Buyer Beware

### ASYLUM Playtest Packet

# Overview

Oswald Mercury **was** a wealthy eccentric and collector of eclectic artifacts. After almost 80 years of life he passed away suddenly and quietly. The general public doesn’t know much about Mr. Mercury beyond those facts. He intentionally projected a sense of distance and mystery.

Insiders, Outsiders, and those familiar with the Underside of the supernatural world are privy to more interesting facts and rumors though. It’s generally known that Mercury was a Circus agent following WW2. Even though he’d retired decades ago, it’s generally believed he was still instrumental in the transition from Circus to Cirque. Many suspect he was actually a Contractor as well.

## Unknown Treasures

Oswald Mercury had a vast estate of priceless artifacts. Only he probably knew the entire contents of the collection. Consequently, many interested parties have inquired into what’s going to happen to the collection. Information has been scarce the last several months while Cirque directs a formal investigation of Mercury’s death.

The Arbiter’s Guild has just announced Oswald Mercury’s Last Will and Testament. Apparently, he requests that his estate and all of his belongings be auctioned off “as is.” He stipulates though that the auction should divide the estate such that each room and its contents will be auctioned separately. The proceeds from these auctions will be donated to the Asylum organization. This is a most unusual request, to say the least.

# The Player Characters

The Player Characters (PC’s) are all personalities that are interested in attending this auction. If you’re making your own characters or using a cast from a previous story, then look over the following suggested player plot hooks below. Otherwise, we’ve provided pre-generated characters to save you the time and trouble.

## Player Plot Hooks:

* **Cirque** – Undercover Agents may be attending the auction in the hopes of learning more about Mercury’s life and death.
* **K-13** – Among Mercury’s estate are many books and files. There are possibly valuable secrets about Cirque to be learned.
* **Panoptic Media** – Reporters may be undercover in the hopes of learning more about this mysterious occultist.
* **Pantheons** – Much of Mercury’s collection comes from Outside. Certain Pantheons are probably hoping to reclaim some lost artifacts.
* **Red Market** – Brokers could be attending simply because they are interested in acquiring “priceless” items for a bargain.

## Pre-Generated Characters

**Franz “Black Coat” Sansa** – Peddler, Roach, Snitch, Spy

Black Coat is a giant sentient beetle from the Sideways realms of Yore. Kommittet-13 introduced him to Contracting and so he now works as an information broker for them. As Franz Sansa he is also known to trade in exotic medicines and rare commodities. He respects and fears the brutal efficiency of K-13, but ultimately looks out for himself first and foremost. Franz is looking for any secrets or artifacts within the estate that might be valuable.

**Euryale** **Gorgonopolos** – Treasure-Hunting Gorgon

Euryale is a Gorgon that used to fight in the resistance against the Elysian Pantheons. It left her very skeptical about the benevolence of authority. Euryale’s resistance cell was eventually exposed so she fled Inside. Now she’s “retired” to become a freelance consultant and Contractor for the Red Market. She has been hired by Asimir & Partridge to identify and acquire as many rooms from the estate as her budget affords. They’re really only interested in reselling their portion of the property for a profit. Euryale will earn a 15% commission on the eventual resale of the goods and property.

**Simon Tell** – Former Oracle Turned Reporter

Simon is the human grandson of a Cambion. He was born with the innate gift of prophecy, which he later used to investigate supernatural events as a reporter for Panoptic Media. Fortunately his gift allowed him to evade a premature demise from cancer. Unfortunately, the price for his cure was his second-sight. Simon has continued his work with Panoptic Media with a new dedication to exposing wicked and corrupt players in the Red Market.

**Albany Stone** – Glam-Rock Mystic

Albany is an androgynous rock-idol that’s cultivated more than just an occult image. The star has spent a considerable fortune investigating in the secret pursuit of *real magic*. Becoming a Contractor meant sacrificing some professional independence, but now Albany is hooked on acquiring more magic. Albany sort of thinks of Oswald Mercury as a role-model occult celebrity so this auction will be the perfect opportunity to pay some respect, score some magical artifacts, and maybe learn some trade secrets!

**Bill Black** – Thieving Magpie

Bill is a magpie that magically awakened when he drank from the Font of Wisdom in the Sideways Realm of Yore. He came to this world several years ago because he heard about the wonders that Insiders had built. Turns out, humans go through a lot of trouble to track down thieves. Bill got in a little spot of trouble with an organization known as Cirque, but turns out they’re swell guys! As long as Bill keeps his head low and does the occasional odd job for them, Cirque doesn’t care about other people’s missing baubles. Bill is here because Oswald Mercury had good taste in stuff! He’ll buy some of it, but he’s hoping to walk out with more than he paid for.

**Liu Shan** – Restless Spirit from the Past

Liu Shan was among of the first agents that the Celestial Ministry recruited upon reconnecting with the Inside almost a century ago. Shan started young and had many successful years as a Contractor and until he crossed paths with Oswald Mercury one too many times in the 60’s. Mercury left Shan wounded to die during an operation in Mongolia, and die Shan did. Of course, the Ministry keeps tabs on its agents even after death. Shan’s spirit was eventually summoned and promoted within the Ministry to the position of case officer. After all these years, there are no hard feelings left. Shan’s just here to pay his respects and find a suitable souvenir to remember his rival by.

## Non-Player Characters

**Dio Newcastle** – Napoleonic Ghoul Gangster

“You think something is funny, punk? Mind your own business!”

Dio is the eldest son of the Don for the Newcastle crime family. Each member of the family is born Cursed and monstrous but rely on Contracts to maintain their humanity. They have gradually become one of the predominant mobs to get involved with Underside affairs. Dio is an egomaniac that tends to screw things up. He has a chip on his shoulder and is looking to prove his worth to the family.

Dio is here because his family wants to get something back. Oswald Mercury led a crime bust that arrested several important Newcastle family members and seized several strange relics including a human skull and the funerary statue of a knight. The Newcastles want that skull back, and if possible, the statue too.

If there is any way that what you say could be interpreted as an insult in any way, then Dio will see it that way. He’s overly defensive and insecure and rarely speaks up except to brag or belittle.

If anyone uses tradecraft against Dio, he will first attempt to personally intimidate them. He’s not afraid to reveal that he is armed, and if they seem unimpressed then he might reveal a little of his monstrous nature or let slip that he brought back up. Dio will not say who he works with though, even if someone recognizes him as a Newcastle.

Dio’s has a few tricks up his sleeve. First, his inherited curse means he has a few supernatural powers at his disposal. Second, he has a dozen Contracted minions waiting outside the estate in case there’s trouble. All he has to do is get the skull out of the house and back to his people to accomplish his objective.

Unfortunately, Dio’s great disadvantage is himself. He won’t do anything as simple as buying the skull and leave. In fact, he’s going to make this as hard as possible by attempting to take the statue and *everything* else he thinks is valuable as well.

Cash on Hand: $8,000,000 in unmarked US Dollars.

**Mattias von der Recke – Servant of the Aesir**

"What was once lost will now be found!"

Mattias is a servitor from the remnants of Asgard. In the setting of Asylum, several of the mythological Pantheons are actually great societies that exist outside of Earth. Their influence is felt on Earth by way of worshippers and occasional visitors that are written off as angels, spirits or divine manifestations. Mattias is undercover as a rich German baron.

Mattias hopes to purchase Mercury’s armory, which he believes houses the sword Mistilteinn. This weapon is important for the Aesir that Mattias faithfully serves.

In the social scene, Mattias will demonstrate his bizarre alien anachronisms. He will call for a round of mead, drink to Odin, and praise the warrior spirit of anyone that impresses him.

If anyone uses tradecraft against Mattias, he will respond in person, unaware of the level of threat the PCs represent. He will assume they are mere mortals and the Power of Asgard will crush their puny defenses.

Mattias has some basic supernatural tricks as an advantage. He also has the advantage of knowing exactly what why he is there.

Mattias's biggest disadvantage is that he is somewhat disconnected from the rest of the world. He doesn't know nearly as much as he should about the other factions or possible threats facing him. For Mattias it is enough that there are no Dopkalfar or Frost Giants. He has absolutely no idea who else he's dealing with.

**Cash on Hand**: $10,000,000 in unstamped gold bullion

Max Xanderberg – Accidental Billionaire

"Let me tell you what you should be doing."

Max Xanderberg is the inventor of MyFaceTube, the social streaming media share application that has become hideously vital to the fabric of society. Max just found out about this mysterious Oswald Mercury fellow, and wants to learn why most people don’t talk about him. It’s a point of pride that he leaves with the most expensive and sought-after property at this auction. He can be swayed by emotions but any attempt to fake information will be difficult and could backfire.

Max has met several affiliates with the Red Market who have attempted to subtly warn Max about Outsider presence at this auction. Max doesn’t really know or believe anything about Outsiders yet, so he has mistaken this as an elaborate scheme to generate hype and increase the demand for the property.

In the social scene, Mike will be an entitled jerk. All this old money pales in comparison to his tech innovator stash. He has more money than most gods and he is kind of a socially graceless prick. Not domineering or aggressive. Just. . . so painfully entitled and convinced he is the smartest guy in the room.

If anyone uses tradecraft against Mike, he will call the police and get his security goons to start investigating.

Mike's only real advantage is money. He has the most of anyone.

Mike's biggest disadvantage is that he is only human. He's too important to just kill off, but he can probably be beaten or neutralized by supernatural powers. Humanity also makes him susceptible to Ancient Eldritch Forces Older than the Earth, and he will buy the onyx pyramid unless someone has convinced him to blow his wad ahead of that.

**Cash on Hand**: $24,000,000 in MyFace Tube unsigned stock certificates; though he will not necessarily spend it all.