

Project: **The Jedemi Chronicles - Mythology for the next Millenium**

Overview: The Jedemi Chronicles are stories that connect the past to the present to better prepare us for the journey ahead. Specifically, these stories are about spirits from the past who hang out at Jedemi Cafe, telling stories and offering advice. This unique cafe ends up becoming an oasis in a vast wasteland where nothing connects to anything (aka our world as it exists today).

Brief Description of Jedemi Cafe

The beginning: About eight years ago, I came up with an idea for a cafe. I wanted to create a place that had the look, feel and influence of Paris' Left Bank in the 1920s -- an enabling environment. I had envisioned a cafe where coffee was not the main draw. I saw it as a creative incubator of sorts where one had access to books and videos, art supplies --everything from paints to pottery-- and a place to work on projects and a theater/studio for dance/movement classes and other productions. Most of all, it would be a comfortable environment for the exchange of ideas.

My aim was to have a place that rekindled and nurtured creativity with the thought that the happiness one derives from having a creative outlet would spill over into other areas of life: work, family and friends.

The idea refined: After struggling to find an ideal location for the cafe, not to mention that Starbucks and like competitors were popping up everywhere, I decided to step back and think of a clever way to pull it off. Two things came to mind:

- 1) Though the cafe itself was unique, it needed a story of its own.
- 2) That story had to reach the target audience via an accessible medium.

A Story is Born: The idea came to me, borrowing from the Greeks and a multitude of other things I had read. What if spirits from the past hung out in this cafe? To narrow it down, what if these spirits were of people who happened to have lived in the same time period? What if they even knew of each other or actually influenced each other (either directly or indirectly)? I fanned this flame and came up with my characters. Their stories and how they interact with the people at the cafe is what the Jedemi Chronicles are all about.

Technology Catches Up: During the last four years, while doing research on my characters, interest in the Internet has grown and people have become very comfortable with utilizing browsers (i.e. Netscape) to find their way around. It seemed ideal to me to create a virtual cafe where the Jedemi Chronicles are accessible worldwide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The goal would be to have the story appear in installments to encourage the viewer to check back frequently to see "what happened."

Creating Interest: One of the toughest parts about hanging your shingle on the web is drawing people to your site. The idea came to me to launch the Jedemi Chronicles with a pilot (like they do in television). I've named it "The Taming of the Suit." I decided that it would be a live performance that also utilizes a video wall to tell the story (that script is in development). Another way to generate interest, is via a grass roots operation where short, one-page teasers are left at local cafes with the website URL.

Jedemi Chronicles - Characters at a Glance:

As mentioned earlier, the spirits that inhabit this cafe represent people who actually lived in the past, during the same time period. The following is a chart that shows the cafe "regulars."

	Entertainer	Teacher	Entertainer	Entertainer	Bookstore	Screenwriter	Writer			
	Film	Storyteller	Choreographer	Comedian	Publisher	artist	adventurer	Inventor	Writer	Musician
	Frankie	Joey	Aggie	Lucie	Sylvie	Frannie	Ernie	Tommie	Johnnie	Bennie
1840								b1847		
1850										
1860										
1870										
1880					b1887	b1888	b1889			
1890	b1897									
1900		b1904	b1905						b1902	b1909
1910				b1911						
1920										
1930								d1931		
1940										
1950										
1960					d1962		d1961		d1968	
1970						d1973				
1980		d1987		d1989						d1986
1990	d1991		d1993							
2000										

Spirits from the past on a mission --To provide connections and enable the creative spirit.

Frankie - Frank Capra	Frannie - Frances Marion
Joey - Joseph Campbell	Ernie - Ernest Hemingway
Aggie - Agnes DeMille	Tommie - Thomas Edison
Lucie - Lucille Ball	Johnnie - John Steinbeck
Sylvie - Sylvia Beach	Bennie - Benny Goodman

The Process: Over the last three years or so, I've been reading up on these people and taking detailed notes. Base level research was very biographical in nature, with an emphasis in understanding each character's struggles and accomplishments, personality traits, and notable quotables. The most complex, but satisfying, part of the project has been making the "connections." This is where I see how their lives were inter-related. I have put together a timeline to use as an overall frame of reference. I've also noted the connections in the margins of the basic biographical information. All of this information will be synthesized and woven into the Jedemi Chronicles.

Endless Permutations and Possibilities: These characters are the nucleus of the Jedemi Chronicles and the possibilities are endless. Not only do you get a better understanding of history (including two World Wars, the 1906 earthquake, the stock market crash of 1929 and the beginning of Hollywood), you also get

to see how their experiences actually mirror things that are happening to us today. The chronicles are not limited to the interaction between the spirits and the patrons of the cafe. Folks logging onto the website will also have a chance to interact with the spirits.

Cafe of Dreams: If I write it, they will come. Success hinges on developing witty and memorable dialogue -- to give the Jedemi Chronicles its voice. The goal is not just to tell great stories, but to tell these great stories well. Above all, these characters, who have become my muses, have admonished me not to bore.

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My dream is to have a place that recharged and nurtured creativity with the thought that the happiness one derived from having a creative outlet would spill over into other areas of life: work, family and friends.

After struggling to find an ideal location in the city, not to mention I at Starbucks and other popular coffee shops, I decided to step back and think of a clever way to pull it off. The things came to mind:

1. Though the cafe itself was unique, it needed a story of its own.

2. The story had to reach the target audience via an all-critical medium.

A story is born. The story came to me, borrowing from the Greeks and a multitude of other things I had read. What if spirits from the past hung out in the cafe? To narrow it down, what if these spirits were of people who appeared to have lived up the same time period? What if they were known to each other or at least influenced each other, whether directly or indirectly? I formed the theme and came up with my first few "short stories" and how they interact with the program at the cafe. The Jedemi Chronicles are all about:

Technology Catches Up: During the last few years, while doing research on my characters, I learned in the Internet has given us a way people have become very comfortable with utilizing technology (i.e. desktop) to find their way around it. It seemed ideal to me to create a virtual cafe where the Jedemi Chronicles are accessible worldwide, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The goal would be to have the story spread in an attempt to encourage the viewer to check back frequently to see what happens.

Creating Interest: One of the toughest parts about hanging my shingle on the web is drawing people to my site. The idea came to me to launch the Jedemi Chronicles with a pilot like a radio program. I've named it "The Tasting of the Soul." I decided that it would be a live performance that would have a video web site and the story that is going in development. Another way to generate interest is to give away free samples of the story, a page reader hit left at local cafes with the website URL.

Jedemi Chronicles - Characters at a Glance