

Leaving

A Module by Brent Benadè

The night was long and dour. Each drink to lift the weight from one's shoulders instead stirring and weighing the ephemeral contents of the head. You leave. Time in between coherent snatches disappears into the swirling of space. Through the rain and the roar of the road, a bright light pierces reality, and takes you away...

This module uses mechanics derived from, and resources taken directly from **Apocalypse World by Vincent Baker**. This is not **Apocalypse World**, but you should buy it anyway :P.

This module is influenced by: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Sucker Punch, A Perfect Circle, IT, Halloween, HP Lovecraft* and whatever else my subconscious remembered that I haven't.

Running this module

In terms of reading this module:

This text indicates a description, it may be stylized in places, but is not intended to be read out verbatim.

This text indicates a “cut-scene”, while optional, these blocks are intended to be read to the players (not this one)

[These brackets indicate a condition that needs to be fulfilled for a text block to make sense]

This text indicates a critical detail.

{These brackets indicate a rules term}.

Synopsis:

All of the characters are aspects of the personality of a single person, James. James has just been fired from his job. He has a loving wife and a very young daughter, and he has no idea how he can support them, or what he’s going to do in the days to come.

He can’t bear to face them yet, so he goes to a bar and tries to find the courage to tell his wife the news in the bottom of a bottle. But after a whole night of searching all he finds is the strength to cry. He tries to drive home and is caught in an accident. He’s badly injured and in a coma.

The module takes place as James lies in the hospital, and is the journey of his subconscious as he tries to wake up.

In the first act, the characters are trapped in an asylum with all the aspects of their personality that they tried to suppress, both the vile, and the pure. The elements of the hospital room leak through: the television that is always on, but only ever shows static; the saccharine-sweet nurse that gives him his morphine; the smell of flowers...

Each day the asylum becomes more horrible, forcing the players to try to escape. This module is a free-form puzzle, each of the characters have special abilities that allow them to make plans to escape in various ways. Key elements, places and details are given, but as the GM you have the right to chop, change, reduce and extrapolate based on how your players react.

Once the players escape, they realise that they are in a desert. A man in rags greets them; he pulls a huge sled through the desert, with bags and boxes stacked on top of it. Trailing him is a motley of people and animals, half distinguishable, half place-able. The ragman is the custodian of James’s memories. Each person is a one forgotten or half remembered and the sled is filled with remembered things. The man explains that they are retreating from a

dark wave on the horizon and that he knows of a city where they can seek shelter. Sure enough, on the horizon is an inky ocean of death that creeps quickly towards them.

The players will reach the city, but it seems to be abandoned and its gates are closed. The players need to find a way in, before the black ocean swallows them. If they do, they wake up to their wife and child; and realise that they are the same person, if they haven't already. If the players fail to escape the asylum on time, or find a way into the city, Jame's condition deteriorates. He dies, and all of the players with him.

Tips and Bits:

The rules are intended to be bent and interpreted, don't follow them verbatim.

Attacking with fists does 1 harm, any practical weapon the PC's can make does 2 harm and an explosion does 4 harm to people caught in it.

Unless stated otherwise, NPC's can only take 2 harm.

Reward creativity.

If it doesn't say anything about it in the character sheet, it's for one of two reasons. Either it didn't stand out in the character's mind, or they don't know. You want the characters to question their sanity. You can make up details, but don't be afraid to tell them they don't know.

Characters:

Jonathon is the face that James puts on when interacting with other people. He is a bit self-absorbed, but good with people. Particularly, he's good at calming people down so that he can get out of trouble.

Andrew is James's work ethic and his ability to "buckle down". He's hard working and honest, and has a cool head under pressure. He can perform any trick you might reasonably expect a magician to perform (this includes escape artistry).

Melissa is James's protective instinct. She becomes almost unstoppable when caring for those she loves.

Edgar is the core of James's soul. He's shy and reclusive, but well meaning. He can travel through a pocket dimension, but it becomes more nightmarish the longer he stays

Sophie is James's insight and self reflection. Not only can she read what's going on, she can "see in between what's there" to find the truth.

Act 1

The Asylum

The asylum represents the depths of James's coma. It is run by nurse Mallard, a painfully cheery woman. She's the only non-patient who can speak. She is an extension of the asylum, and the orderlies are in turn an extension of her. If there is enough of a ruckus she will come through. The orderlies are quite strong, but Nurse Mallard can sedate the pc's with her presence alone.

The walls are painted off-white all the way through the building. Most of the passages are paved with green-grey linoleum. Unless specifically mentioned, none of the rooms have windows. The whole building is lit brightly by flickering halogen lights.

The asylum is unpleasant, and grows more so with each passing day. There is a specific routine to each day, broken down into sections. At the conclusion of each of the first 2 days, the pc's will experience shared nightmares. The third day never ends. Instead, at the conclusion of the day's routine, random activities are repeated until the pc's escape or die.

[If Sophie gets a {10+ for a The Way Things Are roll}]:

The orderlies and patients appear to be in their form for day three.

The orderlies are attached by cables to Nurse Mallard, who in turn slides through the rooms hanging from a chain to the ceiling.

All of the players are badly burnt on their left arm and have blood leaking from their right side and right leg.

[If Sophie gets a {7-9 for a The Way Things Are roll}]:

The orderlies and patients appear to be in their form for day two (unless it's already day three)

There are fuzzy ephemeral grey links between the orderlies and nurse Mallard and between nurse Mallard and the building.

There is some kind of dark ooze clinging to each of the players, specifically around their left arm, the right side of their chest and their right leg

[If Edgar successfully uses his {Special Place move}]:

The whole asylum appears to be a network of intestines and fleshy chambers. Locked doors appear to be closed valves. No other people are visible, but fuzzy grey strings seem to move

about within the chambers (corresponding to the grey links in Sophie's move). If Edgar has successfully brought a sharp object

with him, he can sever the line. This will permanently kill an orderly, or nurse Mallard if he can find her line.

As always with Edgars {Special Place} move, it is up to the GM to fill this world with as much nightmare fuel as they can. Eg. faces and arms may push their way out of the fleshy walls, tunnels may become flooded with insects, Edgars body may twist and corrupt unpleasantly, etc.

The characters and places in the asylum are given separately. Unless otherwise stated, all NPC's can only take 2 {harm} and do 1{harm} if they get a chance to attack.

Player characters do 1{harm} with their fists. Basically every weapon in this module upgrades this to 2{harm}.

Day 1

Good Morning

You awaken in a small white room, the orange light of morning leaking in through a small square window, high up on the wall. Diamond shadows distort over what you now see to be old quilting. The room is padded with slightly yellow fabric and you are lying on a foam mattress. You appear to be wearing blue cotton pyjamas, but they are sticky with sweat, though the room smells of fresh flowers. A windowed door sits in the middle of the opposite wall. You see a man's profile silhouetted through the window. You hear a knock, and a click from the other side...

Each player is awakened in turn by an orderly.

The orderlies seem very plain, they have similar pyjamas save that theirs are white. Each orderly has a name tag, but the name is smudged as to be unreadable. They each have short, neatly cut black hair, and seem to be Caucasian. They're faces are plain and forgettable. In fact as soon as one looks away from them, it's as if you never saw the face.

The orderlies are silent, and strangely graceful. They beckon the players to follow them. If the player refuses, or tries to ask questions, the orderlies will respond. However, as they talk, they're mouths seem to open over a wall of television snow and the only sound that they make is that of static. If the player refuses to co-operate, a second orderly will appear and help the first man-handle the character out of the door.

Wait until every player has made the decision to exit, or has been forced to exit.

Once the players are outside, they see that their cell is one in a row of cells. Outside each cell are orderlies and other people dressed in blue pyjamas. Four of them the players recognise as their friends, but there are some new faces.

(Wobbles)

The first to catch their eye is a tall obese man. The pyjamas he wears are enormous and there are sweat stains all the way down his sides. He has thick, greased-back, brown hair and beady eyes half swallowed by his chubby face. He seems to be wheezing with the effort of getting out of bed.

(Larry)

The next is a man of average height with thinning hair and a neck-beard. He has some red acne visible through the beard. His chin is weak, his shoulders are narrow and he has some weight around his waist making him appear not unlike a bowling pin. An excessively greasy bowling pin. His face has an unmistakable layer of oil over it and his pyjamas have numerous strange brown stains of various sizes, overlapping and culminating in density about where

you would expect his belly button to be. His hands are deep in his pockets, and his gaze shifts rapidly between the other patients, though they seem to linger on one in particular...

(Irene)

...a strikingly pale slender lady. She's painfully thin, which at first makes her look taller than she is, but the scale of the orderly beside her reveals that she is actually quite small. Beneath her long lank platinum hair is a face that would be pretty, were it not for how haggard it was. Her large grey eyes are puffy and framed by dark rings. The salty trails of tears, now quelled, still adorn her cheeks and her forearms are wrapped in bandages, stained red-brown along the inside.

(Percy)

In stark contrast to the maudlin woman is a tall slender man, who practically dances out of his cell. His pate is completely bald, but the rest of his bushy gray hair is making a grand effort to compensate for it. His face is wrinkled, but it has high cheeks, a moderate jaw and a warm smile. There is a spark in his eyes which matches his smile as he tries to have a rather animate chat with the steely and unresponsive orderly.

(Jeff)

Lastly, there is a small pallid man, hunched over nervously as if trying to hide in his own shadow. His untidy tousel of black hair barely conceals his flitting eyes. He fidgets as if there are ants under his skin that he's quietly trying to ignore.

Everyone is led through stark paint and linoleum passages and into a large white tiled bathroom. On one side are toilet cubicles; on the other, shower cubicles. On the far end of the room is a large metal basin. There are a series of grubby mirrors and a long shelf above it. There are tooth-brushes, tooth paste and razors on the shelf. On the close side is a shelf with clean sets of blue pyjamas folded up and a laundry hamper.

Some orderlies enter the room and keep watch, as the other patients begin their morning ablutions.

This is a good opportunity for the players to interact with each-other and the other patients.

Breakfast

Once the patients have finished with their ablutions, they are led through the passages to a large room with wooden floors.

There are about six small square plastic tables laid out through the room, each table has four plastic lawn-chairs arranged around it, but having four people eat at any of them would be somewhat ambitious.

One end of the room(to the right as the patients enter) is cordoned off by what would presumably be a dispensary; though it looks more like a bank teller. It consists of a half wall supporting a counter with a thick glass pane leading up to the ceiling. In about the centre of the kiosk there is a slot between the glass and the counter through which objects could be passed. At the moment there is an orderly standing behind the kiosk with a tray holding some steaming bowls, presumably breakfast. The other end has a door that is currently closed.

The other patients form a line behind the counter, and the pc's are motioned by the orderlies to join. One by one, everyone collects a bowl of plain oats porridge. It's bland, but everyone is hungry.

[Once everyone is settled]:

The door to the cafeteria opens with a squeak. Through it comes an orderly pushing a person, bound in a straight jacket and with leather straps to some kind of two wheeled metal trolley. The bound man is huge, well over six and a half feet tall and broadly built. Beneath the straight jacket his muscles visibly bulge as he occasionally writhes; struggling and swearing at the orderlies. His face is severe, pale with short cropped red hair. His cheeks are red and his eyes are wild. The orderlies prop him against the wall and try in vain to feed him oats.

The door opens again, and a small, older woman with curled shoulder-length blond hair walks into the cafeteria. She has a beaming, but false, smile and a large syringe. In a cheery voice, she tuts:

"This won't do deary! You need to count to ten and calm down-".

The bound man spews a barely sensible apoplectic stream of obscenity towards the small woman. The woman shakes her head and pouts disappointedly. Then, with a sudden bout of barely concealed sadistic glee she skips towards him and stabs him in the chest with the almost cartoonishly oversized syringe. The man's head rolls back and he gasps. The fire in his cheeks subsides and his head lolls forward again; his wild green eyes now clouded in a chemical haze.

The patients are given some time to socialize before the small blond woman rings a bell. All the patients get up and head towards the closed door. [If the players don't co-operate] the orderlies will try to manhandle them

Group

Through the door is an L-shaped room with worn brown carpets. Near the entrance is a circle of plastic chairs. Behind the chairs is a set of small plastic tables, with paper and crayons and just around the corner sits a black piano.

The small blond woman takes a seat, and each of the patients takes a seat in the circle. William is wheeled to the opposite end of the Circle to the blond woman.

"Hello, everybody"

The woman chimes with a smile.

"For those of us who are new here, my name is Nurse Mallard and this is Sunny-Hills Home for the Mentally Unsound. Each day we have a schedule of activities designed to make you better."

Percy nods sagely, but Jeff and Wobbles practically gag.

"This is our first activity for the day; Group Therapy. Some people call it Group, but don't forget the therapy!!"

Nurse Mallard smiles expectantly, as if she's just made a joke.

"We shall each take turns talking about how we feel, and maybe by working together, each of you can realize how wretched an example of a human being you each are."

Nurse Mallard beams cheerily and claps her hands.

"Right! Let us start with Irene today. The orderlies tell me that you tried to kill yourself again last night. Now we, can't let you do that deary, it reflects badly on the institution. My but you are rather stubborn... they say you bit right into your arms to open them up like that."

Irene hangs her head low, gripping her knees tightly.

"Do you ever stop to think about the medicine we have to waste to stop you from dying? What if someone else gets hurt and we can't help them because some stupid melodramatic bitch had a bit of a tantrum? What are we supposed to tell them then?"

Irene gets up with a start, but is almost instantly pushed down again by an orderly. She crawls into a ball in her chair and starts sobbing violently. Larry stares intently, laughing and occasionally licking his lips. Beads of sweat gather on his skin.

"I hope you think about what you've done."

Without skipping a beat the nurse turns to Larry.

"How do you feel about Irene's repeated transgressions, especially in light of those terrible paranoid accusations that she laid on you?"

Larry stops laughing. The room is silent save for the sound of Irene crying. Without ever breaking his stare, Larry licks his lips, the stickiness of his spit audible in the empty room.

Mallard affects a pouty frown

"I think we can all agree that this matter is very serious indeed. Does anyone else have something that they would like to share?"

At this point, unless someone else acts, Percy will get up and tell everyone at length long winded tales of his own personal woe and redemption. If not interrupted, this will last until. Nurse Mallard claps her hands and asks him to sit down.

"I think that will be enough for today, I hope everyone can use what we learnt about ourselves today."

With a smile, Mallard pops out of her seat.

"How about we all get some fresh air?"

Yard/Lunch

The players are all led from the rec-room through the cafeteria and the passage to a door which leads into an enclosed concrete courtyard. It's noon, so the high concrete walls surrounding the yard offer no protection from the blazing sun. It's possible to see a row of what look like cell windows high up one of the walls. The players have about an hour to socialize practically unsupervised. After which, they will be herded back inside for lunch.

The patients line up and fetch lunch as before. It's a bowl of grey meat-stew, with a stale slice of brown bread. They have an opportunity to socialize again.

Art

After lunch, the patients are herded into the rec-room. Wobbles, Jeff and Percy will sit down at the small tables, and doodle with the crayons. The players are welcome to join.

Unattended crayons will be eaten by Wobbles.

Larry will grab a crayon in his fist and draw stylized penises and breasts on the walls while quietly laughing to him-self. This is the true artistry usually reserved for the inside of toilet stalls in a boys' high school.

Irene will sit at the piano and start playing. She completely zones out as she plays, and for a moment she seems to escape into some form of happiness. She only knows two pieces though... Fur Elise and the Moonlight Sonata. As she alternates between the two pieces Percy gets progressively more irate, but he seems to keep it under control.

William is still bound, and propped up in one of the corners. He seems to enjoy the music.

Hours pass, until eventually the orderly usher everyone back through to the cafeteria.

Dinner

Nurse Mallard is now attending the counter. As each patient gets to the counter, they are handed two plastic cups, one with a pill and another with some water. Once the patient has demonstrated that they have taken the pill, they are given dinner. Dinner is exactly the same as lunch, save that it comes with a bowl of some kind of sickly sweet pink pudding.

After dinner, the patients can choose to either return to their cells, or they can mingle for a few hours. Irene and Larry go back to their cells. Jeff and Wobbles bring some tables together and pull out a deck of cards. Wobbles will beckon the players over to play cards. William is interested in watching the cards.

After a while the orderlies will shepherd the players back into their cells.

Sweet Dreams

All of the players share the following nightmare:

The road swims in front of you. Appropriate for the amount of rain pissing down on it. Your headlights cast luminescent cones through the heavy rain, barely effective. You contemplate if perhaps you should pull over and wait the rain out. You decide against it. In for a penny in for a pound!! That reasoning makes no fucking sense, but it's convincing enough. You can't tell for a second if you're going down a hill or if it's just the alcohol playing with your sense of balance. The rivulets of water flowing downwards indicate that it is in-fact a hill. You decide that you should probably be going slower than whatever three digit number your speedometer is indicating. You hit the brakes. The car loses grip and starts skidding sideways down the hill. This gives you a pretty good view of the on-coming truck, before it hits you.

You wake up in your cell, sticky with sweat from your nightmare. No. As you look down you see that you are covered in blood which seems to have poured from a set of now non-existent holes in your chest and leg.

Day 2

The routine for the day is unchanged. The other patients are obviously transformed, but it has no effect on their behaviour or abilities. The patients and the staff do not perceive these changes at all. As the players have probably figured out most of how the asylum works by now, the daily events are more free form than before.

The door to your cell opens and an orderly beckons. However, the orderly seems to be strangely different. His skin and hair seems to be made from plastic. Instead of eyes he now has two unblinking eye-shaped screens, each showing television snow.

As the players exit their cells, they notice some strange changes in the other patients:

Wobbles has grown so fat as to strain disbelief. The rolls of fat on his legs and arms overflow and cover his feet and hands, making them look almost elephantine. He is unable to bend his knees or drop his arms. His rolls of flesh nearly swallow his head and he needs to face slightly upwards just to avoid suffocating himself.

Larry seems greasier than ever, his facial oil lies so thick that visible droplets form and run down his skin. The brown stains on his pyjamas are replaced by similarly sized and distributed green ones. He stares intently at Irene and licks his lips, but instead of a tongue, some kind of flat millipede-like creature emerges from his mouth and scuttles sideways across his lips.

Irene has grown even paler and her skin now has a slightly blue tinge. Her lips have turned blue-black. The dark rings around her eyes are now completely black and appear to leak into her tears, based off of the black runnels of tears streaming down her face. Her bandages have grown long and thin. They've partially unravelled, giving the impression of long trailing sleeves as she walks.

Percy has somehow exchanged the normal blue pyjamas for bright orange ones. He also has an elegant pair of white gloves. His face seems less wrinkly, but in a waxy disconcerting way, like he's had a bad face-lift. It also looks like an attempt has been made at dying his bushy hair blond, but the dye is patchy and even where it sits thick looks a bit silly and plastic.

Jeff's once thick brown hair has thinned dramatically. His skin has grown nearly transparent, revealing blue veins beneath it. His dark flitting eyes seem to be completely black, and a bit larger than they were before. As he wrings his hands nervously it is very apparent that his fingers have become significantly elongated.

The players are led to the wash-room. If they have made arrangements for contraband from Jeff, they will probably find them in their fresh pyjamas.

When the players come through for breakfast, they will see that this time William has been brought in and sedated ahead of them. William is also changed:

William's, short cropped hair has been shaven off completely, revealing a strangely symmetrical set of eight bony bumps arranged in two rows of four along his scalp. As he eats his oats, you can see that his teeth have become pointed and sharp. His eyes are now red instead of green.

After breakfast (unseasoned oats again), the players are taken through to group therapy with Nurse Mallard.

Nurse Mallard, if left uninterrupted will take turns picking on Irene (for being selfish and melodramatic), William (for being a glorified toddler, with a terrible temper and no sense of perspective) and Wobbles (for being fat and useless).

The characters then have yard time and lunch as before.

During art [if the players haven't managed to get more music for Irene]:

Percy grows gradually tenser and irate. Eventually whichever crayons he's using start crumbling from the force he's using them with. Eventually something snaps. Percy stands suddenly, upending the table he was sitting at.

"Even if you only know TWO FUCKING SONGS that doesn't mean you have to play them OVER AND OVER A-FUCKING-GAIN. For fuck's sake, surely you can bash out some sort of original composition? It doesn't have to be Beethoven. I don't care if it's FUCKING twinkle twinkle little star."

Irene remains serene and unresponsive. Percy storms across the room towards her. The other patients don't even turn to pay attention. The orderlies remain still.

Give the players a chance to react. At this point they can intervene by talking Percy down.

[If the players don't react]:

Percy moves up to Irene and pulls her backwards away from the piano and onto the floor. Irene curls into a ball and starts crying and calling for help. Percy starts kicking and stomping her curled up form. No-one reacts, except for Larry, who starts bounding around the scene, laughing uncontrollably.

If the players react at this point, they will need to physically restrain Percy. He will calm down almost instantly at this point, and the orderlies will come through to separate you.

[If the players continue to not react]:

As Percy continues stomping on her, Irene's crying turns to muffled whimpering, and then silence. The stomps start sounding meatier and meatier as Irene's bones start cracking audibly. Eventually Percy stops. He spits on her body.

"Now we both get what we wanted."

The orderlies come through and remove Irene's body. Larry doesn't stop laughing.

Irene will be absent for the rest of the day. However, she will still appear the next morning when everyone wakes up.

The rest of the day will proceed as normal.

Sweet Dreams 2: The Dreamenning

All of the players share the following nightmare:

You're in a dimly lit room. It has ancient dark wooden floors and the green patterned wall paper is mouldy and peeling. You're lying on the floor, your hands are bound back to back by thick ropes. Above you is a flickering light-bulb suspended from the ceiling by a wire. An inky black substance is running down the side of the bulb and dripping into a puddle on the floor.

You force your way upright. The puddle is starting to grow faster and faster. You know that whatever that black substance is, it will be your death. You try and fail to untie your hands with your teeth. The black puddle continues to grow faster and faster, and you know that you don't have much time. You head to the door and struggle for a few terrifying moments to use the door-knob. On your toes to avoid the edge of the puddle, the door finally unlatches and opens out. You run along the upstairs passage and down the stairs. You don't recognize the dilapidated wooden house at all, but you some-how know your way through.

At last you make it through the front door. You shut it behind you and keep running down the empty night streets. You hear a creaking followed by a thunderous roar. Tripping over your feet to look behind you, you see that the front of the old house has burst outward, with a river of the black liquid spewing forth. The mass of liquid swells and grows so fast that you are eventually unable to out-run it. It sweeps you up. Every centimetre of flesh it touches goes instantly numb, the muscles beneath paralyzed. As the paralysis wracks your body, you have no choice but to be swept away in the torrent. You don't drown though. Your lungs are unable to move to draw breath and you suffocate.

You awaken and all the padding in your cell has turned black. For half a second you fear that you are unable to move, but this passes and you draw a relieved breath.

Day 3

You cell door opens, but instead of an orderly there stands a black humanoid automaton. It's face is a hissing television screen.

You leave the passageway expecting some transformation in your fellow patients, but are still caught off guard, by the severity of their mutation.

Wobbles has become a single wrinkled ball of flesh, as he moves along the passage, random limbs poke through the mass of skin to push him one way or another.

Larry is now completely drenched in a thick green slime. His feet are each closer to the foot of a snail than a human. Beneath his pyjamas writhe about a dozen large oblong shapes, which occasionally reveal them-selves to be giant centipedes, as they're mandibled heads or pincer-tails flick out of his sleeves or collar.

Irene actually looks much healthier. She seems to have put on a healthy amount of weight, her bandages are absent, as are the dark rings around her eyes. Her lips and skin are still disturbingly blue. Black tears still run from her eyes, and if you concentrate at all, you notice that you can see through her. As if her whole form is nothing but a dense mist.

Percy is now dressed as a clown. His bushy hair is now plastic red, his face is covered in white grease paint, save for a red painted smile. His pyjamas are half orange, half green with yellow pom-poms for buttons. He wears comically large shoes and has a large white ruff around his neck.

Jeff's hair is almost completely gone; his skin has gone slimy and loosely mimics whatever is behind it. His eyes are now two large black disks, sitting at each side of his head. His hands have become webbed, and he seems to have sticky pads at the end of each of his fingers. His legs bend more like those of a dog than a human, accentuating his hunching posture even more.

When the players arrive at the bathroom, they see William being carted out of it, swearing wildly at the orderlies as they take him.

William's skin has turned blood-red and scaly. The eight bumps down the centre of his head, have burst out of his scalp as two rows of four back-wards pointing horns. His eyes flash with fire as he screams at the orderlies. As he struggles, you can't help but notice that in addition to the form of his muscle beneath the jacket, there appear to be hard pointed objects spread all over his skin. Particularly large ones seem to point from his elbows.

The routine for this day is unchanged until dinner. At which point the players are not allowed to go back to their cells to sleep, and the various daily activities happen in a random order, only discernable by the way in which the orderlies try to herd the players. **The players**

still physically need sleep and will suffer the effects of sleep deprivation, including hallucinations in the later stages of deprivation.

If your players are unable to figure a way out of the asylum, or die trying to escape: go to Ending 1.

If they do figure out a way out of the asylum, then go to Ending 2.

Ending 1:

In a hospital room there lies a man, bloody and broken. Without hope, he lies in a coma. He lies there for his cowardice, for his ill-judgement. Beside him sits his wife and his daughter. They would have forgiven him just to see his smile again, but they'll never get the chance.

Ending 2:

Exodus

As the players leave the asylum:

A hot wind blows kicking sand into your eyes. As you turn to find the source of the sand, you see the whole asylum dissolve into the wind. When the wind dies down you see that you are no longer standing on well kept grass. Instead you are at the crest of an enormous dune. The sun hangs at its zenith, blazing unpleasantly down on you, the sand is hot and the ground shimmers above it.

On the horizon, you can see a dark shadow gathering, and visibly spreading across the landscape. You can't say how you know... but that shadow brings cold death.

Almost out of nowhere a man dressed in rags appears behind you. He must be at least 7 feet tall, but his shape is basically indistinguishable beneath the layers and layers of mouldering grey and brown cloth that coat him. His face is concealed in an unnatural darkness and his hands are wrapped in dirty white linen.

He's dragging a huge sled, stacked high with boxes, chests and suitcases. Following him is a trail of people, dressed strangely for the desert. Children with chocolate smeared hands; young adults clutching enormous text-books; awkward teenagers in ill-fitting school uniforms all follow the rag man, ignoring the desert sun and the shifting sands. Amongst them a ginger cat and a Jack Russell weave their way through.

A voice like rushing wind comes from the figure:

"You must come with me, or else the black tide will swallow you. I know a safe place."

There between the desert and the approaching tide, there doesn't seem to be much choice. The man indicates towards the sled. You get on the sled and the man starts pulling. What seems like hundreds of kilometres of desert stream beneath you in seconds.

After a couple of steps forward the rag man stops. Before you is a large set of white walls, with an iron gate set into it.

The rag man turns towards you.

"I cannot open these doors for you."

This last puzzle may require some lateral thinking on the part of the players. The rag man doesn't speak anymore, but he is the embodiment of James's memory. Each person and

animal has played a bit-part in James's past, something that the players should hopefully pick up on. The memories are unable to talk back.

If the players open any of the boxes they will find hoards of things that James's once owned or remembers. If the players think of something specific, they will find it in the first container they look in, independent of size constraints. Additionally the object will be as they remembered it.

The players may reasonably assume that they can find rope, and maybe some objects to form a grappling hook out of. Another viable option is the ladder from Edgar's background, he remembers it as being huge, and so it can reach all the way up the city wall.

The players could also build a ramp-like structure out of the chests and boxes to get over the wall.

If Sophie succeeds with {The Way Things Are}, the wall appears as a giant sheet of cloth. Once a character knows this, they can simply cut the wall open with any object sharp enough to cut cloth.

If the players are unable to figure out a way into the city, then the black tide will eventually catch up to them and swallowing them up (as in the second dream in the asylum). The players then get Ending 1.

If the players manage to all get over/through the city wall then:

Your eyes open crustily. You're lying in a hospital bed, wrapped in bandages. The wall is blank in front of you, save for a black wall mounted television, which for some reason is showing snow and hissing static. A small bird-like middle-aged blond nurse sees you wake. She smiles excitedly and exits the room. Through the door come two familiar faces; Ingrid and Emily. Ingrid is crying as she comes to the side of your bed.

"I was so worried for you..."

"I'm so sorry."

Larry

Larry is the embodiment of James's lust. He's specifically designed to make the characters uncomfortable. He is supposed to be a foil for Sophie; he ties into her background of sexual shame. In general he should be difficult to like.

Mannerisms:

Larry doesn't ever talk. He constantly breathes in a heavy wheeze. His gaze typically lingers creepily on a single person at a time. If spoken to or addressed he tends to respond with a stupid sounding laugh (think "hurr-durr", more than "haha"). As a nervous tick, he often licks his lips. The easiest way to gauge what he's thinking is by the manner in which he licks his lips.

Description:

His build is much like a bowling-pin, with narrow shoulders and a weak chin. He's always greasy and slimy. Over the course of the day his pyjamas accumulate brown and grey stains, radiating from the region of his bellybutton.

On the second day, the stains change colour to greener hues. The oil on his face gathers and drips in greasy droplets. When he licks his lips, instead of a tongue he instead has a flat millipede-like creature, which flicks out of his mouth and scuttles sideways across his lips.

On the third day, he is continuously drenched in thick green mucous, his feet are more akin to the foot of a snail or slug and wherever he drags them is covered in a layer of viscous green goo. His arms are tentacled, splitting into three-pronged "hands". Beneath his clothing you can see close to a dozen oblong forms crawling about. Occasionally the mandibled head of a giant centipede pokes out through his sleeve, collar or pants leg. His tongue is still the millipede of before, but as he laughs, the force of the air launches droplets of the goo in whatever direction he is facing.

Motivation:

Larry wants sex, or sexual experiences.

A female character can {seduce} him, but she will have to actually have sex with him. This will not be pleasant, and afterwards that character can never be clean. For the rest of the module she will still have his slime and his smell congealing on her skin.

He wants Irene, this can be sex; but watching her try to kill herself is good enough.

William

William is the embodiment of James' rage. He is meant to be scary and dangerous. However, unless the players free him he will stay bound for the entire module. He needs to give the impression of being completely tempestuous and unpredictable. He should play with Melissa's fear of loss of control or direction of strength. The trick to this character is that he needs to be scary, but ultimately able to garner a measure of sympathy from the players. Every time Nurse Mallard sedates or belittles him, it must seem like a gross abuse of power.

Mannerisms:

Being pushed around by the orderlies will cause him to rage and swear uncontrollably. As will Nurse Mallard talking to him condescendingly. When he rages his face will turn red, he will writhe in his restraints, and go completely wild-eyed. At this point Nurse Mallard will typically sedate him, which will last until about half-way through whatever daily activity the players are currently in. If Nurse Mallard isn't talking to him, and he isn't being forced to do something against his will, then he largely calms down. He still has a tinge of desperation and nervous energy to his voice, but he is mostly reasonable to talk to. When talking about other NPC's, there will always be a slight tinge of contempt to his voice.

Description:

William is over six foot six inches tall and heavily built and muscled. He has a severe face (think drill sergeant) and short cropped red hair. He has green eyes which are particularly striking, despite the animation of his raging face. His pale skin flushes red at the slightest provocation. The straps on his straight jacket don't appear to have buckles or clips. The only way to undo them is to cut them.

On the second day his short cropped hair has disappeared, and he is instead bald. There are eight bony bumps arranged in two rows along his scalp. His teeth are now pointed and his eyes are now red. If he escapes, the players will see that his hands have turned claw-like.

On the third day, his pale skin has turned a permanent blood red. The two rows of bumps appear to have burst through his skin as a set of eight black backwards pointing horns. Even bound, his elbows seem to have grown black barbs through the elbows of his straight jacket. If he is released at this point, one can see that his whole body has gone red and scaly, with hard black protrusions extruding through his clothes all over his body.

Usefulness:

William knows that Wobbles has swallowed the key to the orderlies' room. If he tries to fetch it, he will rip open Wobbles' belly to find it.

William also knows everything to do with the High Security Cell Block.

William is able to kill Nurse Mallard.

Motivation:

William wants to be set free. If the players free him he will go on a murderous rampage, starting with Nurse Mallard, but then mostly attacking people at random (including the players if they cross his path). The players should be made aware of this, it is obvious that after killing Nurse Mallard, William completely loses himself. His continuous destructive force is easy to see, it would be easier for the players to avoid him than to fight him. If the players do fight him, he has 3 health levels and does 3 harm with his hands. If he gets in range of a player, he will always land his attack. PC's need to {act under fire} in order to do anything once he is rushing towards them.

Jonathon can calm William down with his {Winning Smile} move, but this means that he has to both grab William's attention and have long enough to say something to him. This will also require an {act under fire} roll if William is coming to attack him.

Dialogue:

William knows that Wobbles has eaten the key for the Orderlies' room, and he knows about the layout for the High Security Cell Block. He desperately wants to escape, and he can be negotiated to say everything he knows to get the players to free him.

[When first approached]:

The bound man twists his head towards you, his stare intent and piercing. In a ragged voice he hisses:

"Who comes now to mock the lion in his cage?"

[When asked what he knows about the Asylum]:

The man pulls a face halfway between a sneer and a smirk:

"I live in the high security cells, which means that if you fuck with me, you'll probably live in the infirmary. All there is for you to know, is all there for you to see... this place is a shit-hole."

Or

The man looks to see where the orderlies are, then starts whispering:

"I know a secret... the first part I'll give for free. The orderlies don't want us to know, but they've lost an important key. Set me free shit-dick and I'll fetch it for you."

Or

He gives a description of the lay-out of the High Security Cells, notably that their windows look out over the grounds, not the yard ("How retarded is that?") and the contents of the Guard Room.

[When asked what he wants most]:

The man suppresses a laugh:

"What else could a beast want, but to be free, to feel blood on his teeth... and to see Mallard's brains splattered across the floors and walls of this pit?"

[When asked about the other characters]:

[For any of the other patients]:

He goes on a tirade about how pathetic and worthless each of the patients are, picking on their most obvious traits, but often returning to how they're too afraid to let him free. Maybe even suggesting that they don't want to be free, the way they act.

[When asked about Nurse Mallard or the Orderlies]:

The man snarls and growls.

"FUCK. I came so close. Before these binds I almost killed her, I almost squashed the queen bitch. But I made one mistake. Those orderlies aren't men. They bleed and fall, but after a few minutes they get up as if they had not at all. I took too long to gloat, and was overwhelmed from behind. The only gloating I will need next time will be my smile as the light leaves those false-ringing eyes."

Wobbles

Wobbles is the embodiment of James's gluttony/greed. He compulsively tries to eat everything, including inanimate objects. Though he wheezes and struggles to move at all, he is weirdly quick and silent when he has a goal in mind. Anything left unattended in his presence is fair game to be snatched up and eaten. He is meant to play off of Edgar, who has lingering shame from a period of comfort eating.

Mannerisms:

Wobbles smiles nervously most of the time. He laughs quickly and haughtily. He always speaks loudly, frankly and unashamedly. He mostly keeps in good spirits, unless he is forced into prolonged physical activity. All of this breaks down at the sight of food, he becomes almost animalistic in trying to eat it as fast as possible. He normally won't eat random objects unless no-one is looking. He is at heart ashamed of that impulse, but he can't restrain it if he feels like he could get away with it.

Description:

Wobbles is average height, with thick greased back hair. He is morbidly obese, the rolls of his back are visible through his pyjamas and his face is half swallowed by the fat on it. The fat on his legs rolls over and covers his ankles. The slight movement from room to room is enough to cause his breath to become laboured and his clothing to become drenched in sweat.

On the second day, he is supernaturally fat, his flowing fleshy folds now concealing his feet and hands, making his limbs seem almost elephantine. He is unable to drop his arms. The fat on his torso and shoulders nearly swallows his head completely. He needs to look upwards just to breathe. All in all he gives the impression of an over-stuffed toy awkwardly shuffling along.

On the third day, he is a formless wrinkled ball of flesh. As he needs them, limbs may force their way out, so that he can move or grasp. If spoken too, the flesh shifts and his puffy face emerges from the folds.

Usefulness:

Wobbles has gotten into the kitchen before, and knows what's in it.

Wobbles knows that there is a spare set of kitchen keys behind the counter in the cafeteria.

Wobbles **doesn't** know that he's eaten the keys to the orderlies' room, he doesn't keep good track of what he puts in his mouth.

Wobbles is not very regular. If you cut him open (this kills him) he will have most things that he's eaten in recent memory still in some part of his digestive tract.

Wobbles knows how to not be caught by the orderlies.

Motivation:

Wobbles feels like Nurse Mallard is trying to starve him. He knows that there is much more (and better) food in the kitchen stores, because he's been there before. However, he can't get there himself anymore, because the orderlies expect him to try. Wobbles will do what he can for the characters in return for more food. (Bear in mind that if the players never eat, they will starve).

Another aspect to Wobbles is his shame about eating non-food objects. If the characters catch him doing so, then they can blackmail him.

Dialogue:

Wobbles is interested in engaging with the players, because he wants someone who will help him get food from the kitchen. He is likely to be friendly, co-operative and amiable.

[When first approached]:

The large man turns towards you and a broad smile pulls his cheeks aside like curtains:

"Ah! So, you are the new patients! Everyone here calls me 'Wobbles', so you may as well too. Might I know more about you?"

[When asked what he knows about the asylum]:

Wobbles looks about furtively, though evidently more for drama than stealth, as he proceeds to rant rather loudly:

“You know, they want us to all die here. This is a death camp. Can you think of any reason why we would be here otherwise? They hide the real food from us, giving us leavings simply to prolong the starvation. Then each day they force us to toil about in the noon-day sun.”

It’s not entirely apparent whether the man is aware of his own melodrama, or if he genuinely believes what he’s saying.

[When asked about the other characters]:

[Larry]:

“There’s something not-quite right with Larry’s head... I’m not sure if he’s really altogether there. He certainly has plenty of the needs of an adult, saddled with the mind of a child. He lacks impulse-control. I don’t like the way he looks at Irene... it’s like he’s hungry”

[William]:

“William is a psychopath, don’t listen to anything he says. All he has is violence and death and given the chance he’ll kill every single one of us. There is some kind of anger in him which is about as restrained as he isn’t.”

[Jeff]:

“Jeff is a slimy little fuck. He has somehow figured out a way of smuggling contraband into the asylum, but don’t trust him. He will always screw you over, he won’t make the deal unless he’s winning.”

[Percy]:

“Percy is a suck-up and a snitch, he likes to think of himself as the well liked leader of this ragged bunch. But for every moment he’s trying to be chums he’s spending two whispering in an orderlies’ ear or kissing Mallard’s ass.”

[Irene]:

“The poor lass... if ever there was evidence that Mallard was trying to starve us it’s her. She was brought over to the men’s side as some kind of punishment, but what for, only she and Mallard know. Mallard really has it in for her, and the tiny soul can’t cope. Every night she tries to off herself, and every night the infirmary is put to good use to guarantee that she fails.”

[The Orderlies]

The man smiles and beckons for the players to come closer. Uncharacteristically, he starts to whisper:

“There’s something strange about the orderlies... they aren’t really different people. So, if there’s too much of a distraction... all of them are distracted. But if they aren’t distracted, or doing too many things, then if one catches you, they all know about it.”

[Nurse Mallard]

"She runs this place, and claims that it's for our benefit. Don't be fooled by her enthusiasm and day-glow smile... that enthusiasm is not for helping us. We are her personal clown show. Her three-ring circus whipped to dance with the bears until we fall and die. And she'll laugh behind that smile for every dying breath we draw."

Jeff

Jeff is the embodiment of James's envy. He's a skittish, skulking figure who always wants what other people have, often simply because they have it. He is able to arrange for small items of contraband to be smuggled to the players. He is the foil for Andrew, who should be uncomfortable with his own envy towards those he sees as unfairly rewarded.

Mannerisms:

Jeff, while furtive and talkative, never raises his voice above a whisper. He never moves fluidly, only in sudden and quick twitches, as if he's half fighting with his body to take him in whatever direction he chooses. Sometimes he might be seen sitting alone and mumbling softly to himself.

Description:

Jeff is small and thinly built. His skin is pale and waxen. He has a thick and seemingly unmanageable touse of black hair. He has dark eyes which continuously dart back and forth. He is almost always hunched over, and wherever possible keeps to shadows and corners.

On the second day, his hair has thinned significantly and his skin has grown transparent in its pallor. His eye's seem to have gone black and grown significantly. His fingers have grown disproportionately elongated.

On the third day, his hair is almost completely gone. He has become effectively transparent, his skin loosely mimicking whatever happens to be behind it. His eyes are now two large black disks dominating the sides of his face. His hands have become webbed, and he seems to have sticky pads at the end of his fingers. His legs are very obviously digitigrades, emphasizing his hunched skulking.

Usefulness:

Jeff is able to secure contraband. If the players have arranged to trade for a small item, it will appear to them hidden at some point; usually in the pockets of a new set of clothes, or hidden in a bowl of food.

The kinds of items that Jeff can secure are limited by size, difficulty and personal risk. The item must be generic, instead of specific (the players can't ask for a specific key, for instance). The item needs to be concealable in a pants pocket. Good examples are things like: pocket-knives, lighters, screwdrivers,

tweezers, hair-pins and paper-clips. Examples of things that aren't really feasible are: hammers, bolt-cutters, blow-torches, large knives, guns, drugs and explosives.

Motivation:

Jeff wants to own everything interesting in the asylum. The players may at some point acquire or make various items, in which case Jeff will almost always be willing to trade. What the players can get for their barter will be dependent on the novelty of what they have.

Secondarily, there are a few things that Jeff specifically wants, which he may indicate a desire for from the players, either in exchange for an item or his good will. These include, but are not necessarily limited to: a pizza-cutter from the kitchen, a steel chair from the guard room, the cardboard box from the laundry room or a condom from the infirmary.

Dialogue:

Jeff will actively approach one of the players at his first opportunity:

The small twitchy man slinks up to your side and whispers conspiratorially:

"Hey, buddy... if there's ever something you need to get, or get rid of. Jeff's the guy, and I'm Jeff"

The man looks again to either side, and then tries to skulk off again.

After his initial introduction, he becomes very reluctant to give the players information. If the players can get him objects of value, he can tell them anything about the lay-out of the asylum, but he otherwise dodges questions.

[When asked what he knows about the Asylum]:

Jeff gives you his best lop-sided smile:

"If ever someone knew about this place, it's me. Specifically, it's not you... it's bad for business if you know more than I need you to know. Sorry bud."

In terms of his knowledge of other characters, Jeff knows almost nothing, except about the orderlies and Nurse Mallard.

[When asked about either the orderlies or Nurse Mallard]:

Half a glimmer of pity flits across the skulking man's face:

"I don't want you dead, bud. It's bad for business... so this information is off the books..."

He looks for listeners, and somehow manages to lower his voice even more:

"Nurse Mallard here is the master puppeteer, and these orderlies are just her little puppets. If you could cut the strings, they would drop to the floor like the toy soldiers they are... but you can't cut the strings... Instead, bear in mind that even the best puppeteers have only so many hands. Mallard runs out of hands too sometimes."

[When asked what he wants]:

“Well, there is a little something that I had my eye on...”

Jeff then names a specific item that can be found in the asylum, and broadly describes where it could be found.

Percy

Percy is the embodiment of James's pride. He tries to paint himself as regal and well-liked by everyone. He comes out theatrical, and almost comical. He is a foil to Jonathan; he is everything Jonathan fears that he is.

Description:

Percy is a tall thin older man. He has a worn but friendly face. His pate is completely bald, but the rest of his grey wiry hair is quite verdant. His blue eyes are very animate. He moves with the grace of a dancer and carries himself in a confident posture.

On the second day, Percy has a distinct orange set of pyjamas, and an elegant pair of white gloves. His face is smoother, but in a disconcerting way, as if he's had a bad face-lift. It also looks as if he's tried to dye his remaining hair blond, but the dye-job is patchy and not particularly convincing where it does have coverage.

On the third day, Percy is dressed completely as a clown. He has bushy orange hair, a red nose, and white grease paint with a red painted smile. He wears a multicoloured set of pyjamas with pom-poms for buttons and a white ruff around his neck.

Usefulness:

Percy knows quite a lot about the other inmates.

Percy knows where the orderlies' room is, and exactly what is in it.

Percy is able to imitate anyone's voice pitch perfectly.

Motivation:

Percy wants to be liked by everyone. He is aware that most of the other patients don't like him, so if the players can convince them to be genuinely grateful towards Percy, then he is likely to be quite cooperative. If the players don't make any effort to help him (if they are helping different patients, it will usually be

enough to specify that they are helping them on behalf of Percy), then Percy will try to hinder them by snitching to the orderlies whenever he catches them trying to do something.

Dialogue:

Percy won't approach the players directly, but when they approach him, he is unable to mask a flutter of excitement. He tends to speak in a theatrical manner and a haughty tone.

[When first approached]:

The lanky old man sees you approaching. Despite his best efforts he can't help but grin in excitement. He crosses his arms and raises his chin in a desperate effort to appear to be looking away and thinking of something else. The charade breaks as soon as you enter some invisible radius from him. He turns his head towards you, cocks it to the side and raises an eyebrow:

"I see we have some new members for our merry flock. My name is Percival, but everyone shortens it to 'Percy'. Though, it matters not what the sheep call their shepherd so long as they know to love him and to follow."

[When asked about the Asylum]:

The tall man spreads his arm out with a flick, as if to indicate the vast swathes of land that this place most certainly is not:

"This grim playground, this dour pen, is all a means to an end. You see, each one of us needs salvation from ourselves. I have found mine, but I stay to guide you all."

[When asked about another character]:

[Larry]:

"The poor chap has really been given very few gifts in life. He is an imbecile, he is unattractive and this is all paired with an insatiable lust. He needs a friend to show him the way, but he still needs to be shown who is there for him."

[William]:

"It's such a shame, the man is a poet at heart... but that same passion and the chagrin of his incarceration conspire to brew a stream of hatred so vile..."

Percy shudders visibly.

"I fear what ill-conceived revenge he plots, but I hope that a benefactor may have those wild eyes turn blind."

[Wobbles]:

"The man is a pig and a monster. Leave anything unattended for too long and he's liable to eat it. I managed to negotiate with a nameless rascal to get a brush for my hair. I turned my back on it for a second and it was gone. At the time the only person still around was Wobbles. The pig is happy with slops."

[Jeff]:

Percy affects a lop-sided smirk and raises an eyebrow.

"Hah, I suppose that rascal has already approached you? Some fantastic economy churns in that weasel's head... but he has found a way to get things from the outside. I too once fell so low as to negotiate with him. Now, I do so only to see if I can figure out his trick. The orderlies really would like to know... if he can get things from the outside in, what stops him from taking things in the inside out?"

[Irene]:

A look of uncharacteristic concern darkens Percy's face.

"Our little flower is wilting... she needs to return to the garden, but she only cares for the earth. What lily would be left to adorn her grave? Both Larry and Nurse Mallard seem to have designs on her, which is one of many sources of distress for her. I wish she would learn a few new songs for that damnable piano though."

[The Orderlies]:

"Helpful gentlemen they are. They always know what needs doing and are eager to perform their duties. They're not very talkative though, so it can be hard to tell what they actually take in."

[Nurse Mallard]:

"If ever there was a good soul so underappreciated! She only wants to help us get better, but she's greeted only with scorn and distrust. For what? A sunny smile and a positive outlook? Since when is happiness a sin? I have found the humility to accept her help, I wish you all would follow suit"

[When asked what he wants]:

“All I ask, is that the poor souls of this asylum acknowledge that I care for them. They won’t let me help them; but if you do, and name me as your patron, I will be most grateful.”

Irene

Irene is the sinking feeling as one loses hope. Irene is the cold embrace of depression and the child inside that begs to be protected. Irene is innocence lost. She should set off the protective instincts of Melissa, if not the rest of the players too.

Description:

Irene is small but willowy and graceful. Her skin is radiantly pale and she has elegantly beautiful features. She has long platinum blond hair, which hangs flat and straight. Her eyes are large and grey and framed by dark rings. She has bandages on her forearms, stained brown red from her latest attempted suicide.

On the second day, her skin has a slightly blue tinge, and her lips have turned black. The dark rings around her eyes have grown black and seep inkily into the almost continuous stream of tears that roll down her face. The bandages have grown long and unravelled, seeming almost like trailing sleeves about her willowy arms.

On the third day, she becomes ephemeral. One can basically see through her. The dark rings are gone, as are the bandages on her arms. She has filled out to a healthier figure and her movements are graceful to the point of almost floating. Her face still bears sadness, and her black tears continue to fall.

Mannerisms:

Irene will always try to avoid eye-contact, instead usually dropping her gaze to contemplate her feet. Her posture is typically closed and she often runs the hand of one arm down the side of the other, the half-hearted shadow of an imagined hug. When she speaks her voice is very soft. As she gets more upset or afraid it may go even softer, until she is barely speaking under her breath. It's easy to upset her, and she often tries to retreat somewhere to cry. She is able to play the piano, but only knows two pieces: The Moonlight Sonata and Fur Elise. When she plays the piano, her eyes close, her tears stop and a look of serenity crosses her face. She won't respond to anything until she finishes whichever piece she is playing.

Usefulness:

Irene knows about the infirmary and its contents

Motivation:

Irene ultimately wants to escape from the asylum, and she doesn't mind if it's in a coffin. In fact, she can't imagine how one would otherwise escape, but the orderlies always take her to the infirmary after she passes out. The players can make her life better, either by getting more songs for her to play on the piano (she likes Beethoven), or getting rid of Larry. However, if she could ask anything from the players it would be for them to help her die, either by "protecting" her body from the orderlies, or securing an efficient way to die (her current method is to tear the veins in her arms open with her teeth).

Dialogue:

Irene is too shy to approach the players directly. If approached she will look as if she wants to run and hide, but ultimately she'll freeze up, like a rabbit in the head-lights. She doesn't think ill of the players, but she expects abuse of some sort, so her responses are typically fearful or sad.

[When first approached]:

The little woman gets a panicked look. But as you approach, despite her obvious terror, she seems unable to run away. Instead she crouches down and hides her head behind her arms.

"who-who are you? What do you want with me?"

[When asked about the asylum]:

The woman contemplates her feet, and starts muttering softly

"I don't belong here... this place is evil... I don't..."

Irene starts sobbing. Then looks up and meets the player's eyes with a piercing look.

"You have to help me get out of here!"

Her face drops again.

"...but the doors are guarded and locked... the only escape is death, and even that right is denied... I spend a lot of time in the infirmary."

[When asked about the infirmary]:

Irene readily gives a complete description of the infirmary and its contents.

[When asked about the other characters]:

[Larry]:

Irene collapses into a hunched over heap on the floor and starts sobbing violently.

“Every moment, every day, I can feel his gaze on me. It’s- it’s unclean... it’s mocking me, it remembers. There was a day... where he followed me into my shower cubicle. I couldn’t scream. I can still feel his slimy tongue crawling against my skin... –I –I don’t think I will ever be clean again. I told the orderlies, and they ignored me. I told Nurse Mallard and she laughed. I brought it up in Group, and was told that I’d imagined it. I would give anything to make him disappear...”

[William]:

“I’ve never spoken to him, but I get the feeling that if those straps were to ever break... I would not survive the storm that follows.”

[Wobbles]:

“He seems a kindly sort; he always has a smile for me, and asks how I am. He projects his own desires though... he seems to think that if I eat more I’ll be happier. I wish he could see that food isn’t what makes him happy.”

[Jeff]:

“I don’t have anything that I would give him, so I’m worth nothing to him... I worry that he may use me as a pawn in some of his dealings- well, more that I suspect that he already has...”

Irene will close up if the players push the issue, but she thinks Jeff distracted the orderlies when Larry came into her shower.

[Percy]:

“Percy makes a show of everything. Everything is just an act... he makes a show of caring about me... but he wouldn’t stand up for me in Group. When I play piano he’ll complain loudly that I always play the same things- I only know two songs, and there is no sheet music... I’m a mascot in his eyes, put on a pedestal, but worth less than a puppet.”

[Nurse Mallard and the Orderlies]:

“The orderlies never do anything Nurse Mallard doesn’t want them to... but also, she almost never needs to give them orders... it’s almost as if they can read a bit of her mind... Nurse Mallard is not a nice person. She saw me scared one day in the women’s section... she saw that fear and it was enough to bring me here... ‘to punish me’ what for? For being? Nurse Mallard delights in suffering, mine most of all...”

[When asked what she wants]:

Irene will always bring up help with her suicide first. If the players press on; she may either shyly request that the players try to get her some sheet music, or with uncharacteristic venom ask them to “get rid of” Larry.

Nurse Mallard and the Orderlies

Nurse Mallard is the asylum. And the asylum wants to keep the patients inside it forever. The orderlies are extensions of her. She can only pay attention to a finite number of tasks, so typically if there is some major distraction, the uninvolved orderlies are less than effective at anything. Nurse Mallard is annoyingly cheerful, but specifically also sadistic and abusive towards the patients. The orderlies aren't really able to communicate at all.

Description:

Nurse Mallard is always a small, bird-like middle-aged blond woman. She wears an old-school nurse's outfit: a white dress with the boat-shaped white hat with the red cross on it.

The orderlies appear to be vaguely homogenous young men. Each is Caucasian with short black hair and a smudged name-tag. If they speak, their mouth is filled with television snow and only static comes out.

On the second day, the orderlies appear to be mannequin-like, and their eyes are permanently replaced with continuously open glass screens depicting television snow.

On the third day, the orderlies appear to be black mechanical humanoid constructs. Instead of faces they just have a circular television screen. Always snowing.

Mannerisms:

Nurse Mallard is hyper cheery, condescending and abusive. Think of her as a mixture between a children's TV-show presenter and an abusive alcoholic parent. She will often pull exaggerated or theatrical faces to convey some emotion that she thinks is appropriate for the situation.

Dialogue:

The players are likely to try to drill Nurse Mallard for information; she will only tell them the following:

- The players are in Sunny Hills Home for the Mentally Unsound.
- They have only been here since the night before they first woke up.
- They don't get access to the phone, because there has been a problem with contraband that is being clamped down on.
- They can't see the doctor who evaluated them; he's a very busy man.
- They weren't injured when they arrived.

[If the players ask why they are in the Asylum]:

Nurse Mallard leans forward. She puts her hand to the side of her mouth, and in a stage whisper:

"It's not polite to say what's wrong with you, and if I tell you, it will just become a label. In order for you to recover, you need to discover that for yourself. But, be rest assured that you are, in fact, completely insane."

Nurse Mallard stands straight again, hands together, smiling:

"Don't worry! With our carefully constructed therapeutic routine, you will soon realise exactly how you are so disgusting and example of human existence, that you need to be locked away!"

[If the players question Nurse Mallard's methods]:

I am the qualified psychiatric health practitioner here. Trust me, this is for the best.

Nurse Mallard can't be seduced, manipulated or intimidated. If threatened with sufficient violence, she will either try to talk the patients down, and call the orderlies (as in the combat section).

Combat:

Aside from the orderlies, Nurse Mallard can also protect herself by sedating the patients with her voice. The players can resist the sedation, but it makes it very difficult to harm her or the orderlies without a weapon. William is immune to this effect, and has to be sedated by direct administration of a large amount of tranquilizer.

Each orderly has 2 {harm} worth of health, can do 1 {harm} and can do 1 harm in the process of restraining a patient. If a player succeeds when they roll a {suffer harm} move as a result of an attack from an orderly, they are automatically restrained by the orderlies.

Nurse Mallard has 2 {harm} worth of health and 1 {armour}. She can't inflict harm directly, but if the players are within ear shot, she can talk them down ("*come on now deary, calm down, you're just going to hurt yourself*"). If she does so, the players need to {Act Under Fire}, on a 10+ they can carry on unhindered, on a

7-9 they can carry on, but inflict {-1 harm}. On a miss, the player is unable to act. Without a weapon, it is very difficult to kill Nurse Mallard.

If Nurse Mallard is killed, all the orderlies die, but all the doors in the asylum remain locked. She doesn't carry keys unless she was on the way to the room that was locked.

Places

A Cell:

Each cell is a padded room, about 2x4 metres. There is a foam mattress, which typically has clean bedding. The quilting on the sides of the room is a bit old and yellowed, but not obviously dirty. There is a **small globe light-bulb that hangs from the ceiling from a wire, about 3 metres from the floor**. The room doesn't have a switch for the bulb, that seems to be in control of the orderlies. **Each room has a small square glass window, about 2 metres up the wall**. A person could conceivably squeeze through one, but the glass is very thick, and has some kind of diamond shaped metal grating over the other side.

The windows in the normal cells look out onto the yard, but the windows in the high security cells look out onto the grounds.

There is a door that bolts closed on the outside of the cell, with a thick glass window looking in.

The Wash-Room:

The wash-room is a white tiled public bathroom. There is a black residue encrusted in all of the grouting and green patches are developing in some of the corners. It has a set of toilet cubicles on the one side, and a set of shower cubicles on the other. **The showers have blocks of soap**. At the end of the room is a series of washing basins, **with mirrors, shaving razors and toothbrushes**. Next to the entrance is wooden shelf, **where the players will find their fresh laundry**, and a hamper to put their own laundry in.

The Cafeteria:

The cafeteria is a fairly large rectangular room. On the one side is the counter and on the other is the door to the rec-room. It typically has around six small plastic tables and enough plastic lawn chairs for everyone to sit.

The Counter:

The counter sits between the kitchen and the cafeteria. On the cafeteria side it has counter which is separated from the cafeteria by a half wall and a thick pane of glass. There is slot in the glass that objects can be slid through. **A person could never fit through the slot, but they could certainly reach through it with an arm. Under the counter is the medication cabinet and a spare copy of the kitchen keys**. There are two doors to the kiosk, one that leads out into the passage and one that leads into the kitchen. **Only the door to the passage needs a key**.

The Rec-Room:

The rec-room is an L-shaped room with a worn brown carpet. As you enter, there is a circle of plastic chairs. Behind the chairs are some small tables with crayons and paper, and around the corner is a beat-up square **black piano**.

The Laundry Room:

The laundry room contains about 4 washing machines and 4 dryers. **You need a key to get in. Typically there is an orderly doing laundry.** The fresh laundry will typically be laid out in well folded piles on the machines. The old laundry will be in a hamper somewhere. The orderly typically goes through the dirty laundry and removes everything from the pockets, **and puts it in a cardboard box that stays in the room.** There is a small window (as with the cells) **that looks out over the grounds.**

The Infirmary:

The infirmary contains a plastic covered gurney and a **medicine cabinet**. Inside the medicine cabinet one can find anything one could expect to find in a fairly good first aid kit: **bandages, scissors, plasters, tape, surgical gloves, disinfectant, local anaesthetic spray, chemical ice packs.** **You need a key to get in.**

The Orderlies' Room:

This room is a bit like a lounge; there are comfortable chairs, a pot plant, microwave, fridge and kettle. **There is a cabinet filled with syringes and sedatives.** There is a key rack **which has keys for anywhere in the Asylum.**

Normally, one could only get in with a key... but the only key is lost (Wobbles has it). An orderly waits inside and when another orderly or Nurse Mallard approaches he unlocks the door for them.

If the other orderlies are distracted, he will let in someone who sounds like Nurse Mallard or an Orderly.

There is a door leading to the Guard Room in the High Security Cell Block.

The Kitchen:

The kitchen has a large marble counter down the middle as a preparation surface. Above it hangs a collection of **pots and pans**. Beneath the counter are sets of drawers containing plastic cutlery and crockery, but also **cooking knives**. On one side of the kitchen is a set of cupboards and refrigerators, containing **food and ingredients**. On the other side is a row of ovens and **gas stoves, with gas bottles attached.**

The High Security Cell Block:

The passage with these cells is sealed off from the other cell block by a set of double doors which can be barred from the outside of the cell-block. The main discernable difference between these cells and the others is that none of these have lights or beds, and the doors seem to be much stronger. **At the end of the passage, there is a Guard Room.** The room is separated by a large sheet of bulletproof glass. There is a **locked heavy steel door** between it and the cell block. The contents of the guard room are visible from the passage.

The Guard Room:

The Guard Room has a door from the Orderlies room and to the High Security Cell Block. Inside it is two **steel chairs** and a table. There is a rack on the wall with **two suits of riot gear, some batons and pepper-spray.**

The Yard:

One door along the passage leads down into the yard. The yard is a small square area of concrete surrounded on all sides by the Asylum. There is little air flow, and the stark courtyard offers almost no protection from the elements. The walls surrounding the yard are sheer and about 5 metres tall. The low security cell windows are visible along the inside of the walls.

The Entrance and Passages:

The passage way starts from the High Security Cell Block and wraps all the way around the yard, ending in a T-junction with the main passageway. There is a set of double doors between the High Security and the normal Cell Blocks, between the cafeteria and the kitchen and orderlies' room and at the junction of the passage and the main hallway.

If the players turn right into the main hallway, then they end up in blocks of the asylum similar to their own, save that they are empty. If they turn left then they get led into a nice tiled atrium, bedecked with potted plants and an abandoned receptionist's desk. There is a large glass double door which leads out onto the grounds.

The Grounds:

The grounds outside the asylum consist mostly of grassy hills and vales rolling outwards, speckled with healthy trees and bushes.

As soon as all remaining players escape into the grounds, start Act 2.

