this.

Tey’s mansion is impressively surreal, a tangled agglomeration of triangles, circles, and cylinders. You’ve heard that when he built it four years ago, it cost him more than three million dollars to construct, a staggering amount even for a successful artist like him. As you pull your car up to the off-center door, a valet steps forward and takes your keys with a smile, quickly parking your car next to the dozen or so already crammed into the narrow cliff-side lawn. A flash of lightning from the clouds overhead briefly illuminates the choppy Pacific waters beyond the lawn, and you can see that only a low wooden guard-rail shields strollers from a sheer cliff-drop to the choppy waters below. This wouldn’t be a good place to experience a major earthquake.

As the drops of rain grow from a scattering to a downpour, you hurry inside, to the welcome light, warmth, and noise of the gathering party.

There are two men, valets, waiting on the front porch of the mansion to park the cars of visitors. Since the mansion’s garage is insufficient to house all these visitors, the cars are parked on the lawn, churning the grass with their tires. Besides the PCs’ own vehicles, there are fifteen other cars present.

The party is gathering in the main front room of the house (area #1 on the Map). Two silent servants, a Hispanic man and woman, circulate with drinks, and a long table boasts various hors d’ouvres and snacks. People talk loudly, circulating through the room to see and be seen. Michael Tey himself is nowhere to be seen.

THE OTHER GUESTS

Bryan Simmons

Simmons is a pudgy, self-important, pretentious man in his late forties, with tufts of graying hair sprouting from around a balding scalp. He is curator of the Los Angeles Museum of Fine Arts and never tires of reminding people of it – his support can make or break an artist’s career. He is fond of making cutting remarks about the work of artists he dislikes, or who have personally offended him (he doesn’t care for Finnigin Posner, and resents the latter’s success). He is also a rather clumsy, maladroit womanizer, and will make awkward passes at all the women here, including

Tabitha and Linda. Bryan believes he is the one who “discovered” Michael Tey as an artist, and never tires of describing how he first found Tey’s work on display at a Chinatown festival in 1961.

Jacob Bernstein

Jacob is a writer and political activist, adhering to a strict and ferocious Marxism. He sometimes contributes to the magazine *Ramparts*, and is a casual acquaintance to James Spraddock and Jackson Lee. He regards himself as a “cultural critic-at-large” and often writes scathing attacks on the “imperialism” and “racism” of American culture. He admires Michael Tey’s early artwork but claims to despise his current output as a “sellout to the capitalist system.” At some point during the evening he will launch a scathing attack on a children’s author, “Jason Davis” (Jackson Lee’s nom-de-plume) for creating works which are obviously “racist” (because of the distinct Arabian Nights flavor) and “tranquelize working-class children, like religion does their parents.”

Will Mosby

Mosby is a vague, slightly lost-looking young man who dresses in a suit that seems a size too large for him. Mosby is a sculptor, specializing in abstract shapes and disconnected human limbs, all rendered in smooth white plaster. He always carries a small plaster hand in his pocket, the fingers sticking out as though waving to passersby. Mosby is insane – he went mad during a previous visit to Tey’s mansion. He feels disconnected from reality, and sometimes experiences violent and frightening hallucinations (particularly when speaking with someone for the first time), although he does his best to conceal this and put up a normal front (he is deathly afraid of being institutionalized, a fate which befell his father).

Mosby knows that Tey is also a madman, and that he has vile designs on everyone around him, but feels powerless to do anything about it. He comes across as nervous to the point of fearfulness, vaguely depressed, easily distracted, and more than a little “spaced out.” He avoids Tey (to the point of hiding from him). A Psychology roll can convince him to open up to at least some degree, to the point where he will make strange remarks like, “Tey hates me, but then, he hates all of us,” or (after Event #3), “Don’t bother with the phones, they’re busy.” After Burns’ rampage (Event #5), Will hides in the basement (Event #6), where inquisitive PCs may be able to find him and gain valuable clues.

William Burns

Burns is a British (specifically Scottish) Shakespearean actor working in Hollywood. Lacking the talent of more

famous British “imports” like Olivier, his career has been an undistinguished one, and he is a bitter and angry man, given to drug addiction, alcoholism, and womanizing. Nevertheless, he manages to put on a shallow, brittle front of charm and wit, and is handsome in a rough-edged, raffish sort of way. (Anyone making a Psychology roll after speaking with him will be able to see through appearances to the rot within.) Like Simmons (who he hates, and will insult behind his back), Burns will make passes at any attractive females, although his approach is generally smoother.

Burns is distantly acquainted with Tey from some design work Tey did on a horror film (“The Thing Without a Shape”) two years ago. He thinks little of Tey, who he routinely insults as a “morbid Chinaman,” and regards this party as nothing more than a chance to get drunk and chase skirts. He will also be the first guest to fall victim to Tey’s house, going mad in rooms 8b and 8c and then running amok (Event #5).

Alexis Chen

Chen is a short, plain-featured, sharp-tongued Chinese-American woman who is an art critic at the *Los Angeles Times*. She dresses conservatively and wears thick glasses that conceal the intelligence in her small dark eyes. Alexis despises Tey’s work as “shallow, pretentious, and morbid,” and believes she has been invited to this party to curry her favor. She will not hesitate to tell this to anyone, and speaks her mind on every topic. A prototype feminist, she regards men as slightly dim-witted creatures ruled by their desires, and has even more contempt (if that is possible) for women who play along with men (like Maryanne).

In truth, Alexis is less clear-headed than she might wish. She attended art school herself, and envies successful artists because she couldn’t be one herself. She is fond of making cutting remarks about others’ talents (or lack thereof), and at some point Bryan Simmons will remark that Alexis “never found an artist she didn’t hate.” Her favorite target here is not Tey but Finnigin Posner, who she considers an empty-headed poser.

Maryanne Howard

Maryanne is a vapid young would-be star who also worked on the film “The Thing Without a Shape,” where she distinguished herself by being so sickened by some of Michael Tey’s designs that she demanded they be removed from the set. Silly, shallow, and less than intelligent, Maryanne flits around the party talking up everyone and trying to make contacts for furthering her “career.” She knows nothing about Tey or his work (other than her brief film experience), but tries to sound “with it” and knowledgeable about everything. Her opinions on most subjects are “radical chic” (she’s

against capitalism, racism, Vietnam, and so forth) although she has no real understanding of any of these things, simply parroting what she has heard at other parties. (This will quickly earn the contempt of Jacob Bernstein.)

At some point, William Burns will make a pass at Maryanne. She is unreceptive – having suffered through William’s attentions on the set of “The Thing Without a Shape,” she has no time for him now – and the scene ends with her throwing her drink in his face. William attempts to laugh off the incident and retreats to a bathroom (he is not seen again until Scene #5).

Agatha Symcox

This thin, slightly bony woman has large soulful eyes and a perpetual expression of earnest concern. She dresses in jeans and tie-dyed shirts, wears her stringy brown hair in long braids, and wears a wooden pendant carved to resemble an oak leaf. She is a painter, producing delicate works of fantasy that serve primarily as illustrations to children’s books – the other guests clearly wonder why someone like her was invited.

Agatha is a spiritual medium, and has at least some inkling of her own abilities. She thinks of them in rather vague terms with heavy influences from India – in many ways, she is a prototype “New Ager.” She approaches the world with a wide-eyed innocence and naïveté, and likes to pepper her conversation with the newly popular term “grok” (a euphemism for “understand”). She has never met Michael Tey, and is pretty confused about why she was invited to the party (“maybe he needs a cleansing of his spiritual aura – this place feels really heavy”). If Finnigin Posner makes a Cthulhu Mythos roll after speaking with her, he will realize that something about her reminds him of “the bug” which once lived in his head.

Agatha is one of the three individuals here whose underlying gifts will serve as focus points for Michael Tey’s invocation of Azathoth. She will perish first of the three (Event #7), the trauma of her death unleashing the first breaks in the walls of reality.

Various Others

In addition to the specific individuals listed above, there are nineteen other guests at the party, fodder for Tey’s inhuman plans. The Keeper should feel free to improvise whatever artistic or Hollywood types seem appropriate to the scene. Politics are generally left to extreme left, and everyone agrees that Tey is a genius.

THE SERVANTS

The Valets

These two gentlemen, Jose and Tony, are both dressed in the sharp, red-and-black uniforms typical for valets. When not parking cars, they stand in the door, chatting with each other and occasionally sneaking a quick smoke. They have been hired for the night by a Los Angeles temp service, and know nothing about Tey or his mansion. Shortly after the storm breaks (Event #2), they will disappear. The PCs may be able to discover their corpses later.

The Waiters, Jorge and Candiza

This man and woman, both Hispanic, are dressed in rather plain formal garments (jackets and pants) and wear their dark hair short and slicked-back; it is often difficult to tell them apart, especially since they never speak. They have worked for Tey for several months, and NPCs who have visited Tey’s mansion before (like Alexis Chen) remember them and their peculiar mannerisms. These two poor souls are victims of Tey’s experiments with “flesh art;” their tongues have been cut from their bodies, leaving them mute, and their minds broken by participation in Tey’s foul rituals. They respond to questions or requests with silent nods, brief gestures, or an occasional grunt or “hm.” They are completely insane and will slavishly follow Tey’s plans. Their true nature will not become apparent until later in the evening (unless a PC makes a deliberate attempt to stalk them and learn the truth about their nature), but anyone speaking with them for more than a minute or two will notice the glassy, distant stare in their eyes, and a Psychology roll will suggest there is something desperately wrong with these people.

A GUIDE TO THE TEY MANSION

Tey’s mansion is the product of an insane mind; he built it five years ago, after his first successful exhibition brought him wealth and fame. He later sorcerously murdered the contractor who made it to keep certain aspects of it secret forever. Portions of it are non-Euclidean in nature, serving as links to other realities.

Superficially, the interior of the house is extremely “modern,” with smooth cream-colored walls and ceilings, abstract-shaped light fixtures, and severely simplified furniture. Paintings by avant-garde artists decorate the walls, while corner stands boast abstract and experimental sculptures.

The house is built into a near-cliff overlooking the Pacific, and the back of its near-flat roof is flush with

the slope. Below the house a sheer drop descends over a hundred feet to the churning waters. Above it, steep slopes covered in scrub brush climb away out of sight. The slope is so steep and rugged it will require halved Climb rolls to ascend it during this rain soaked night; at least five rolls will be needed to make it over the crest of the hill to safety. Failure means the PC slides painfully back down the slope, suffering 1d6 damage (a critical failure – 96-00 – means the PC suffers a broken limb).

Behind the back of the house, halfway up the slope, an entrance to the secret True Basement is concealed behind a brush-shrouded boulder. PCs will not find this unless they actively search the slope (requiring several halved Climb rolls) and then roll Spot Hidden. If the PCs come here after Event #3, they will find an obvious trail of footprints and tumbled rocks and brush leading down to the roof of the house (this is where the valet, Tony, attempted to escape). If they roll Spot Hidden, they will also find the burnt remains of a fuse (Tey came here to light the dynamite charge which blocked the drive).

The Drive/Access

The mansion's paved drive winds along the steep hillside for a half-mile, a rugged near-cliff rising on the inland side while an even steeper drop-off descends to the Ocean on the other. The drive leads to a state highway few miles north of Los Angeles.

After Tey sets off his dynamite charge (Event #2), a mud-slide will block the drive, leaving a huge pile of treacherous mud and rock to clamber across. Vehicles will not be able to pass this blockage, and PCs attempting to clamber over it must make a total of five Climb rolls. If any Climb roll is failed, the PC begins sliding and tumbling down the mud toward the edge of the seaside cliff, requiring a Luck to roll avoid a desperate plummet to certain death. (A merciful Keeper may choose to allow a final, desperate Jump roll to find purchase at the very edge of the cliff.) This is the classic horror movie situation, of course, and smart players will recognize it for what it is.

Area 1: Front Room

This is where the party is underway. As described in the introduction, this is a large, well-lit, high-ceilinged room with a staircase sweeping up one wall to a balcony at the second floor. A very expensive-looking chandelier hangs from the center of the ceiling. There is a large ornamental fireplace on one wall (no wood, and no sign the fireplace has ever been used), and a large color television in the corner under the stairs. Archways lead to the kitchen and a hallway to the rest of the first floor.

Besides the table of snacks and hors d'ouvres, the only furnishings here are display stands in the corners which boast small abstract sculptures.

Initially, this will be the only room where any NPCs can be found, and the majority of the guests will remain here throughout the evening (although the bolder and more curious will soon go exploring).

Area 2: Kitchen/Dining

A large and thoroughly modern (electrical, not gas) kitchen adjoins a dining area with a glass table and seating for four. A large counter in the kitchen boasts bottles, glasses, and buckets of ice for drinks. Another counter has supplies for making snacks, sandwiches, and so forth. The two servants shuttle in and out of this room constantly, renewing the guests' supplies in the main room.

After Event #2 (the Storm Breaks), PCs who happen to visit the kitchen will find the two valets here, sheltering from the rain and enjoying a snack. The servants will soon drug them and take them away to the True Basement for sacrifice.

Aside from the generous party supplies, there is actually very little food and drink kept in the kitchen, except for an astonishing number of cheap TV dinners in the freezer. Tey clearly doesn't much care what he eats on a day-to-day basis.

If PCs search the drink supplies, they can roll Medicine or Pharmacy to notice a bottle of powerful (prescription-strength) sleeping pills amidst the normal liquors and mixers.

Other useful items in this room include an assortment of kitchen knives (damage 1d3 or 1d4, depending on size), a chemical fire extinguisher, a drawer full of candles (with a box of matches), a pair of flashlights (with spare batteries), and a telephone.

Area 3: Art Studio

This room is normally kept locked, but can be seen clearly through the sliding glass doors which separate it from the corridor. The lock can be forced by overcoming its STR of 10, or a PC can simply break the glass.

Tey's studio is a large room with a vaulted ceiling and modern light fixtures. There are several desks, easels, and work tables scattered around the place, and you can see painting and sculpture supplies everywhere: tubes of oil paints, brushes, trowels, bags of plaster, plastic tubs which probably hold clay, blank canvasses, and so forth. Atop one desk are a large tape recorder and a rack of shelves which contains the bulky disks of old tapes. A tripod nearby holds an 8mm movie camera. You can also see the indistinct

shape of a half-completed sculpture atop a work-stand toward the back of the room.

Most of the items and supplies in this room are mundane, although PCs could conceivably find many uses for things like paint thinner or plaster. Besides the things listed above, the room also contains a telephone (with a very long cord, able to reach anywhere in the room), a small screen and projector for showing movies, and a large filing cabinet full of blank audio tapes and reels of blank 8mm film.

The drawer of one desk contains an oddity: a large collection of extremely sharp knives (over twenty of them, damage 1d4+3, if anyone chooses to use them in combat). The blades are apparently meant for meat-carving; what they are doing here is unknown. One knife is clearly missing, leaving a gap in the long row of gleaming steel.

The partially completed sculpture in the back of the room cannot be seen clearly unless the PCs enter the room or shine a flashlight into it. It is a half-completed rendering of Daoloth, the Render of Veils, a Mythos entity whose alien geometry is deadly to the normal world. (Another of Tey's projects for bringing his transcendent madness to the rest of the world.) Although the statue is not complete enough to be a direct menace, its alien geometry and strange, pseudo-abstract yet somehow threatening components are deeply disturbing to look upon for any length of time, costing 1d3 SAN for each round a PC gazes upon it.

If a PC looks through the completed tapes and movies in the storage racks, they can see that they are all dated, but not kept in any particular order. Tapes from two years ago sit next to film from last month.

Listening to any of the tapes reveals that they are dictations by Tey discussing various art projects and plans. Although there is nothing openly incriminating on any of the tapes, there is definitely something unsettling about them: Tey comes across as frequently disoriented, rambling incoherently or mumbling, and referring frequently to "the perfect goal, the perfect art," which he cannot seem to attain.

The films are records of Tey's sculptures, from beginning to completion, and are rather boring except for the unconventional nature of his work. However, one film (Luck roll to find it, if the PCs pick at random) shows the creation of the "Truth" sculpture in the display room. That film is described in HANDOUT #3. Any PC who watches it loses 0/1d4 SAN.

Area 4: Display Room

Tey uses this unsettlingly irregular room to display the many paintings and sculptures he has accumulated in the last five years, as well as a few of his own works. It is also a focus-point for his Mythos activities, for its

mildly non-Euclidean nature makes it a focal point for Mythos energies. When Tey's ritual begins, this place will become quite dangerous. See the Events listings.

You cannot see the far end of this oddly irregular room, and the light is limited to soft pools surrounding the various paintings and sculptures which are scattered throughout its length. The floor is dark tile, and echoes oddly through the room as you walk forward.

The subtly non-Euclidean geometry of this room is damaging to the human psyche, and any PC who spends more than a few minutes here begins to register a subconscious sense of profound unease. The PC cannot explain why they feel nervous – something just "isn't right," although the feeling fades shortly after the PC leaves the room.

The artwork here is mostly popular contemporary works from trendy artists such as Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollack. Tey's own works here are two paintings (mere abstract geometric constructions) and one special item: a bizarre, unnatural sculpture which might be described as a cross between a three-dimensional circuit diagram and components of a human corpse, all rendered in a mixture of clay, metal, plaster, and plastic. The sculpture, entitled simply "Truth," is a truly shocking work, its impact enhanced by the fact that it lurks in an odd nook of the room and is not visible until PCs are right on top of it – at which point it seems to leap into their sight. (Lose 0/1d4 SAN.) Tey has been unable to sell this work – it is too shocking – and keeps it here to ambush visitors.

If any PC dismantles or vandalizes the "Truth" statue, they will learn a terrible secret – the "clay sculptures" of human body parts are simply thin layers of clay smeared over ACTUAL body parts. This shocking discovery costs 1/1d6+1 SAN to anyone but Oscar Petrovsky (who merely loses 0/1). If the PCs watched Tey's home movie of making this statue (HANDOUT #3), they know what to expect and lose only 0/1d3 SAN.

This room contains one of three entrances to the Secret Basement (area #11), the other two being outside and in the normal basement. The non-Euclidean nature of the room's geometry, however, makes it very hard to spot the thin irregular lines of the concealed panel in one corner (near the "Truth" statue). Only a halved Spot Hidden roll will find the door, and then only if the PCs are actively searching for hidden doors or compartments.

Tey will use this door to deposit Agatha Symcox's corpse after her murder (see Event #7).

Area 5: Public Bathroom

This is a simple bathroom (no tub or shower) meant for the use of guests. There is nothing strange or alarming here, although after Event #8, the plumbing here may become a source of menace.

Area 6: Library

This room is L-shaped, and the far end of the L terminates in a glass-walled globe, a sort of observation dome, overlooking the ocean. A single low-light fixture hangs from the center of the globe, while the rest of the room is lit more generously, creating a dim recess that seems to draw you in. The room itself contains shelves along both walls, packed with books, while a large cylindrical aquarium gurgles quietly near the door. There are three overstuffed chairs in the room, each positioned near a light source.

Players/PCs who have seen Walt Disney's live-action movie *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* will recognize the glass-walled "observation dome" as being inspired by the similar window in the movie's Nautilus submarine.

The books themselves are the sort one would expect for a trendy Sixties artist: a mixture of liberal/left politics, art and entertainment, current affairs, and so forth. There is really nothing overtly strange or mysterious about the books, but a Library Use roll will discover something of interest along one wall: several framed newspaper articles hung on the wall between two of the shelves. The pieces are mostly "Lifestyle" puff-pieces on the construction of this unusual mansion by "rising art-world star" Michael Tey. However, the last piece describes something else: the mysterious murder of the contractor who built the house. (HANDOUT #2) If anyone asks Tey why he has that piece framed here, he remarks that "he did good work, and I felt it was proper to remember him here." Anyone making a Psychology roll sees a glint of malicious humor in Tey's eyes as he makes this remark.

If any PC comes here after Event #2 (the power outage), the room gives a very different impression, as lightning flashes outside illuminate the room in strobic blinks. At that time, they will discover the body of Tony, one of the valets, sprawled atop the glass globe, streaks of rain-diluted blood running down the curving glass. (Lose 1/1d6 SAN.) He fell here after trying vainly to escape (see Event #3).

Area 7: Upstairs Bathroom

This is a large, luxurious bathroom, tiled in shining white and boasting a huge tub with shiny, ultra-modern steel fixtures. There is nothing initially strange or threatening about this place, but after the barriers of reality begin to fade (as outlined in Event #8), the plumbing here will be a source of menace.

Area 8: Guest Rooms

There are a total of four guest rooms in Tey's mansion, each with a slightly different shape. Each, however, shares the same basic layout: a large bed, a lamp on a bedside table, a dresser and closet, and an adjacent half-bath. The windows in rooms 8a-8c are high and narrow, and provide a view of cliff and ocean. The main difference between each room is the choice of artworks and decorations to be found within.

Guest Room 8a: There is a large duplicate of Picasso's famous painting, *Guernica* (depicting the German bombing of a village during the Spanish Civil War) on the wall of this room. Anyone who looks closely at the painting will experience a disorienting sense of vertigo, as though they are falling into the painting, and briefly hear a roaring in their ears, as though of distant explosions. (SAN loss 0/1.) If anyone asks Tey about the painting, he will smile and remark, "It's quite a good replica, isn't it?"

Guest Room 8b: There is a large Indian rug on the floor of this room, laid out in an elaborate mandala pattern. The rug is a mental trap, and anyone who stares at it for any length of time must roll POW x3 or find their mind lost in its infinite patterns, standing vacant-eyed and drooling in the middle of the rug. This causes a loss of 1d6 SAN for every minute in this state.

William Burns will fall victim to the rug early in the evening, and will eventually go completely insane and run amok (see Event #5).

Anyone who rolls Cthulhu Mythos after seeing the rug will realize that the mandala pattern is actually an artistic rendering of the cosmic writhing of Azathoth, the Daemon Sultan.

Guest Room 8c: There are a dozen framed photographs spaced around the walls of this room. All of them depict moments of savagery and slaughter in recent history: the Holocaust, the Spanish Civil War, the Japanese invasion of China, Vietnam, etc. Stark black-and-white scenes of concentration camp victims, executions, and battlefield slaughter stare at visitors from every wall. Spending any amount of time in this room is deeply unsettling to anyone not already hardened against such scenes (anyone but Oscar Petrovsky), filling them with a sense of the pointlessness of human life and the emptiness of all mankind's claims to enlightenment and decency. Roll SAN: possible loss is 0/1d4. Anyone who is already insane when affected by this room will become convinced that human life has no meaning and human flesh is nothing more than putty.

Guest Room 8d: the artwork in this room is nondescript (abstract paintings and sculptures), but anyone who spends more than a minute or two here must make a Listen roll. Success means the PC hears a strange, wailing, flute-like music in the distance. The source of the music cannot be ascertained. SAN loss 0/1d3. If the PC makes the SAN roll, the music fades away, but if the roll is failed, thereafter the PC will seem to hear the music everywhere in the house, always just barely at the edge of their perceptions.

The music is a distant reflection of the Court of Azathoth, to which the house is vaguely attuned, and this particular room is a focal point for it. As the evening progresses, the music will gradually become louder, until Listen rolls are no longer required to hear it. Ultimately, a Servitor of the Outer Gods will manifest itself here. See the Events section for more details.

Area 9: Tey's Main Bedroom

This is a large, almost grandiose room which nevertheless feels oddly constricted and uncomfortable to anyone who spends time in it. The room's dimensions are non-Euclidean, with angles that don't quite "add up," and spending the night here will cost any sleeper a point of SAN.

This large rectangular room is probably Michael Tey's personal bedroom. There is a huge king-sized bed of modern design in the middle of one wall, and beside it a spare, cleanly-designed desk with a telephone and untidy piles of notepaper. A single abstract painting, a collection of colored bars and squares, hangs on the opposite wall, next to the doors of a walk-in closet. Aside from the clutter on the desk, the room feels spartan, almost un-lived-in.

The impression is accurate – Tey, being mad, has little need for sleep. The appearance of normality is somewhat marred by the contents of the closet – the clothing is jumbled and mixed together randomly, with piles of both clean and dirty laundry intermingled on the floor.

The papers on the desk are a mixture of random personal notes and memos (everything from schedules and art sales to grocery lists, letters from colleagues, and even pages covered in random numbers). Looking through the papers and making a Luck roll will uncover some items of use, including the combination to Tey's safe. (HANDOUT #4). A drawer in the desk contains a flashlight, a pocketknife (damage 1d2), a book of telephone numbers (including the numbers of all the guests, but none of them in alphabetical order).

Behind the painting, set into the wall, is a safe. If the PCs do not think of looking behind the painting, anyone who searches the room carefully can make a Spot Hidden roll (to notice faint scratches on the wall where the painting has been swung aside) or a Track roll (to notice that the carpet on the floor in front of the painting appears slightly more worn). The combination to the safe can be found in Tey's papers on the desk, as mentioned above. A PC may also try to unlock the safe with a Locksmith roll (which represents the classic Hollywood ear-pressed-to-the-door method) or simply by randomly guessing numbers (requiring a POW x1 roll to succeed).

The safe contains over \$100,000 in assorted bills, bound together randomly and piled in the back. It also contains a list of guests for the evening's party (HANDOUT #5), three audio tapes which detail some of Tey's plans for this evening (if the PCs play them in Tey's studio downstairs, give them HANDOUT #6), and a set of blueprints for the house. A PC can read the blueprints with a successful Idea roll, in which case they can learn the locations of the three entrances to the "true" basement (the basement itself is not shown on the blueprint).

Area 10: The "Public" Basement

After the power goes out (during Event #5), the PCs may wind up descending to this area in search of the breaker box.

The basement of Tey's house is a large concrete-walled chamber that underlies about half of the house. A pair of bare light bulbs hang from different parts of the ceiling. Besides random junk, extra furniture, and other random bits commonly found in basements, this place is home to a washer-dryer, a laundry chute from the second-floor main bedroom, a large propane furnace for heat in cold weather, and a bulky breaker-box on one wall.

The furnace should raise some eyebrows – this is California, after all, where heat is a modest problem. In point of fact, if the PCs search the corner where the furnace is located, they can roll Spot Hidden to locate the hidden door (disguised as a metal panel on the side of the furnace) that leads to the secret "true" basement. It is held shut by a magnetic seal, and is opened by pressing in sharply and then releasing.

After the power outage, Will Mosby will be found hiding in the basement. See Event #6 for details of his behavior.

Area 11: The True Basement

This place is where Tey keeps his darkest secrets, the things he cannot risk anyone learning. It was to keep

this place secret that he murdered the building contractor. There are three concrete tunnels which lead to this place: one from the normal basement, one from the display room, and one from the hidden entrance halfway up the outside slope. All three entrances are the same: narrow, damp concrete stairs, lit by intermittent bare light bulbs. After the power outage, there will be no light at all. Any time after Event #7, Tey and the two servants will be found in the true basement, unless they are out trying to capture Tabitha or Linda.

The three riveted-metal doors that lead into the True Basement from the three tunnels are normally locked, with only Tey having the keys. They can be opened with a Locksmith roll, a halved Mechanical Repair, or by forcing them by overcoming their STR of 18 on the Resistance Table (up to two PCs may try at once). All three doors are inscribed with eldritch symbols that will prevent passage by the Entities, once they have appeared (Event #8). However, the air vents in the ceiling are not so warded.

The True Basement itself is a large room that appears to be square, but in fact is not – somehow the angles of the room do not quite “add up.” This will be apparent to anyone who spends more than a few minutes here, and the realization costs 0/1d2 SAN.

In the center of the room is an elaborate circle of signs and mathematical symbols. Set into the concrete are manacles for holding a victim in place, and there is a drain for letting out blood. This is where Tey sacrifices his victims to the ritual.

One wall of the room has a small wooden rack of books, a mixture of old occult tomes and obscure art books. Hidden among them (Library Use to find) are old copies of the nine volumes of the *Revelations of Glaaki*. Tey has scribbled a number of hand-written notes into the inside front covers of these volumes (HANDOUT #7).

Another wall boasts some of Tey’s most radical paintings, bizarre abstract works that seek to encapsulate on canvas the unimaginable vistas of Azathoth’s court. Viewing these dark masterpieces costs 0/1d3 SAN. Nailed to the wall in between the paintings are two small, shriveled, blackened objects that can be identified with Know rolls as human tongues (lose 1/1d4 SAN).

In one corner of the room is a small wooden box containing two sticks of dynamite, along with fuses and blasting caps. It will require a halved Know roll to get a stick of dynamite prepared for use (a normal Know roll for Oscar Petrovsky). Damage from a stick of dynamite is 5d6 with a blast radius of 2 yards.

After Event #3, the knife that was missing from the studio is here, coated with blood, along with the horribly mangled body of Jose the valet, tossed in a corner. After Event #7 (Agatha’s sacrifice), the

bloodstains will be much worse and there will be a trail of blood leading up the passage to the display room.

SEQUENCE of EVENTS

After the PCs have had a chance to socialize with the other guests, the evening’s events begin to move forward. The following events should happen more-or-less in sequence, although the Keeper should feel free to modify the course of events to make the adventure flow more smoothly.

Event #1: The Host Appears

Michael Tey will make his first appearance after the guests have had time to socialize with each other (and perhaps to begin wondering where he is). Stepping out on the balcony above the main room, Tey waves to everyone, smiling a charming and unpleasantly wide smile. Then he descends the stairs to mingle briefly with the crowd.

Michael Tey is handsome in a smooth Asian-American way, with light-gold skin and sharply styled black hair. He is fashionably “dressed down” in jeans and a polo shirt. Superficially, Tey is glib and talkative, a charmer, whose opinions are all “correct” for the time (which is to say, left of center). However, there is an icy distance beneath his charm, and anyone making a Psychology roll after speaking with Tey senses that he is profoundly disconnected from normal human feelings.

Tey will circulate through the crowd, engaging in superficial conversation and generally playing the gracious host. He will be sure to stop and speak with Agatha Symcox, Tabitha Conrad, and Linda Waite, asking each of them about their work, praising their “unique visions,” and promising that their talents will soon find a “proper venue.”

Tey invites everyone to make the house their own, to view his art collections and his library, and generally to enjoy everything his residence has to offer. He is hoping, of course, to make his planned kidnappings and sacrifices easier by scattering his guests through the house.

Event #2: The Storm Breaks

At this point, the gathering storm suddenly unleashes itself with tremendous fury. Thunder booms and echoes, and everyone can hear the sudden roar of heavy rain pounding on the house. Lightning flickers outside repeatedly. Most of the guests utter small noises of astonishment, the occasional “ooh, ahh” at a particularly bright lightning flash, and so forth.

Any PC who makes a Listen roll during this period may notice that, amid the thunder, there was another, deeper and sharper, detonation. It seems to have come from back up the road. Tey has set off a landslide with a dynamite charge. Oscar Petrovsky (only) can roll Know to recognize the sound as an explosion (if he heard it).

If anyone is trying to watch Tey at this point, they can make a Spot Hidden roll to notice a brief satisfied smirk cross his face.

If any PCs decide to leave the mansion, they discover the two valets are gone, having fled inside from the pouring rain. (Anyone who makes an Idea roll remembers seeing the servants leading the valets back to the kitchen a few minutes ago.) There is an odd burnt smell drifting through the rain – Petrovsky recognizes it as the smell of explosives.

If the PCs go up the road, or try to track the smell, they soon discover the drive has been blocked by a massive mudslide, mixed with boulders and trees. No vehicle can navigate the blockage.

Event #3: The Valets Perish

Some little while after the explosion, Tey departs the front room. Many of the guests are now wandering the house, so his departure is not completely surprising; if any PC asks when he left, and with whom, they can roll Idea to recall that Michael was talking to Agatha Symcox. Agatha is still in the front room, and does not recall where Tey went after speaking with her. Several other guests are absent, taking advantage of Tey's offer to explore the house.

At this point, the two valets have been drugged and taken down to the basement for the human sacrifices required to begin the evening's "festivities." However, one of them (Tony) is not completely overpowered by the drug, and manages to flee up the secret staircase and across the roof before the enraged Tey finally catches and kills him.

Any PC who is on the upper floor of the house will hear a sudden irregular pounding on the roof, very different from the normal drumming of the rain: a Listen roll will determine that this is running feet, probably more than one pair. If anyone is in the Library (room #X), they will see the valet's bleeding corpse land heavily atop the observation dome.

Event #4: An Observer Arrives

After the sacrifice of the two unfortunate valets, the first phase of the ritual has begun. The powers and energies of the Outer Gods will begin to flow through the house, weakly at first, but growing with each additional step in the ritual. The distant wailing in room 8d will become slightly more audible. The first direct

manifestation, however, will be in the telephones and television.

At some point, have one of the PCs notice another guest (Chen and Simmons are good choices) attempting a call, then putting the phone down with a strange, unsettled expression on their face. If a PC speaks to them, they say only "something was wrong... I got some odd voice." They will say nothing further.

Any PC's attempt to call anyone on any of the telephones will fail. Instead of the number they dialed, the PC will get a strange, deep voice which speaks with them in mocking tones, belittling them, their accomplishments, and indeed their very species.

If anyone happens to turn on the television after this time, all of the channels are showing the same thing: a suave, dark-haired, swarthy man in an elegant black suit. The man is reading – in a deep voice fraught with mocking, amused tones – news reports about war, destruction, and crime from all across the world. His glittering dark eyes seem to follow anyone who watches him. He is on all the channels.

Both the voice and the man on the television are manifestations of Nyarlathotep, the messenger of the Outer Gods – Tey's ritual has drawn his attention, and he will observe things through the telephones and the television until the end of the scenario. The Keeper should feel free to improvise additional mocking behavior on Nyarlathotep's part when it seems appropriate – the god is darkly amused by everything that transpires here, and is not above contributing further terror and chaos to the situation. He will never take any sort of direct action, however.

Event #5: William's Rampage

William Burns is driven insane by the Azathoth mandala in Guest Room 8b (Tey led him there before departing to sacrifice the valets). He then wanders into room 8c (the room of war crimes), and goes psychotic.

The insane Burns runs rampage through the house, attempting to murder the other guests (using kitchen knives, furniture, and bare hands, even teeth if necessary). His favored targets will be women who spurned his earlier romantic efforts, such as Maryanne Howard. All the while he gabbles that "I can see now, it's all so simple, DEATH is what matters, the FINAL CURTAIN, nobody cares about any lesser performance!"

Midway through this horrific assault, there's a violent lightning stroke, and the power goes out. The rest of the struggle takes place in darkness, lit only by the strobing of lightning. The Keeper is encouraged to play this up for maximum horror-movie cinematic effect, with Burns stalking guests through the house while chuckling, babbling psychotic nonsense, etc.

Sometime during all this confusion, Agatha Symcox disappears (stolen away by Michael Tey).

William cannot be broken out of his madness – his SAN is at zero. He must be overpowered or killed.

The electrical power will not come back – the breaker is blown. There are candles in a drawer in the kitchen (once the fight is over, the servants will bring them out and light them), and flashlights in the kitchen and in Tey’s master bedroom.

Event #6: Mosby in the Basement

If the PCs visit the basement at any time after the power outage (perhaps to search for the breaker box), they will find Will Mosby sitting in the dark and singing softly to himself. If any PC speaks to him, Will answers with nonsensical babble mingled with lines from Alice in Wonderland.

If the PCs speak with Will for more than a few minutes, he begins to mutter, “They make the flowerbeds so soft, the flowers are always asleep!” while fumbling his way along the walls of the basement, peering closely at the concrete and scrabbling at cracks in it with the plaster hand he always carries, as though trying to find a doorway. (He can sense the secret basement below the house.) If the PCs try to question him about what he is doing, or why he is here, he says, “Well, do you think the clams really appreciated being eaten? I’ve always wondered, you know, but all WE ever here is the walrus’ story. Time to speak of many things...” He gets a canny smile on his face. “No telling what you might find down a rabbit hole. Just ask Alice.”

At the Keeper’s option, Will Mosby can supply additional cryptic clues, using the above suggestions as examples. He will not leave the basement, even if the PCs do indeed find the breaker box and turn the power back on. Eventually Mosby will disappear (perhaps leaving behind his plaster hand), devoured by one of the things summoned by Tey’s ritual.

Event #7: Agatha Symcox is Sacrificed

Whether or not the PCs have noticed the absence of Agatha Symcox, shortly after the end of William Burns’ rampage, a series of desperate, agonized screams echo through the house. The screams are Agatha’s, carried up through the hidden ventilation ducts from the Secret Basement. It will be impossible to determine their exact location, though anyone making a halved Listen roll can deduce they are being carried through the ducts. Listening to these screams (which go on for several minutes before mercifully ending) costs everyone 1/1d6+1 SAN.

After this event, Tey deposits Agatha’s corpse in the display room (Area #4), festooning her body on the “Truth” sculpture. Anyone who suddenly stumbles

across her loses 1/1d6+1 SAN – the way in which her body actually seems to fit in with the rest of the sculpture only enhances the shocking sight. Agatha has clearly been tortured, her body covered in bloody cuts and her eyes torn from her head; her mouth gapes in a soundless scream. Anyone who examines the body can roll Medicine to determine that the injuries were inflicted with an extremely sharp blade.

Anyone who examines the surrounding area after this time can make Spot Hidden or Track rolls to spot a few drops of blood which lead to the hidden door to the Secret Basement.

Event #8: The Things Emerge

Shortly after Agatha’s death, the dimensional walls in and around Tey’s house begin to collapse, and various Mythos entities begin seeping through and menacing the remaining guests and PCs. Other-dimensional things, invoked by Agatha’s death, begin stalking through the mansion and its surroundings, slaughtering the guests in various horrible ways. The wailing from room 8d will also become noticeably louder after this time, audible on the entire second floor.

There will be a total of four entities stalking through the house, although the Keeper should refrain from having more than one or two appear at once. They should be noticed as much through distant screams and dead bodies as through direct encounters. Needless to say, all their activities will inflict SAN losses (suggested SAN loss for hearing someone else fall victim to these things is 1d4).

These creatures appear to be translucent, shapeless beings, vaguely resembling amoebae, but sprouting tentacles, toothy mouths, and claw-tipped limbs. They cannot pass through solid objects but can freely alter their shape to slip through narrow spaces, and favored stalking techniques will include sliding under doors, pushing through air vents, and so forth. The cleverest of the four entities will take up residence in the pipes and plumbing of the house. This thing will strike through faucets, sinks, and other suitable locations, traveling around the house with unnatural speed (and accompanied by gurgling, clunking sounds as it traverses the pipes). The Keeper is encouraged to draw on the inspiration of horror movies to depict all these creatures’ activities.

None of these entities will directly attack Linda Waite or Tabitha Conrad, who are effectively protected by Tey’s ritual. They will strike ruthlessly at all the other PCs and NPCs, however. Victims killed by these things are literally turned inside out, their brains and hearts devoured.

These things are largely immune to physical weapons, but spells, enchanted weapons, fire, and electricity will harm them (a Cthulhu Mythos roll can

suggest which weapons will hurt these creatures). Clever PCs may come up with clever methods of employing such weapons (such as scavenging batteries or siphoning gasoline from the cars outside). The Elder Sign will prevent them from passing through openings, but cannot otherwise harm them.

Event #9: Tey Takes Action

Michael Tey will eventually set out to capture Linda Waite and Tabitha Conrad so as to sacrifice them and complete the ritual. He will try to do this while the rest of the guests are being hunted by the Entities, giving him free reign to slip through the house in search of his prey. The two servants will accompany him.

Tey's goal is to take these two people alive, ordering his servants to Grapple them and drag them downstairs to the True Basement. There he recites an extended incoherent chant while ritually torturing and finally executing his victim (assume this costs 1d3 HP and 1d6 SAN per round until the victim dies).

If Tey is attacked or otherwise interrupted, he will try to have his servants intercept the intruders while he hastily completes the sacrifice. If forced to fight himself, he exploits his magical abilities to the fullest. He will try at all costs to avoid killing Tabitha and Linda before the ritual sacrifices, since their deaths can only power the summoning of Azathoth if they are performed in the proper ritual setting.

If any of the PCs were being pursued by one or more of the Entities when they came to the basement, those beings will find their way in through the air vents a few rounds after the PCs arrive. This will come as a shock to Tey (if he is present), since he forgot to consider the vents when he warded the basement.

Event #10: The Piper and the Quakes

If Tey has succeeded in sacrificing two of his three chosen victims (Agatha and either Tabitha or Linda), the piping and wailing from Room 8d rises to a fever pitch as a Servitor of the Outer Gods manifests in that room. This monstrosity will normally remain in the room, piping insanely, and will not depart until dawn (or Azathoth appears). It will not leave the room but will attack anyone who approaches it for more than a moment. So maddening is its piping that anyone on the second floor loses 1d3 SAN per minute.

Also, once the second victim has been sacrificed, small earthquakes will begin to shake the area every few minutes. These will require the PCs to make DEXx5 rolls to keep on their feet, and will impose a -30 percentiles penalty to Climb rolls.

FINALE #1: SURVIVAL

If the PCs succeed in killing Tey or otherwise preventing him from completing his ritual, the energies he has unleashed disperse at sunrise, and any surviving Entities retreat back to their own dimension (along with the Servitor of the Outer Gods, if it appeared).

You stagger out of the house, dazed and blinking in the light creeping up from the eastern horizon. The sea sparkles with the rising sun, and you wonder if anyone will really believe any of what happened to you. Perhaps it will be best to claim that someone spiked the evening's drinks with LSD.

FINALE #2: AZATHOTH APPEARS

If the PCs do not succeed in stopping Michael Tey, he will eventually succeed in sacrificing all three of the focus-point victims and summoning the Daemon Sultan. This event is triggered by the ritual death of the third sacrificial victim (Tey will try, if possible, to make Waite the last victim).

The ground heaves and shudders like a beast in torment, and the shrilling of terrible flutes rises to an insane, impossible pitch. A massive earthquake shakes the ground, splitting open Tey's mansion like an overripe seed pod. The sky itself seems to tear open, and through the rent in reality's fabric you catch a glimpse of something impossible to comprehend: vast entities coiling and dancing impossibly around a writhing shapeless THING that somehow radiates idiot malignancy. The vast shapeless mass forces it's way through the gap, spilling out into the real sky, spreading and coiling smoke-like across miles of open air in merest seconds. As its pseudopods begin to descend to the earth, you see soil and trees and water flash into plasma and dust.

Lose 1d10/1d100 SAN. All is not completely lost if Azathoth appears. Assuming the PCs survive the SAN loss, Finnigin Posner knows the spell to Dismiss Azathoth (he remembers it from when the Shan inhabited his skull), and will recognize Azathoth as the same entity from his memories of when the Shan departed. If Finnigin casts the spell, PCs who do not know the spell can still contribute 1 Magic Point apiece to it (assuming they are sane enough to join in the chant).

If the PCs fail to Dismiss Azathoth, the Daemon Sultan obliterates them along with Los Angeles and a large portion of the California coastline.

The End of Art for Art's Sake

HANDOUT #1: WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT MICHEAL TEY

Michael Tey is a Californian of mixed Chinese-American ancestry. By his own account, his mother is Chinese, his father an unknown white man. Tey's age is uncertain, but probably in his mid-to-late thirties. Supposedly he grew up in San Francisco's Chinatown during the Depression and World War II, where he claims to have learned the "profound wisdom" of his Chinese ancestors while embracing the more enlightened values of the modern age. His career as an artist began in the late Fifties, but his startling, avant-garde creations didn't win major popular or critical success until the Sixties, when a more open-minded attitude came to prevail.

Tey's work is a mixture of painting and sculpture, and is extremely unconventional. One of his favorite techniques is to blend an overall abstract work (full of bizarre shapes and colors) with one or two extremely realistic elements, such as a portrait. Violence and torture are recurrent themes, as is oppression. Much of his work is believed to be making a statement against the cruelties and injustices of the world, although Tey himself is often somewhat cagey about his work, saying only that "you can judge it for yourself."

Tey designed his famous Los Angeles mansion himself, and reportedly spent over three million dollars on its construction. Since it was completed four years ago, it's become a popular site for trendy parties and artistic gatherings.

HANDOUT #2: NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

Los Angeles Times, October 22nd, 1965: Local Contractor Killed

Scott Avandros, a local building contractor known for the fine houses he has built for many Hollywood celebrities, was apparently murdered in his Venice, California home last night. The body, and Avandros' hysterical wife, were discovered this morning by his housemaid, Angelique Vasquez.

The crime was reportedly one of extreme violence. According to police statements, Avandros was literally torn limb from limb with great force, as well as suffering numerous puncture wounds. Rumors have circulated that, despite the extreme violence, almost no blood was found, it having been drained from the body. When asked about this story, detective in charge Joe Ridgson dismissed such "stupid rumor-mongering."

Avandros' wife has been hospitalized for shock and hysteria, but is reportedly recovering well and cooperating with police. Detective Ridgson would not comment on what help she may have been able to offer, except to say that she had been "very helpful."

The police urge anyone with information on this crime to contact them immediately.

HANDOUT #3: The Making of “Truth”

This reel of silent film shows Tey creating a sculpture. It seems at first to be little more than a complex assortment of wires and metal parts, and Tey spends many minutes of the film meticulously hammering, soldering, and twisting the different parts together, following some pattern found only in his own mind. Periodically the film jumps as Tey turns off the camera.

Finally, when the sculpture is nearly as tall as he is, Tey brings in a bucket of wet gray clay and a large sack, setting them both down heavily. The lumpish, dark-stained sack clearly contains several irregular-shaped objects. He begins removing them from the sack, carefully coating them with clay, and affixing them to different locations on the sculpture. It takes you a few moments to realize that these objects are the blood-drained parts of a dismembered human body. Tey continues carefully embalming them in clay and affixing them to the statue until the sack is empty. There is a pleasant, slightly vacant smile on his face throughout the procedure.

HANDOUT #4: Notes on Tey's Desk

Assorted handwritten notes in a shaky scrawl. There is no apparent order or system to how they are kept.

Sequencing important. Agatha first. Waite last.

Don't forget to invite Chen and Simmons. One good turn deserves another.

15 - 34 - 8

Petrovsky. Escaped. Make sure he attends.

Remember to do something about the valets.

Get something to block road. Can't have anyone leaving before the finale.

HANDOUT #5: Guest List

Agatha Symcox

Linda Waite

Tabitha Conrad

Oscar Petrovsky

William Burns

Will Mosby

Maryanne Howard

James Spraddock

Bryan Simmons

Jacob Bernstein

Alexis Chen

Jackson Lee

Finnigen Posner

HANDOUT #6: TEY'S TAPE RECORDINGS

1st TAPE

[A long silence, broken only by a sound that might be heavy breathing]

[Male voice (Tey?)] I understand everything now. See the fundamental truths.

[Two other voices in the background, wailing and pleading. Gender uncertain. Sounds Spanish?]

You see, it is simply a matter of abandoning the limitations of the flesh.

The flesh, yes... such a burden.

[Wet crunching sounds. A woman(?) shrieks.]

[Tey, sounds out of breath] Yes! I can, can see it now! The ultimate... the supreme art transcends the flesh, the very – the- the very bounds of PHYSICAL REALITY!

[Long scream abruptly cut off by end of recording.]

2nd TAPE

[Tey? A male voice, mumbling, mushy pronunciation] No other... no other artist can grasp the final, true form... not Pollack, not Warhol... Hah! They'd puke their guts if they saw, saw the real... um... yeah, yeah.

[Sound of a long inhalation.]

If, if I walked far enough, I'd never come back. [Strangled giggle.] Focus, now, um... Yeah. He showed me, see, that flesh is the final medium. Ah, artistic, that is, the flesh is just paint. LESS than paint. Unless you see it, see that, you know, it's just an OBSTACLE, it gets in the way, right?

Yeah.

Unless you USE flesh, it just, uh, sits on you, blocks you in. Like that.

Focus, it needs a FOCUS. Something to channel through. The flesh is a door, and through pain comes art. Yes.

Have to, uh, yeah, find DOORS, the right bodies. Out there somewhere.

[Sharp snap, as of fingers snapping.]

Finnigin! He can see 'em. The ones he picks. Yeah.

[Clattering noise, recording ends.]

3rd TAPE

[Tey? His voice has an echo, as though someone is repeating his words a half-second later.] Okay, guest list. Ummm... important ones, yes. Conrad, Waite, and Agatha. Uh, yeah. Is that right?

[Silent pause, sound of labored breathing.]

The stuff, the thing, has to have the FOCUS, yeah. I got that. They'll be here, who's gonna turn down an invitation from ME? [strangled laugh]

[Odd hollow sound, wet, like someone clearing their throat?]

Yeah, I GOT it.

[Long silence.]

Okay, the rest, uh, whoever... Hmm. Who deserves it? [High giggle, joined by a second giggle noticeably higher than the first.] Yeah... yeah.

I'd like to see everyone's faces, when it happens. [Giggles again.] The whole world...

HANDOUT #7: Notes inside the Revelations of Glaaki

The truth is so OBVIOUS.

Everyone must see. When the One comes, all will understand.

A transcendent moment. I felt it, the moment I first read these pages. These things need to be shared. It's an artist's duty to share his perceptions.

The universe is just their tool, their playground. We are ALL part of THEIR artwork. So let us accept our roles!

The Daemon Sultan will remake reality to suit Himself, and in that transcendent moment we will all be One, free of the burdens of the Flesh.

KEEPER'S AID #1: NPCs and MONSTERS

William Burns, insane actor

STR 13 SIZ 15 CON 14 DEX 14 INT 11
POW 8 EDU 12 APP 16 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Fist/Punch 60%, damage 1d3+db.

Kick 30%, damage 1d6+db

Head Butt 20%, damage 1d4+db

Grapple 40%, damage special

Michael Tey, famous artist and maddened cultist of Azathoth

STR 11 SIZ 13 CON 17 DEX 17 INT 15
POW 24 EDU 12 APP 14 HP 15

Damage Bonus: None

Weapons: Sharp Knife 40%, damage 1d4+1+db

Grapple 50%, damage special

Spells: Clutch of Nyogtha, Dominate, Flesh Ward, Red Sign of Shudde M'ell, Wither Limb

Armor: Has a 15-point Flesh Ward in place

Skills: Art (sculpture/painting) 90%, Dodge 40%, Sneak 50%, all others at base

Jorge, insane servant

STR 12 SIZ 13 CON 11 DEX 12 INT 10
POW 8 EDU 6 APP 10 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Weapons: Club 40%, damage 1d6+db

Grapple 50%, damage special

Candiza, insane servant

STR 10 SIZ 11 CON 11 DEX 15 INT 10
POW 9 EDU 5 APP 12 HP 11

Damage Bonus: None

Weapons: Knife 35%, damage 1d4+db

Grapple 40%, damage special

Other-Dimensional Mythos Entities (4)

STR 6 CON 12 SIZ 8 DEX 13 INT n/a
POW 8 HP 10 Move: 8 flying

Attack: Claw 50%, damage 1d6 plus drains 1 POW

Armor: None, but only harmed by enchanted weapons, magic, fire, or electricity.

Skills: Listen 40%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 50%

SAN loss: 1/1d8

Servitor of the Outer Gods

STR 15 CON 19 SIZ 24 DEX 16 INT 18
POW 20 HP 22 Move: 7

Damage Bonus: +2d6

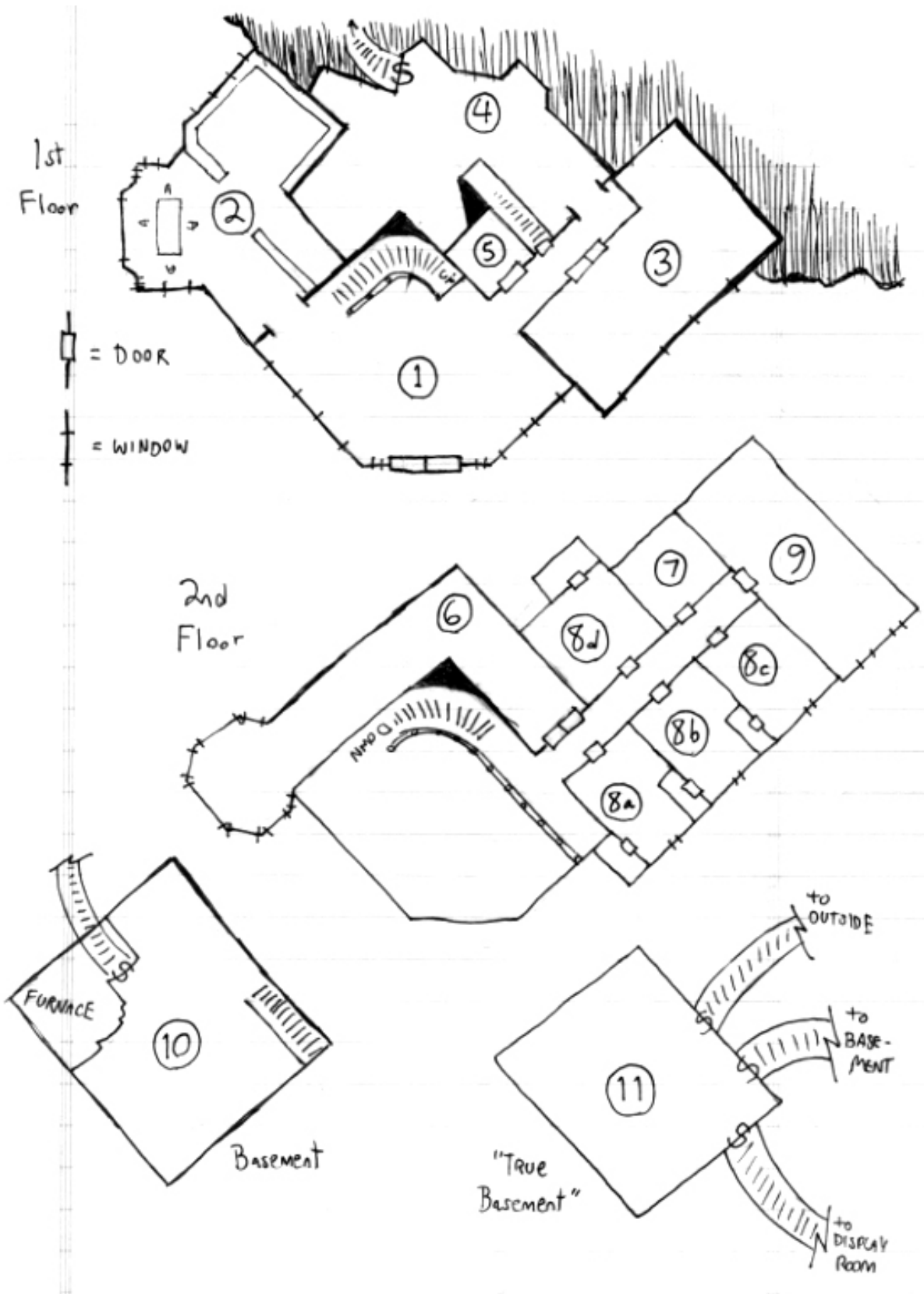
Attacks: 2d6 Tentacles 45%, damage 4d6

Armor: None, but hurt only by spells and enchanted weapons; regenerates 3 hit points per round.

Spells: Mindblast, Shriveling, Wrack

SAN loss: 1/1d10

KEEPER'S AID #2: Map



KEEPER'S AID #3: Suggested Insanities, by Player Character

James Spraddock: if Spraddock goes insane, he begins suffering from an anger disorder, in which stressful situations cause him to fly completely off the handle, screaming, pounding on the walls, grabbing and shaking people violently, and so forth. These bouts of uncontrollable temper last only a short time at first (1d4 rounds), but as his SAN drops further, they last longer and longer.

Jackson Lee: if Jackson goes insane, the disconnection with reality caused by his frequent trips to the Dreamlands begins to slip out of control. He becomes more and more calm, relaxed, casual, and eventually spaced-out, offering advice like “be cool” and “go with the flow,” and dismissing serious contemporary matters like politics as “an uncool drag, man.” Once his SAN drops below 20, he won't really be able to get excited about anything, not even physical pain or death.

Tabitha Conrad: if Tabitha goes insane, she begins having hallucinations of her dead mother, coming back to speak with her. Her mother demands that she fulfill the “family business” by accepting her fate as a sacrifice. As Tabitha's SAN drops, these hallucinations become more frequent and severe, and once her SAN is below 20 she will feel compelled to seek out a place of sacrifice and offer herself up to fulfill her long-avoided fate.

Finnigin Posner: if Finnigin goes insane, his already fractured personality begins to break down even further. He splits into two internal “Finnigins” who argue with each other, quarrel over control of his body, debate decisions between themselves, and so forth. Each time he goes insane again, another Finnigin joins the chorus. Different Finnigins may have different voices, temperaments, likes, or dislikes, but all share the original personality's basic chattiness and aversion to “bugs.”

Linda Waite: if Linda goes insane, she begins having hallucinations about a dark pit where a crowd of robed, hooded people drag her to an altar and sacrifice her to summon forth massive entities of black slime. With an Idea roll, Linda recognizes a face under one of the hoods – the smiling face of her near-forgotten great-aunt, Asanath Waite. The hallucinations become more frequent and intense as Linda's sanity drops, until she begins to see them as predictions of an inevitable doom which her family tried futilely to escape by coming to California. If Linda's SAN ever drops to 20 or less, she will begin looking for a similar “dark pit” where she can share the fate in the hallucination.

Oscar Petrovsky: If Oscar goes insane, he begins to remember what happened to him four years ago in “the Nam.” His memories will return in steps, each time he suffers an insanity effect:

1. His squad was ambushed by a pack of strange, pygmy-like native folk, armed with blow-guns and spears and knives. They seemed impossible to kill – Oscar shot one of them with a full clip from his M-16, and the little monster just stood back up and grinned at him.
2. Then something else came – a vast black THING that resembled nothing so much as a tree that walked on two thick shaggy legs. It snatched up soldiers in writhing tentacles and sucked the very flesh from their bones with the toothy maws that covered its trunk-like body.
3. Most of the soldiers were killed. A few, including Oscar, were captured and dragged deep into the jungle. In a dark, watery cave there was an altar, a piece of ancient stone carved with obscene images. The pygmies danced and shouted and chanted around the altar, and sacrificed their captives one by one, the soldiers screaming horribly as they were ritually disemboweled.
4. Somehow Oscar freed himself – he remembers flinging himself against a rock until one hand broke and could slide free of the ropes that bound him. As he fled the cave, he looked back over his shoulder – and saw the awful, shapeless, impossible THING which the pygmies' ritual had summoned. At this point Oscar goes berserk, running madly through the mansion attacking everyone he sees – which is how he ultimately escaped the first time.

James Spraddock, “Protest Artist,” Age 26

STR 9	DEX 13	INT 15	Idea 75%	
CON 10	APP 10	POW 12	Luck 60%	HP 11
SIZ 12	SAN 60	EDU 17	Know 85%	Magic Points 12

Damage Bonus: None

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 30%, Art (playwright) 50%, Bargain 25%, Biology 10%, Chemistry 10%, Climb 40%, Conceal 15%, Credit Rating 35%, Cthulhu Mythos 0%, Dodge 37%, Drive Auto 40%, Electrical Repair 10%, Fast Talk 25%, First Aid 30%, Hide 20%, History 50%, Jump 25%, Law 25%, Library Use 75%, Listen 25%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 20%, Navigate 10%, Occult 5%, Other Language (Spanish) 25%, Own Language (English) 95%, Persuade 45%, Pharmacy 10%, Physics 20%, Psychology 5%, Ride 5%, Sneak 10%, Spot Hidden 35%, Swim 30%, Throw 35%, Track 10%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 85%, Grapple 40%, Head Butt 20%, Kick 55%, Handgun 20%, Machine Gun 15%, Rifle 25%, Shotgun 30%, SMG 15%, Knife 25%, Axe 20%, Small Club 40%, Large Club 25%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and shoes, billfold (driver’s license and \$21 in cash), pocket notebook and pen, copy of *Ramparts* stuffed in back pocket.

James Spraddock is a bitter, alienated young man. He grew up in a comfortable middle-class home in Boston, incoherently resenting the bland, conformist life that his parents lived and tried to force on him. Going to college in California (at the University of California at Berkeley) was a revelation to him, showing him the hollowness and corruption of American life. James majored in Art, and quickly came to see himself as a “protest artist” who would speak out against the social injustices and crimes of the capitalist world. He joined in many anti-war and civil rights protests, and fought with police on more than one occasion. After graduation, he stayed in California to pursue his artistic career, as well as working at *Ramparts*, a left-wing political newspaper.

James reads the work of Marx and Mao Tse-Tung, regularly marches in civil rights and anti-war protests, and joined in the violent protests at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago last year. His politics are Marxist/conspiracy-theory, blaming the United States (especially the military and CIA) for everything wrong in the world. He admires Third World socialists like Castro as the wave of future. He also despises the USSR as an imperialist power tainted by the crimes of Stalin – it will take a “pure” socialism, born in the poverty-stricken countries of the Third World, to lead the world forward to a brighter future.

James’ art consists mostly of short plays and performance pieces which try to draw attention to social or political ills. It is often considered too bizarre and avant-garde to be really enjoyable, and he has found little financial success – of course, success would mean he’d been co-opted by the capitalist machine, so he’s happy (on the surface, at least) with his status as a “starving artist.” He has mixed feelings about Michael Tey, admiring his daring but resenting his material success. Still, being invited to one of Tey’s parties isn’t a bad thing – maybe he’ll meet people who will really appreciate his art. After all, Hollywood has been getting much more progressive lately.

Appearance/Personality: James is an intense, feverish young man, thin and sallow, with glittery pale amber eyes and thin delicate eyebrows. He dresses in old sweaters, blue jeans, and other “working class” clothes, and wears small spectacles. He tends to be aggressive in his opinions, always seeking a chance to work them into conversation, and grows extremely agitated if anyone contradicts him in the slightest way. He readily tosses around terms like “fascist” or “Nazi” at those he disagrees with. He is currently single (and looking), lonely but too politically intense (and personally grating) to form a stable long-term relationship.

Jackson Lee: You admire Jackson, a black man who has overcome the oppression of racist America to become a successful poet and essayist. Still, you prefer his early, angry work to his gentler, more humorous recent writing, and can’t help feeling that his success has somehow caused him to be co-opted by the very system he opposes. Of course, you would hesitate to ever criticize him out loud – as a white man you can’t possibly appreciate what he’s been through.

Tabitha Conrad: A pretty young woman from the South. You find her attractive, but wish her politics were better – in fact, she doesn't seem to care much about contemporary affairs at all. Maybe you can educate her about such things.

Finnigen Posner: This flaky old man is a shallow poser with no real commitment to anything important. You can't understand why others seem to admire his work, which is childish and confused. Even pop artists like Andy Warhol have more depth than this man.

Linda Waite: Posner's latest little sycophant (he seems to collect them). Linda seems to have the right politics, but doesn't show much artistic talent. Anyway, she seems to think the world of old Posner, so she's clearly not someone you can associate with.

Oscar Petrovsky: A tragic victim of the corrupt System, a working-class man forced to fight in Southeast Asia oppressing the indigenous people there. You've never met him in person, but you know he's an anti-war artist and you're sure you'll get along with him. Maybe you could collaborate on something – his drawings and paintings are amazing, visionary stuff.

Jackson Lee, Writer, Poet, and Essayist, age 28

STR 12	DEX 12	INT 17	Idea 85%	
CON 14	APP 13	POW 14	Luck 70%	HP 14
SIZ 14	SAN 61	EDU 15	Know 75%	Magic Points 14

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Spell: Deflect Harm (learned in the Dreamlands; he doesn't yet realize it can be used in the waking world)

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 10%, Art (writing) 70%, Bargain 25%, Chemistry 20%, Climb 50%, Conceal 15%, Credit Rating 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Dodge 48%, Drive Auto 30%, Electrical Repair 10%, Fast Talk 15%, First Aid 40%, Hide 20%, History 60%, Jump 25%, Law 45%, Library Use 65%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 30%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 10%, Navigate 20%, Occult 25%, Own Language (English) 88%, Persuade 40%, Pharmacy 40%, Psychology 25%, Ride 5%, Sneak 30%, Spot Hidden 46%, Swim 25%, Throw 40%, Track 10%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 25%, Head Butt 10%, Kick 35%, Handgun 40%, Machine Gun 15%, Rifle 25%, Shotgun 30%, SMG 15%, Knife 50%, Axe 20%, Small Club 40%, Large Club 25%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and shoes, wallet (driver's license, \$103 in cash, credit card), wristwatch, pack of cigarettes, lighter, pen (in breast pocket).

Jackson Lee is black, an escapee from the Los Angeles inner city. His parents were sober and hard-working but never got anywhere in life, crushed under the weight of poverty and racism. He himself is self-educated and surprisingly erudite, capable of quoting Hegel or Whitman in the midst of a discussion about contemporary affairs. He is a writer, essayist, and poet, regularly published in many artistic magazines and political opinion journals. Although he has no doubt that America is a racist country, he is surprisingly soft-spoken in his opinions, preferring careful points and gentle satire to angry denunciations. Those who have read Jackson's early published work often expect an angry man full of fire and denunciation, and are surprised to discover that he is calm, soft-spoken, and possessed of charm and elegance.

It was not always so. Up until three years ago, Jackson was full of anger and bitterness, and a member of the nascent Black Panther party. Many of his early writings, which brought him to public attention, were angry screeds against the "racist white power system." He was also a drug addict, seeking escape in narcotics from his bitterness at the world around him. The drugs sometimes brought him strange visions of a world of fantastic wonders, a place free of the evils and oppressions of white America. Then, three years ago, he discovered he could visit that world in his dreams, spend weeks in it during a single night. That place, the Dreamlands, became Jackson's escape from the anger and frustration of the waking world, and he found himself able to face the cruelties and absurdities of waking life with much greater equanimity. Some of his early admirers were disappointed with the more relaxed, live-and-let-live style he developed, but now his work (especially his poems) began to reach a larger audience, and he found himself becoming famous.

Today, Jackson Lee is a popular figure in Los Angeles, where he is invited to all the best parties and can hob-nob with the rich and famous. He still doesn't hesitate to criticize America's problems, or to recall the bitter fate of his parents, but he does so in a relaxed, almost gentle manner which even his loudest opponents find disarming. He is also increasingly wealthy, for an interesting reason: although his "official" writing is still politically-oriented, essays and poems about America's racial problems, he also writes children's fantasy under a pseudonym, Jason Davis, using his Dreamlands adventures as inspiration. The stories have become quite successful.

Appearance/Personality: Jackson is a handsome black man in his early thirties. He dresses well but conservatively, and speaks in a cultured voice which only occasionally (in moments of stress) shows the accent of his inner-city youth. It takes a lot to get him angry or upset; there is a serenity about him, a sense that he is somehow above all the cares and worries of day-to-day life. He feels slightly embarrassed about his secret career as a children's author, but at the same time is proud of his work and happy that he can share his nightly adventures with others.

James Spraddock: One of those young fiery Marxists who always seethe with indignation against all the evils of the world. James is way too intense and angry, and reminds you of the worst aspects of your younger self. He needs to relax a little, though you doubt he'll take your advice.

Tabitha Conrad: A pretty young woman from the south, she seems quite naïve and distinctly out of place in the California scene. Despite her background she doesn't seem to show any racial prejudices, and you can't help wondering how she'll fare in this worldly environment. She does surrealist paintings that sometimes remind you of your own dreams, and you wonder if she visits the Dreamlands as well. She somehow knows about your alter-ego Jason Davis, as well, though you got her to promise to keep that secret. You'd like to get to know her better – there's clearly more to her than meets the eye.

Finnigen Posner: This wacky experimental artist is harmless and fun to be around, but almost certainly insane. Although he's clearly a product of the white privileged class, it's hard to resent someone so clearly off his rocker. Weirdly enough, sometimes his random babble reminds you of things you've read in the Dreamlands – maybe he's also been there himself. Posner makes a point of trying to promote less-fortunate artists, although his choices of who to promote sometimes are rather odd. His current "project" seems to be the young Miss Waite.

Linda Waite: A very young woman apparently trying to launch a career as a poet. You don't know anything else about her, and you wonder whether she can succeed even with Posner's support.

Oscar Petrovsky: A Vietnam vet who dresses like a street bum and does strange, unpleasant drawings. Oddly, something about this man reminds you of yourself. Maybe because you both grew up in poverty? Or perhaps because you have each been victimized by the white power structure? You should try to get to know him better.

Tabitha Conrad, Surrealist Painter, Age 24

STR 8	DEX 11	INT 14	Idea 70%	
CON 17	APP 14	POW 18	Luck 90%	HP 14
SIZ 10	SAN 79	EDU 17	Know 85%	Magic Points 18

Damage Bonus: None

Spell: Shriveling (instinctive ability – doesn't consciously realize she can do it)

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 20%, Art (painting) 75%, Astronomy 20%, Bargain 50%, Climb 50%, Conceal 15%, Craft (knitting) 25%, Credit Rating 20%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Dodge 30%, Drive Auto 20%, Electrical Repair 10%, Fast Talk 5%, First Aid 40%, Hide 25%, History 20%, Jump 25%, Law 5%, Library Use 50%, Listen 40%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 25%, Navigate 30%, Occult 25%, Other Language (French) 15%, Own Language (English) 85%, Persuade 45%, Psychology 80%, Ride 25%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 80%, Swim 25%, Throw 25%, Track 70%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 50%, Grapple 25%, Head Butt 10%, Kick 25%, Handgun 20%, Machine Gun 15%, Rifle 25%, Shotgun 30%, SMG 15%, Knife 25%, Axe 20%, Small Club 25%, Large Club 25%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and shoes, purse (lipstick, compact with mirror, \$34 in cash, notebook, pens and pencils), wristwatch, crucifix on necklace.

Tabitha is a young Cajun woman from Louisiana. She grew up on a remote farm, and was educated at a one-room schoolhouse in the backcountry. She proved, however, to be quite intelligent, and her teacher was surprised at her skills and energy. He urged her to seek a scholarship and try to attend college. But her backwoods family seemed to resent her academic success, claiming it was distracting her from “more important things.” Her mother, in particular, was adamant that Tabitha not waste her time on “book learning” and instead stay on the farm to learn the “family business.”

Tabitha never really learned what that “family business” was, but she gathered it had something to do with a time when she was five years old, and her mother took her into the woods alone. She doesn't remember what happened there, but after that she began to have strange visions, visions so intense that she would lose all awareness of the world around her until they ended. Her mother would always question her afterward, demanding that she describe everything she had seen in detail. Tabitha began drawing her visions to help herself remember them.

When Tabitha was 16, her mother took her into the woods, saying that it was time for her to “complete her duties.” She took Tabitha to a huge, misshapen tree deep in the Louisiana swamps, and when Tabitha saw the manacles on the tree-trunk, and the knife in her mother's hand, she realized something terrible was about to happen. She cried out, screaming for help in a language she had heard only in her visions – and her mother suddenly shrieked and collapsed, smoking and shriveling before her eyes into a blackened, twisted corpse.

After that Tabitha's family no longer tried to impede her education. Eventually, she earned a scholarship to attend Louisiana State University, enrolling at the tender age of 17; from there her interests and talents in art and painting led her to Yale Art School. She graduated just two years ago, and already her work has earned her praise and attention in the national art scene. Now she has traveled to California, where her work gets even more appreciation. She finds California city life a bewildering and often unsettling environment, however, and feels very much out of her element. At the frequent parties which seem to be an important part of life on the West Coast, she is often reduced to smiling and laughing uncertainly, confused by all the personal rivalries and the incessant politics. She would much rather be painting.

Her visions still continue, strange fugue states in which she seems to see into other realities. Whenever she emerges from these visions, she has the inspiration for a new painting. Her bizarre, surrealistic images have earned her comparisons to Picasso and Dada, among others.

Appearance/Personality: Tabitha is normally a pretty, dark-haired, soft-spoken young woman with a pronounced southern/Cajun accent (she has not spent enough time elsewhere to lose it). She is short and slim, and dresses conservatively. Superficially she seems to be innocent and naïve, but there is a core of saddened experience beneath – she still remembers the terrible day when she had to kill her mother. She is lonely and looking for a boyfriend, but often lacks confidence in her ability to find one, thanks in part to her poor rural upbringing and mannerisms. Since her childhood experiences she has been a devout Catholic, and she feels uncomfortable in the agnostic, over-educated atmosphere of California. She also has a faint air of the otherworldly about her, a sense that she is not quite connected to the same world as everyone else. She seems to see right through people, and to understand things about them instantly. Many people find these insights unsettling, especially from someone as “innocent” as her.

James Spraddock: An angry, intense young man whose bright eyes and feverish energy somehow remind you of a polecat who once slaughtered your mother’s chickens. You can see that, underneath all his talk of justice and a bright socialist future, he’s nothing but a big bundle of anger, and that alarms you. You try to keep yourself distanced from him, but that’s not easy, since he always seems to hang around you when you meet.

Jackson Lee: A handsome, smooth-spoken Negro gentleman from Los Angeles, he writes a lot for serious magazines and newspapers. Your family didn’t like Negroes, being old-fashioned Louisiana folk, but one thing you learned at Yale was that Negroes (well, actually, they prefer to be called blacks) are just people like anyone else. How your folks would be scandalized to see you talking to one! Jackson used to be an angry man, like Spraddock, but now he’s calm and pleasant. You wonder what changed him – whatever it is, he holds it deep inside himself. Maybe it has something to do with the lovely children’s books he writes under another name – when he realized you knew about them, he made you promise not to tell anyone about them.

Finnigin Posner: What a peculiar old fellow! He’s always chattering and babbling strange things, and everyone thinks he’s awfully clever and creative (even “brilliant” or “visionary”). But when you look into his eyes, it’s as though there’s a big hollow place inside him, as though someone scooped him out and just left a shell behind. You’re not even sure that “Finnigin Posner” is his real name. You wonder what happened to him in the past to change him so much, and what he was like before that.

Linda Waite: A nice (if a bit plain) young girl who seems to be dating Finnigin Posner, although it’s so hard to be sure about that sort of thing out here in California. Why, sometimes the women here seem to change their boyfriends every day! Linda is a poet, and what little you’ve seen of her work somehow reminds you of your own paintings. You wonder if she has visions like yours. There’s something about her that makes you think of the sea, for some reason.

Oscar Petrovsky: a poor, ragged young man who fought in that terrible war over in Viet Nam. It seems to have affected him dreadfully, and he’s always drawing pictures of horrible things. He’s usually a mess, but could be really handsome if he cleaned up. He always seems even more lost than you at these parties, so you try to help him around. You find yourself worrying about him, and wish you could help him to get over whatever happened to him over there in Viet Nam – the memory sits inside him, festering, like a boil. Can you lance it, perhaps?

Finnigin Posner, Painter, Poet, and Madman, Age 45

STR 6	DEX 10	INT 19	Idea 95%	
CON 15	APP 13	POW 16	Luck 80%	HP 14
SIZ 13	SAN 41	EDU 12	Know 60%	Magic Points 16

Damage Bonus: None

Spells: Call/Dismiss Azathoth, Elder Sign, Enchant Weapon.

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 10%, Art (poetry/painting) 50%, Astronomy 50%, Bargain 5%, Biology 30%, Chemistry 40%, Climb 40%, Conceal 15%, Credit Rating 75%, Cthulhu Mythos 40%, Dodge 20%, Drive Auto 40%, Electrical Repair 10%, Fast Talk 30%, First Aid 30%, Hide 10%, History 30%, Jump 25%, Law 5%, Library Use 40%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 40%, Navigate 20%, Occult 50%, Other Language (Shan) 20%, Own Language (English) 70%, Persuade 60%, Pharmacy 25%, Physics 60%, Psychology 50%, Ride 15%, Sneak 10%, Spot Hidden 45%, Swim 25%, Throw 40%, Track 10%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 50%, Grapple 25%, Head Butt 10%, Kick 25%, Handgun 20%, Machine Gun 15%, Rifle 25%, Shotgun 30%, SMG 15%, Knife 25%, Axe 20%, Small Club 25%, Large Club 25%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and shoes, pocket-watch, wallet (\$230 in cash, driver's license, business cards), deck of cards (in back pocket), pack of cigarettes, lighter.

Finnigin Posner woke up one day with someone in his head. It was a bug, a great big bug, and it crawled around in there and chattered in his ear, and made him do things. Finnigin (that wasn't his name back then) spent a lot of time with the bug. It made him build things, machines the bug needed. Amazing things. Then it made him kill some people. Then it called something. SOMETHING. Finnigin doesn't want to remember that, but he has to. The vast, impossible THING spoke to the bug, and then it and the bug went away together, to a place where humans can't go.

Finnigin woke up in a park in San Francisco, trying to remember who he was. There had been a war, he learned, while he was with the bug. And lots of other things. He realized he shouldn't talk about the bug, because other people didn't have bugs, and if they found out about his bug they'd lock him up. So he was very careful, was Finnigin. Eventually he learned that he actually had quite a bit of money. He had a wife too, but she had left him after the bug came. Or maybe the bug killed her – Finnigin isn't too solid about all that. Once he learned who he was, he decided to change his name, because his old name reminded him of the bug. He became Finnigin Posner, who didn't have any bugs in his head. Anymore.

Finnigin is an artist, of sorts. He likes to paint, and to write. He likes to talk. Mostly he paints or writes or says whatever pops into his head. Sometimes it's things he remembers from the bug, but more often it's just whatever he imagines at the moment. His mind is always whirling, spinning round and round, chasing the bug that isn't there anymore. People like the stuff he paints and writes and says, they say it's "profound" and "visionary" and "far out." He gets invited to lots of parties, and they show his pictures in museums, and print his poems in big magazines like the *New Yorker*. Posner thinks this is all pretty funny, but he likes going to the parties, and meeting all the people who think he's "profound." Especially the pretty women, they're always fun to meet.

Finnigin meets lots of artists, because he's famous now, and the other artists hope he can make them famous too. Sometimes he helps them, and sometimes not – whatever pops into his head at the time. His big, hollow, bug-less head. Occasionally, though, Posner meets someone whose art reminds him of his own work, or of the bug. He helps those people. If everyone sees the same things, he won't have to worry about talking about the bug.

Finnigin's going to a party again tonight. It's held by Michael Tey, an artist who's a lot like Finnigin. Well, his pictures are sort of like Finnigin's, so Finnigin thinks maybe Tey had a bug too, once. He's not as nice as Finnigin, but his parties are always good.

Appearance/Personality: Finnigin Posner is a thin, gangly man with a huge shock of gray hair, sprouting out of his head like a fern. He looks to be in his fifties or sixties, but is actually only in his forties, and acts in an innocent, childish manner that seems far younger. He sometimes speaks in a vaguely British accent, but not always. He dresses in an odd mixture of formal old-fashioned garments and hip new styles, such as combining a formal evening jacket with tight blue jeans and a tie-dyed t-shirt.

Finnigin is a disconnected, fragmentary personality. He tends to say whatever he feels at the moment, or speaks in random free-association chains, or makes inane childish jokes. Many people think (mistakenly) that he's constantly stoned on drugs. Finnigin doesn't bother to disabuse them. Basically, though, Finnigin is a nice fellow, a harmless crank who likes anyone who doesn't actively threaten him, and often does favors for complete strangers. Secretly, Finnigin fears that the "bug" (which was actually one of the Shans, the Insects from Shaggai) might someday return and make him do bad things again, and his attempts to promote artists who share his visions are a clumsy attempt to understand what happened to him years ago.

James Spraddock: An angry young man. There seem to be a lot of those nowadays. You wonder what they're so angry about. You like to tease him – it's so much FUN when his eyes bug out like a frog's! You're sure he'll never have a bug in HIS head – too crowded with his own thoughts.

Jackson Lee: A nice black gentleman who is a very pleasant conversationalist. It's funny, though – his poems remind you a little of the bug. Odd, isn't it? You should find out if he's ever had a bug, or met someone else with one.

Tabitha Conrad: You think Tabitha had a bug for sure. I mean, look at those paintings! So strange, so wonderful, so frightening! How should you ask her about it? Did her bug leave, or is it still there? Maybe it'll skip into your head instead! You'd better be careful around her.

Linda Waite: Linda's a pretty girl, although not as pretty as a lot of the girls you've dated lately. Her poems remind you of your own poems, just a little, so you've been showing her around Los Angeles. Her eyes somehow remind you of the bug – why would that be?

Oscar Petrovsky: Another of your discoveries. Oscar used to be a soldier. His drawings are just like some of the things the bug showed you. You've made Oscar famous. Was that a good idea? Maybe. Who cares?

Linda Waite, Poet, Age 21

STR 10	DEX 9	INT 13	Idea 65%	
CON 8	APP 9	POW 19	Luck 85%	HP 10
SIZ 13	SAN 84	EDU 11	Know 55%	Magic Points 19

Damage Bonus: None

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 10%, Art (poetry) 40%, Bargain 25%, Climb 40%, Conceal 15%, Credit Rating 15%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Dodge 18%, Drive Auto 20%, Electrical Repair 10%, Fast Talk 45%, First Aid 40%, Hide 10%, History 20%, Jump 35%, Law 5%, Library Use 60%, Listen 50%, Mechanical Repair 20%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 10%, Navigate 10%, Occult 5%, Own Language (English) 68%, Persuade 25%, Psychology 25%, Ride 5%, Sneak 20%, Spot Hidden 42%, Swim 25%, Throw 25%, Track 10%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 25%, Head Butt 10%, Kick 25%, Handgun 20%, Machine Gun 15%, Rifle 25%, Shotgun 30%, SMG 15%, Knife 25%, Axe 20%, Small Club 25%, Large Club 25%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and shoes, small purse (notebook and pen, \$13 in cash, lipstick, small mirror), oddly-shaped golden necklace.

Linda Waite is a young poet who is just starting on what she hopes will be a long and successful career – although her surrealistic, fantastical works are not particularly popular in today’s politically-charged climate. She tries to make up for it by being very much a part of the new “hippie” counter-culture, and holding radical political positions that will make her popular with the “in” crowd.

Linda’s parents moved to California in the fifties, seeking a life of prosperity and leaving behind the stale New England backwaters where they had lived for many generations. Her father’s family, the Waites of Innsmouth, was angry at their decision, and they have been estranged ever since. Linda doesn’t even remember them, since the last time she saw them was in kindergarten. But every birthday she gets a present from her great-aunt Asenath, a piece of peculiar golden jewelry. She keeps them all in a drawer, but seldom wears any of them (tonight is an exception – she wants to look her best).

Linda’s health has always been poor, and she had frequent bouts with pneumonia as a child. Since moving to California it has improved, although she still gets the flu every winter. She has also always had strange and vivid dreams, especially when she is ill. Some of them are wondrous, some frightening, and a few so terrible that she’s woken from them screaming, unable (or unwilling) to remember what her mind just showed her. Since Junior High she’s been writing them down, as stories and poems. Many of them got favorable attention in school, and some were re-printed in local newspapers and even in a few poetry magazines, although they paid only with contributors’ copies. Still, Linda was full of hope that she could become a great poet, another Elliot or Whitman, and last year she moved to Los Angeles to pursue her dreams of artistic success. Her parents were furious – they had planned for her to attend college and get a good job – but she refused to listen to them. After all, wasn’t everyone saying now that you shouldn’t trust anyone over thirty?

Since arriving in L.A., however, Linda has had a difficult time. No one wants to publish her poems, not even the student newspapers and alternative press magazines that she was hoping would embrace her work. “Too weird, too surreal,” she always hears. But Linda can’t bring herself to write anything else – her dreams are too vivid to be denied. Visions of strange alien cities, of deep caves full of unknown things, of strange monsters and amazing abstract vistas – surely these visions have some value! Does everything have to be politics? Can’t she just put out some good vibes for everyone to enjoy?

A few weeks ago Linda met an odd older fellow named Finnigin Posner at a book signing where she was trying to interest someone – anyone – in her work. For some reason Posner took an interest in her – or at least in her looks. Linda didn’t want to let herself be used, but she was running out of money and couldn’t face the idea of slinking back to her parents a failure. Besides, she can’t help believing there’s an important reason for her dream visions, a reason that needs to be shared with the world. Anyway, Posner has been taking her around to parties and political

gatherings, introducing her to the movers and shakers in the California art and entertainment scene. She hasn't gotten any interest in her work yet – everyone seems to dismiss her as some bimbo hanger-on of Posner's – but she's sure she just needs to find the right person. Someone with good vibes, someone who can understand her visions – and understand her.

Appearance/Personality: Linda is thin and pale, with wispy brown hair and protuberant eyes which spoil an otherwise pretty face. She adheres to a vague sort of “neo-paganism,” a code of friendship and nature-worship combined with a general sort of niceness. She often refers to the people around her as putting out “good vibes” (if they're nice folks) or “bad vibes” (if they're angry or unfriendly). Linda dislikes angry or temperamental people, who she accuses of “making a bad scene” and getting her “uptight.” She takes her dream-visions very seriously and believes they represent some sort of message which should be shared with the world.

James Spraddock: An unhappy young man who is so obsessed with his politics that he can't seem to enjoy anything. All that anger's making a lot of bad vibes around him. He's obviously a Communist, and while you don't mind that one way or the other, you can't help thinking about how horrified your parents would be that you're associating with a Communist.

Jackson Lee: An intelligent, highly educated black man, full of good vibes. He writes mostly about politics, and you haven't read any of his work, but you can't help liking someone who's so laid-back and relaxed. If more people were like him, the world would be a much better place.

Tabitha Conrad: This woman is older than you, but seems to know a lot less about the world than you do. It's like she just stepped off a farm somewhere. You've seen a few of her paintings, though, and for some reason they remind you of your own dream-visions. That's really strange. Maybe your spirits are connected somehow, or you're both tied into some higher plane.

Finnigen Posner: A strange but oddly sweet man, much older than you (how your parents would be shocked!) who's very popular in the California art scene. You've seen some of his paintings and poems, and oddly enough, they remind you a little of your own work. Maybe that's why he's helping you. Maybe someday you'll be famous and popular like him! In the meantime he's been taking you around to parties and such, introducing you. He's really quite nice, full of good vibes, once you get used to his strange behavior.

Oscar Petrovsky: A dirty, bedraggled young man who picked up a lot of bad vibes in Vietnam. His artwork is really creepy, nothing at all like yours or Tabitha's – well, you hope not. Maybe. Why does he do those awful pictures, anyway? Is it because of that war? If so, you'll need to stay away from him – that stuff is just way too heavy and uncool for you to endure.

Oscar Petrovsky, Painter and Former Soldier, Age 22

STR 15	DEX 17	INT 13	Idea 65%	
CON 13	APP 12	POW 14	Luck 70%	HP 14
SIZ 15	SAN 54	EDU 10	Know 50%	Magic Points 14

Damage Bonus: +1d4

Skills (those not listed are at 01%): Accounting 10%, Anthropology 10%, Art (drawing/painting) 70%, Bargain 35%, Chemistry 10%, Climb 70%, Conceal 25%, Credit Rating 15%, Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Dodge 64%, Drive Auto 30%, Electrical Repair 20%, Fast Talk 25%, First Aid 60%, Hide 40%, History 20%, Jump 50%, Law 5%, Library Use 25%, Listen 50%, Locksmith 20%, Martial Arts 10%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Medicine 5%, Natural History 10%, Navigate 30%, Occult 5%, Operate Heavy Machinery 20%, Other Language (Polish) 10%, Other Language (Vietnamese) 15%, Own Language (English) 56%, Persuade 15%, Pharmacy 20%, Psychology 10%, Ride 5%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 63%, Swim 34%, Throw 40%, Track 25%

Weapon Skills: Fist/Punch 60%, Grapple 30%, Head Butt 20%, Kick 33%, Handgun 20%, Machine Gun 25%, Rifle 60%, Shotgun 40%, SMG 45%, Knife 40%, Axe 20%, Small Club 25%, Large Club 50%, Sword 20%

Equipment: Clothes and boots, large sketch-pad, box of drawing charcoal, wristwatch, \$65 in cash (rolled up and tucked in boot), lighter, three packs of cigarettes.

Oscar Petrovsky was just another young Detroit, the descendent of Polish immigrants (his grandparents in New York still spoke the old language, and were barely literate in English). He enjoyed drawing, an odd hobby for a well-built football player, but otherwise was a typical working-class youth (his father worked in the General Motors plant, and Oscar had expected to do the same). Oscar graduated high school in May of 1965, and planned to marry his high-school sweetheart Janet and work in the GM plant. The only thing in the way was the draft – Oscar would have to spend some time in the Army first. He was a patriotic boy and accepted it as his duty.

Oscar was sent to Vietnam. There, he fought bravely in the 25th Infantry Division, struggling to stay alive in the nightmarish jungle fighting, the patrols and ambushes and the long, pointless marches. He didn't understand what the war was about, or why his friends and comrades were dying, and after a while all that mattered was staying alive until his tour was over and he could come home. Letters from Janet kept his spirits up for a while... but then she met some other boy and sent him a "dear John" letter.

Something happened. Oscar does not remember what – it was a patrol, somewhere deep in the jungle, and Oscar was the only survivor. He remembers shadows moving through the trees, inhuman shapes, the screams of the dying... And staggering out of the jungle a week later, starving and feverish, to be nearly shot by the jumpy guards at the firebase. After that he spent most of his remaining tour in a hospital. The Army psychiatrist diagnosed him with "combat fatigue" but Oscar knew there was more to it – knew he'd seen something, met something, that would have driven him utterly mad if he remembered it. Only his drawings, his pictures, let him release the terrible stress of those suppressed memories. His work was frenzied, inchoate, maddened charcoal evocations of the horror of combat.

When he returned to the US, Oscar couldn't seem to fit in anymore. He left home and wandered across the country, working odd jobs to stay alive, and spending every spare moment on his frenzied drawings. Eventually he wound up in California. There, while he was working, an older man named Posner saw his artwork and was amazed. He offered to get Oscar a show at a local art gallery. The next thing he knew, he was famous, trumpeted as a new "protest artist" whose work revealed the bankruptcy and horror of Vietnam. Oscar found he had money, an apartment, and rich famous people inviting him to parties and even into their beds.

Oscar wanders through all this in a daze, the same vague confused daze he has lived in since he returned from Vietnam. The unwanted memories still fester inside his head, and he still draws (and now, sometimes, paints) with frantic energy, trying to exorcise a horror he does not understand. There must be someone else out there who understands these compulsions, these awful, indefinable visions. Surely he isn't the only one with such a burden.

Appearance/Personality: Oscar is normally handsome in a blond, square-faced Slavic sort of way, but since returning from the 'Nam he's really let himself go. His hair and beard are long and straggly, full of snarls and knots, his skin is pale, and his eyes are shadowed and sunken with lack of sleep. He smokes constantly. Oscar usually dresses in a mixture of old, ragged Army clothes and random garments from the local Salvation Army. He always carries a tablet and a box of charcoal, in case the need to draw suddenly seizes him (which it does at the most inopportune times). He has a vague, disconnected, dreamy air about him, and seems to take everything the world throws at him without particularly caring – although he grows tense and irritable when someone brings up Vietnam. Inwardly, he is desperate for someone who can understand and explain what happened to him, who can soothe the clawing not-memories in his head.

James Spraddock: A young idiot who's always babbling about socialism, revolution, and the plight of the working class. What a load of... well, you know.

Jackson Lee: A mild-mannered black man who writes for a lot of famous magazines. He seems very calm and in control of himself – you wish you could feel that way. Maybe he can tell you his secret.

Tabitha Conrad: A pretty young woman from somewhere down South. She seems kind of lost out here in California. Something about her fascinates you, though, as though something in her connects to a current deep inside your brain. She's the first girl you've felt interest in since Janet dumped you. You have to get to know her better, find out what's behind that strange, haunted look in her eyes.

Finnigen Posner: the skinny, wacky guy who made you famous. Posner's always inviting you to parties, like he's showing off his discovery. He doesn't seem to really have much talent himself. Not that you really care – the only difference between now and when you weren't famous is that now you have enough to eat. You think Posner must do a lot of drugs – he has the same look as soldiers in 'Nam who did a lot.

Linda Waite: A thin, plain young girl who looks out of place in this fancy party. She talks in that "California hippie" style you've been hearing a lot lately. She's apparently here with Posner, maybe another artist he's trying to promote the way he did you. There's something unsettling about her big watery eyes, although you aren't sure what – you get the shivers whenever she looks at you for too long.