Introduction

The Auction is a short module for Asylum set in Cornwall, England. The story is modeled on James Bond movies. It assumes a cell of Asylum characters, and provides a sample set of PCs called the Fellows of the West End, from London. Any Asylum cell would be appropriate, however, with minor tweaks. In that case, you will need a secretly corrupt authority figure to stand in for Mortimer Darter, the story’s main antagonist.

The story begins with the protagonists getting a call from Mortimer Darter, their handler in Asylum. He orders them to Heathrow airport to pick up a car and further instructions. This is suspicious, since he’s usually more forthcoming with instructions. It should become clear from the start that something isn’t right.

The car turns out to be an expensive luxury limousine, and the protagonists find a large fortune in gold in the trunk, along with further orders to take the car to Truro, in Cornwall, and bid on ITEM SIX in an invitation-only auction to which they have, apparently, been invited.

The main action of the story is the decision of what to do with ITEM SIX once it has been won, but nothing easily won is worth much, in a story. And anyway, the stable of NPCs in the scenario gives the players a playground to mess around with. Thus, a good deal of James Bond tradecraft will likely ensue. At the very least, they’ll probably interact with Gabriel Partridge, one of the main antagonists, and Terrence MacGregor, a rival who they can cut a deal with, who has important information on ITEM SIX. He believes that the item, described as an antique sword, is Excalibur.

When the protagonists arrive, they meet the other bidders and learn as much as they can in the luxury hotel bar. Then, they have an opportunity to break into the other bidders’ rooms and steal or mess with their stashes of cash – the auction is cash only, though “cash” in this case includes everything from unsigned stock certificates to gold to uncut diamonds.

The next morning a convoy arrives and the auction begins. Likely one of the NPCs, a desperate sorceress, will get herself thrown out. The player characters have opportunities to bid up their rivals to deplete their cash reserves. In the end, they should be able to win ITEM SIX without cheating. But knowing gamers, there will be all kinds of cheating.

Once they win Excalibur – it really is Excalibur – it’s up to the protagonists to decide what to do with it.

You, dear GM, can leave it at that, or take it from there.

How to Use These Materials

None of us got paid to make this. Everything is in here, but a lot of the information is in places it oughtn’t be. Make sure to read all the scenes, as well as the word document in the NPCs folder. Especially read Scene 5, since the auction itself is the point of all the scenes before it.

Allow things to go off script. Heck, the rules in Scene 2, 3 and 4 are just there so that you have Asylum rules for the sorts of things the PCs might do before the auction. If they assassinate NPCs, or bribe them, or forge alliances, or do something so crazy they get kicked out of the auction, so be it. In the end, they’ll never stop trying to get the damn sword. You can set your watch by it: No player in any RPG has ever passed up a chance to get a badass magic sword.

They may have to wait for someone to win the auction and then jump him in the parking lot. So be it! They can take any of these NPCs singly or in pairs, with or without backup.

Combat Challenges

See below for the combat challenges, remembering of course that this is playtest material, so if these challenges don’t work out as advertised, let the designers know!

Easy: One Supernatural NPC

2-4 Basic Thugs

1-3 Competent Thugs

Hard: Two Supernatural NPCs at once

4-5 Competent Thugs

Deadly: Three or Four Supernatural NPCs at once

6-10 Competent Thugs