

A Taste of Jasmine

An adventure outline for Men and Supermen

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May 20, 2004

Editor's History

This story begins 16 years ago, early in the morning on October 30. Janice and Melias Kramer, and their year-old daughter Andrea were on vacation in the Alleghany Mountains, near the border of Virginia and West Virginia.

When I originally ran this adventure, it was 1983. So, the accident occurred in 1967.

Driving on a back road, a drunk driver sped out of nowhere. In the accident, Janice and Melias Kramer died, probably upon impact. Andrea survived miraculously unscathed, and was sent to her Aunt Flora Little, her mother's sister in California.

At least, that's what the records -- newspaper and otherwise, say. Records also exist, however, which state that a certain Melias Kramer bought some land in the Alleghany chain -- land including the area where the accident occurred -- 16 years ago, the transaction concluding on November 4. This Melias Kramer bought, from the government, a 10 kilometer square region, for the amazingly low price of \$1,000.

Today, according to the records, Andrea Kramer still lives in California. Her aunt, thrifty in other ways, hired tutors to give her daughter an education. She receives a monthly money order from the United States government for \$542.32. The United States government has no records of sending such a stipend.

Andrea turned 17 on May 21. She received her driver's license a year ago, and has registered in her name a 1964 Buick LeSabre station wagon. Since she started driving, Andrea has received only one bad mark -- a parking violation. A parking violation in the city of White Sulphur Springs, in the state of West Virginia.

The True Story

The above information will only be found if the heroes have access to records, either from a computer hook-up to government computers, or from contacts in the government, or some other method of finding very old information. Of course, it won't come automatically. The right questions must be asked.

The forested region owned by Melias Kramer is a place of power. The origin of this power is beyond the origin of life on earth, lost forever in

the mists of time. Within this region there is a +1 to both the Astral and the Space/Time Continuums. Sporadically, this number will rise for a day and then drop back to normal. When this happens, the Forest requires a caretaker to hold the fabric of the continuums together. The last time this happened was 16 years ago. Previously, it hadn't happened for nearly 15,000 years. The last caretaker died 3000 years ago, leaving the Forest alone. When the continuum began to bend early on October 30, the Forest reached out to the nearest being -- the dying form of Melias Kramer. It formed an unbreakable bond between the body and spirit of Melias Kramer, and the body of the Forest. For 24 hours it prepared the mind of Melias Kramer. Then, early in the morning on October 31, Melias stepped out of his coffin in the morgue and walked away. Before the body was discovered missing, a mysterious fire broke out in the morgue. The blaze completely demolished the building, eradicating any traces of coffins or bodies. Using the power received from the Forest, he convinced the government to sell him the region. He was still Melias Kramer, still human. So he wanted his daughter to live with him. Melias was a schoolteacher, licensed to teach, so well able to tutor Andrea as she grew up. By the end of November, Melias had convinced the correct people to send Andrea back to him.

Janice's parents -- Andrea's grandparents -- lived and still live in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Although they will not admit to any of this, Laura and Roger Little do know that Andrea lives with Melias. When they were reluctant to believe or go along with any of it, the Forest pulled Janice's spirit back, temporarily. Janice visited her parents and told them to do as Melias asked. They did. They still see their daughter once a year -- from October 29 to November 3. Melias' parents lived in Michigan, although they are dead now. Mary Kramer died of natural causes on January 5th, 12 years ago, and Arthur Kramer of the same on March 12th, 3 years ago. They never knew anything about these goings-on, and have never seen their granddaughter. Melias and Janice were planning to visit them for the first time since the wedding on that fateful vacation trip. Flora Little, the aunt, lives in Riverside, California. Aunt Flora's mind is a little loose, however, and there are times when she truly believes that Andrea does live with her. She sends the monthly money order to Post Office Box 59 in Poplar Hill, West Virginia. P.O. Box 59 is registered to Andrea Kramer. The money cannot be traced by any means. Where does it come from? Hard to find, but: On a contract when he bought the land, the government must provide the money to his daughter.

While Melias Kramer has not been seen by any living being for many years now, Andrea is not quite as reclusive. She has a radio and TV set which she runs off the battery of her Buick. On weekends she goes into town to shop for herself and her father. She has friends in Poplar Hill (the nearest town, about 15 kilometers west of the Forest, population of about 500), and often goes on dates, to movies, or to dances. The nearest large town is White Sulphur Springs, about 20

kilometers southwest of the Forest, population around 3400.

Melias Kramer is beginning to realize that he is changing. His soul is becoming intertwined with body of the Forest. His humanity is slowly draining away. He is becoming a true caretaker of the Forest, an ageless guardian of the power. Soon, he knows, he will have to send Andrea away, probably to her grandparents. For the moment, however, he wants his daughter with him.

Andrea and Melias Kramer live in a small 4-room log cabin on the western edge of the forest, perhaps a kilometer inside the boundary of ownership. There is an outhouse further out from the building. A two-track runs up to the house. All in all, they've been living a decent life.

The Villains

The villain in the story is Jasmine Oil. About 1 month ago, Jasmine Oil representative William Vider offered Melias Kramer \$500,000 to buy the land he owns. Melias refused. Andrea balked, but respects her father's decision. She doesn't know about her father's powers or his strange ward, thinking him simply a strange but loveable old man.

For two weeks, Vider tried to convince them, through pleading, money (the offer was raised to \$1,400,000), and low-key threats. Finally, the threat became less than low key. Some of Vider's henchmen tried to burn the house down. They doused it with gasoline, lit it, and left. For some reason, however, the house survived well, and the vegetation around the building grew back within days.

One week ago, Vider came by for the last time and threatened them with a 'final offer.' Melias flatly refused. Vider left with the words "You'll regret it." and slammed the door as he left.

Three days ago, 3 thugs drove up to the cabin. Melias wasn't in (he was out walking in the Forest), but Andrea was. Realizing that they were up to no good, Andrea grabbed some money (26 dollars) and jumped out the window in her typing room. The thugs attempted to follow her through the forest, but she knows the woods far better than they, so she lost them easily.

She continued running, thinking to draw them away from her father, and to possibly get some help. She hitch-hiked all the way to New York City. With the information network of Jasmine Oil behind them, the thugs were able to follow her all the way here. Until now, she has managed to stay one step ahead of them. Until now.

Why does Jasmine Oil want the Forest? Because they are about to start a project which will allow them to travel to other dimensions. They expect that through this they can make incredibly huge amounts of money -- through mining, cutting trees, and otherwise making a nuisance of themselves in these other dimensions.

That's not too bad an idea, assuming there aren't any creatures in the

other dimensions. If there are, Jasmine Oil will not be above slave trade. But there is another reason they want to travel to other dimensions -- nobody can see what they do there. Jasmine Oil wants to train and equip a full army completely out of sight of the rest of the world.

The next problem: They want the Forest because their tests show that it is the best spot to implement such a plan. In fact, their scientist John Koll has already set up a small research station in some caves at the center of the Forest. What Jasmine Oil and their scientists don't know, and Melias Kramer does, is that once they buy or otherwise acquire the Forest, more than just dimensions will open up to them. The power of the Forest would allow them control over time itself! In their hands such power will be devastating.

How To Bring The Characters Into The Story

One or two of your heroes will be walking down a street in New York. All of a sudden, a teen-age girl (Andrea) will run out of a doorway, pushing past the heroes, and dart into an alley. Then three men (the thugs) dressed in dark blue suits and wearing dark glasses will chase after her. The Editor must roll a perception roll for each of the heroes. If they make the roll, they will catch a glimpse of a gun beneath the jacket of one of the men. The heroes must also roll surprise. If they are surprised for 10 segments or more, the thugs will get past them, turning into the alleyway 10 segments after that, or probably, the beginning of the next round. The alley that Andrea ran into is 15 meters from the doorway that she ran out of. It turns to the right again in another 20 meters, and dead ends in a brick wall 20 meters after that. The heroes are 8 meters from the alleyway.

If attacked, the thugs will respond in kind, using their handguns. They will fight until unconscious or until they realize that they are no match for the heroes. When this time arrives, they will do one of two things: If any one is within reach of Andrea, he will attempt to grab her and use her as a hostage to escape, taking her back to West Virginia. Otherwise, they will simply run, and attempt to lose the heroes in the New York crowd. These thugs do not know any more except that their 'boss' (Vider) wants the girl, alive if possible. They do not even know that they work for Jasmine Oil. If the thugs manage to leave with Andrea, she will unobtrusively drop her driver's license. Each character is allowed an unmodified Perception roll to see if they see the license. (She will be very unobtrusive to make sure that the thugs don't see it) If none of the heroes see it, just before they leave the area a little kid will come up to them with it, saying "I found this over there. (pointing back to the area where the fighting occurred) Is it yours?" The kid's biggest ambition is to become a superhero, and it is possible that he may do so. His name is William (Willie) Crain, and he is NOT a normal. If the heroes treat him well they will have an admirer for life. The driver's license (California number S 363 403) has a picture of

Andrea, her name (Andrea Kramer), her address (112 Division Street, Riverside, California -- her Aunt Flora's address), her sex, her hair color, eye color, height, birthdate, signature, and the expiration date (4 years from her 16th birthday).

Timetable

William Vider must acquire the Forest for Jasmine Oil. However, there must be no publicity. So far this has not been a problem, for Melias wants the same thing. With the intervention of the heroes, however, he will begin to worry a little.

- 1) If Andrea is not kidnapped, he will attempt to have Melias kidnapped. 24 hours from now, from 3 to 8 thugs will arrive at the log cabin and take him. He will let them. He does not want to show off the power that he and the Forest have, for that would make it impossible to get rid of them. These thugs know no more than the previous ones, except that one overheard Vider's plans for Andrea and Melias if the thugs are unable to kidnap Melias. The thugs are instructed to intimidate anybody in the building into leaving. They will only kidnap Melias and/or Andrea, however.
- 2) If the heroes prevent Vider's men from kidnapping Melias, and the supervillains are unable to capture the heroes, they will attempt to kill Andrea and/or Melias and place the blame on one or more of the heroes. They can use fingerprints obtained at Rainbow's End (see the description of that restaurant) and place these on rifles dropped in the woods, or a dagger dropped on the ground, etc. They will be able to do this only if Andrea and/or Melias are alone. If Andrea and Melias are gone, they can buy the land from Aunt Flora.

None of this may be necessary if the heroes get there in time, however. Melias will know if they are trustworthy or not. If they are, he will almost immediately bring them to the small valley where the research is going on. He has known about it all along, although Vider has attempted to keep it secret, because he knows everything that goes on in the Forest. When the heroes are overlooking the valley, they will be attacked by the supervillains. Hell (see the Sun-Ruler) has set up electronic surveillance devices all over this area of the forest, and will know immediately when the heroes enter.

If the heroes enter the research station and get past the Sasquatch guards, Koll, the scientist, will be frantically trying to escape. As the heroes approach, they will hear Koll yelling to his assistants "Turn it on! Pull the switch!" and his assistant in turn will scream back "But we don't know if it works yet!". Koll will only scream louder, as he watches the heroes approach on the television cameras (if the cameras have been demolished, he will only be more anxious to leave). "They're coming, for god's sake! Pull the bloody switch!"

When the heroes break down the door or otherwise enter the room, 4 thugs will have already set up a blockade to prevent them from reaching the equipment. They will have their automatics pointed at the door and are ready to fire. The heroes will see Koll standing in a small booth, like a telephone booth. He is pointing a gun at his assistant. At the last segment the assistant will pull the switch. In a flash of light Koll will disappear. The equipment will start sparking and smoking. Panels will blow up. The huge video screen in the center of the room will, for less than a second, show Koll floating in some blackness, completely inert, his gun floating a few inches from his hand. The screen will then explode, doing d8 points damage to anyone in the room, as an explosion of +10 to Attack, Short Range of 1 meter, Range Set of .5 meters, Maximum Range of 10 meters.

Epilogue

Jasmine Oil: Upon the destruction of their makeshift research station, Jasmine Oil will give up -- here. There are other areas where such research can take place, although it will take somewhat more work. They will file away the experience for later use.

Melias and Andrea Kramer: Andrea will soon leave. She is just about finished with high school level studies, and is going to go to college, probably on scholarship. Melias will continue as caretaker of the Forest for a few more millenia.

The Heroes: If Jasmine Oil is defeated without Melias having to use his power over the Forest, and without ever placing Melias or Andrea in danger, multiply Training Points gained by 1.3.

The Supervillains: Void and Man-Ape are wanted by the law for previous crimes. There is, as a matter of fact, a \$4,000 reward for information leading to the arrest of Man-Ape. Void will be sentenced to 2 years in SITRAAS. Man-Ape will be sentenced to 8 years in SITRAAS. Shale, Sun-Ruler, Prism, and Grasshopper have no previous record, however, and will be allowed to go free if the characters bring them in. They will make noises about suing the characters, but will fade away as they return to Jasmine Oil's employ. No one will implicate Jasmine Oil, and if the heroes make too much noise, there will be a subtle media campaign to discredit the heroes.

Appendix

Non-Player Characters

Melias Kramer, the Caretaker of the Forest

Melias Kramer became a sensitive as a result of the Forest. He has also slowly gone blind. In another decade he will be totally blind (sight of 0). Melias will not talk about the Forest while Andrea is around. If the heroes seem bent on discussing it he will ask Andrea to go to her

typing room and do some schoolwork. He will watch her go out of the room. When he turns back to the heroes (who he has asked to sit down at the table) his eyes will be glowing blue, and he will say 'You will help us.' Then he will move his head, and the glow will disappear. Have the heroes think it was the sun in his eyes. (This wasn't, by the way, an attempt at Convincing -- it was See Future). Whenever Melias uses one of his powers, his eyes glow. When discussing the Forest, Melias will say things like 'This place has power,' and 'The Forest must be protected from wolves such as these.' Play Melias as an eccentric old man.

The Supervillains: Squad 1 consists of Sun-Ruler, Void, Prism. Squad 2 consists of Man-Ape, Shale, Grasshopper. Squad 1 is officially on duty here. Squad 2 is on vacation, but they are not above kicking some super heroes into the dirt if the opportunity arises. If Squad 1 will not provide enough of a challenge, add in one or more of the villains in Squad 2. When they attack, Sun-Ruler will use his Fire Control to blast people, Void will start sliding her molecules (see Void), so that most physical attacks won't hurt her, and will then attempt to get heroes caught in her vacuum. Prism will attempt to be in the clearing, so he can use his laser. Otherwise, he will fight hand to hand. If Man-Ape is in the fight, he will attack hand to hand. Shale will switch to his shale form, and attempt to turn others to shale with his alchemy power. If that doesn't seem to work well, he will use his fire blast. Grasshopper will jump around hitting people.

The Sasquatch: The Sasquatch are the servants of the Forest. It was two of them who set the morgue on fire 16 years ago. Now, however, Koll has enslaved some by placing a small metal band with neuro-control electronics on their heads. The control is not perfect, however. The Sasquatches' movement is somewhat slow (for controlled Sasquatch, divide movement by 2 and give a -2 to hit, -1 to DA). As Editor, assume that Koll has enslaved enough Sasquatch to give the heroes a problem. Note that if a Sasquatch is FREED from control -- by removing the headband -- it must make a save vs. its present EP plus constitution on d100 or fall unconscious for d100 rounds. As soon as possible after being freed, it will attempt to move towards the central room to tear the place up. It will be stopped by the wall, however, not quite smart enough to break it down.

Rainbow's End

Think of *Rainbow's End* as the Denny's from Hell.

Note that *Rainbow's End* is a chain. Jasmine Oil can place their spies in any *Rainbow's End* around the country. Jasmine Oil is very protective of this secret.

On the surface, Rainbow's End seems like an average local restaurant. Actually, Rainbow's End is owned and operated by Jasmine Oil. At any time, at least one of the cooks and one of the waitresses of the Rainbow's End in Poplar Hill are spies from Jasmine Oil. If Jasmine Oil ever gives up on the Forest, the spies will be recalled.

The unsecret part of the basement is used for storage, for both the restaurant and some less than incriminating things which Jasmine Oil wants in the area. In the basement are both steel and plastic cooking and eating utensils, plates, unperishable foods, writing paper, pens and pencils, light bulbs and lamps, etc. In the second unsecret storage room there is a lot of clothing, detergent, some mystery books, and buried beneath these boxes -- about five 1 meter cubic boxes of high technology electronic parts.

The secret section of the basement:

Lab: This is where fingerprints can be lifted, poisons distilled, and various chemical reactions caused to occur.

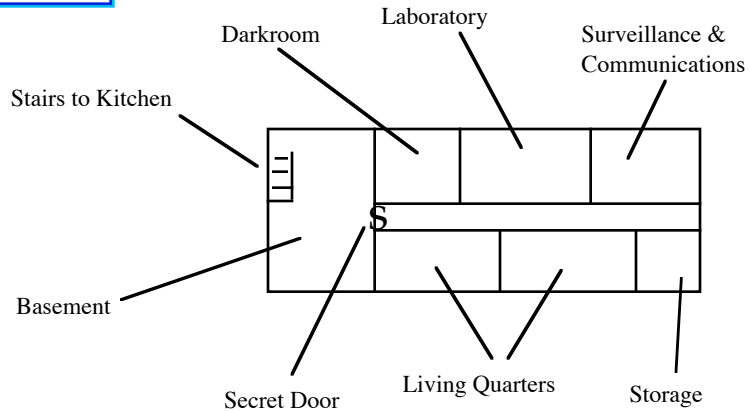
Darkroom: This is where photographs, both normal light, infrared, and ultraviolet, may be developed.

Surveillance/Communications Room: There is at least one person (usually 2) stationed here. Radios, teletypes, and telephones keep in touch with Jasmine Oil and certain contacts. A map on one wall shows an area of 18 kilometer radius from this building -- a special tracing device. There are bugs currently unused in this room, and direction finders to be used in conjunction with them.

Living Quarters: This is where temporary visitors of Jasmine Oil sleep, if they must be secret. Currently no one is in residence here.

Storage: This is where more illegal devices are stored. There are 10 semi-automatic handguns, 100 clips, 500 single bullets, 5 automatic rifles, 25 shotguns, 800 slugs, and 500 shot, 100 counterfeit \$20 bills, 20 driver's licenses with no pictures, and some printing presses.

Rainbow's End



The Forest

The Forest is a circular area about 8 kilometers in diameter, with the Kramers' log cabin on one edge of it. The Forest is not sentient. Any personality it has is the personality of the present caretaker. The caretaker has control of a lot of power. As Melias grows older, he will discover more and more of this. The Forest normally has an additional 1 point to Space/Time and Astral Continuums, although this can increase to 4 in certain special times.

The Kramers' Log Cabin: This is a one-story building. There is very little stuff in the house, except for in Andrea's 'typing room.' She has a manual typewriter and a battery operated television/radio/cassette player, and many cassettes. The batteries are rechargeable, and she recharges them with the station wagon or in town. She usually keeps 20 to 30 dollars hidden under her typewriter.

The Valley/Fight Area: The valley is small, about 40 meters wide and 500 meters long. At the area around the caves, it is 20 meters deep, with very steep (about 3 feet down for every 1 foot over) sides. Inside the valley there is sparse vegetation, while to each side the forest is thick. There are 3 cave entrances. Cave A goes in 10 meters before stopping. Cave B goes in 20 meters. Cave C (the true entrance) goes in 15 meters.

Cave C: At the end of Cave C, characters who listen to the wall may hear a low humming -- treat it as strength 5, 50 meters away. Characters who look for secret doors are allowed a *Detect Hidden Objects* Perception Roll, with no sight modification, at -5. If this roll is made, the character has found a moveable rock on the north wall. Behind this is some electronics and a numeric keypad. What this is is a computerized switch. If the correct set of numbers is entered, this switch will send a burst of electricity to a transmitter located 2 meters in the rock. When the transmitter gets the burst, it will shut off for 10 seconds (1 round). When the door mechanism no longer receives the

transmitter signal, it will open. As soon as the transmitter resumes transmitting, the door will close. The code is 1984. If an incorrect code is entered, nothing will happen (except that an alarm will be sent to the laboratory). If the electric switch is torn out or destroyed, nothing will happen. If a charge of over 1 volt but less than 100 volts is applied to each of the 2 bare wires after the switch is torn out, the door will open.

The Secret Entrance: The door is 1 meter thick. It has a Skin Temper of 1.5, Ignores 19 points damage, and has 60 DP.

Cameras: Once beyond the secret doors, there are cameras set up at three locations. At each location, there is a concealed camera on each side of the cavern. These are tied in to the central laboratory. If someone's 'keeping an eye out' for hidden objects, the Perception roll is at a bonus of 20. Otherwise, the roll is at a penalty of 10.

The Ambush: Characters are allowed a *Detect Danger* Perception Roll. As soon as one or more characters are within 2 meters of the corner, the Sasquatch will ambush them. The Sasquatch are standing silently on the other side of the corner.

The Laboratory: The double doors to this room are closed. They are 2 decimeters thick, and made of steel. They have a Skin Temper of 1.3, ignore 11 points, and have 20 DP. Inside the laboratory, there are 5 thugs who have formed a firing line 2 meters in front of the door. As soon as the heroes burst through, the thugs will open fire with their handguns. This assumes, of course, that they *know* the heroes are coming. (See the *Schedule of Events* for more information).

