
You blink, as the veil is lifted from your eyes.

You see it as it floats before you, the Chain of Isekai.

Three billion miles of impossible structure, forged from the dreams of worlds.

A single link, smaller than your thumb, detaches from the very end, splintering into glimmering motes of light.

You are paralyzed as they sink into your body, and then past it, into your mind and past it, into your soul and deeper yet.

Even as you fall away into the not-space from which the Chain emerged, you feel new strength flowing out from your deepest self.

Gain 1000 CP.

As power flares out, the most shallow aspects of your self warp and change, striving to adapt to your needs.

Flesh is remade, the mind enriched with stolen skill, base matter that fell with you reforged into useful things.

But the changes can only be made so quickly, and this nova will only last so long.

You need to focus on what's most important.

Choose one option.

Survival

You may freely reshape your body into any form appropriate for your race, and all physical characteristics are improved to the level of an abnormally healthy young adult where that would be an improvement.

Your natural lifespan is increased to 800 years, in a manner that synergizes very effectively with all means of life extension.

You gain skill in over a dozen areas of expertise linked to personal survival, including basic medicine, stealth, and use of slings, knives, and bows, equivalent to a trained professional.

A mental database is formed that will release highly-specialized knowledge and skill into your conscious mind as necessary, allowing you to survive in any natural environment as if you were trained for that environment specifically.

The supplies produced include nutritious and well-preserved food sufficient for six months, high-quality water purifiers sufficient for a decade of personal use, two sets of sturdy water and stain -resistant clothing, a large waterproof backpack, a sleeping bag and inflatable sleeping pad, a large canvas tarp, two large knives, a small axe, a modern flint and steel firestarter, six slim steel arrowheads, a ball of twine and coil of paracord, a small pack of toiletries, and a large and well-stocked medical kit.

-Upgrade

Costs 50 CP

Your metabolism becomes superhuman.

You require a quarter the food and water you otherwise would, and no longer require specific nutrients, only calories.

Your resistance to disease and poison is increased greatly, and you recover from injury and exhaustion twice as quickly.

With an hour's work, you can enter a state of hibernation, slowing your metabolism to one-tenth speed and preventing most forms of injury from worsening.

Adventure

You may freely reshape your body into any form mostly appropriate for your race, and all physical characteristics are improved to the level of a composite olympic athlete where that would be an improvement.

Your natural lifespan is increased to 200 years, in a manner that synergizes very effectively with all means of life extension.

You gain skill in the core competencies of an adventurer, including navigation, the use of six kinds of weapon, camping, basic medicine, and negotiation, equivalent to a trained professional, and develop well-honed combat instincts.

A mental database is formed that will release highly-specialized knowledge into your conscious mind as necessary, informing you of the approximate threat, strengths, and weaknesses of any enemy you face.

The supplies produced include nutritious and well-preserved food sufficient for two months, high-quality water purifiers sufficient for a decade of personal use, a set of lightly armored clothing, up to six weapons you have proficiency in (complete with small amounts of ammunition), a large waterproof backpack, a sleeping bag and inflatable sleeping pad, a modern flint and steel firestarter, a large coil of paracord, climbing gear, an adjustable lantern and large quantities of high-grade oil, a small pack of toiletries, and a large and well-stocked medical kit.

-Upgrade

Costs 50 CP

You have a sense for locations of significance, pinging off once you approach within a dozen miles and permanently registering them on a mental map.

This provides a vague estimate for the threat the location poses and the potential rewards of investigating it. Through a combination of luck and a subtle expression of this sense, you are much likelier to discover hidden treasures that you would otherwise miss.

Conquest

You may freely reshape your body into any form mostly appropriate for your race, and all physical characteristics are improved to the level of a composite olympic athlete where that would be an improvement.

You gain skill in over a dozen areas of expertise a ruler could be expected to possess, including diplomacy, swordplay, strategy, dance, composure, and deception, equivalent to someone trained from birth then tempered by years of practical experience.

A mental database is formed that will release highly-specialized knowledge into your conscious mind as necessary, providing historical examples of what the current situation could progress towards and how it might be influenced.

The supplies produced include delicious and well-preserved food and drink sufficient for a month, six rich outfits of varying formality, an ostentatious but well-made sword, a single-shot RPG launcher or an anti-tank rifle with a small amount of ammunition, two large steel-reinforced chests with inbuilt locks, a large and well-stocked pack of various toiletries, three blank leatherbound journals, a high-quality refillable modern pen and several bottles of ink, twelve expensive books, and two large sacks of gold and silver coinage of indeterminate origin.

-Upgrade

Costs 50 CP

Any effect that would make a person or creature less loyal to you, more hostile to you, or have a reduced opinion of you is slightly weakened.

The counterpart of this slightly strengthens any effect that would increase loyalty to you, reduce hostility to you, or improve opinions of you.

This is not limited by range or by number of targets.

Comfort

Gives 1 Special Token.

You may freely reshape your body into any form even vaguely appropriate for your race, and all physical characteristics are improved to the level of an abnormally healthy young adult where that would be an improvement.

Your natural lifespan is increased to 400 years, in a manner that synergizes very effectively with all means of life extension.

You gain a great deal of skill in a limited number of areas that are enjoyable to practice, including all things sexual.

The supplies produced include delicious and well-preserved food and drink sufficient for a month, three very comfy outfits, a large and well-stocked pack of various toiletries, a small sack of silver coins of indeterminate origin, and a self-powered laptop with minor self-repair features, its 100 Terabyte drive filled to 95% capacity with digital media, internet archives, and your personal records.

-Upgrade

Costs 50 CP

You produce an aura of comfort, extending six meters from your heart.

The most basic effect of it cleans and dries things for you, and adjusts grip and friction to meet your needs- you do not need chalk to climb a mountain, even during a rainstorm.

Materials you interact with will soften, harden, or stretch in ways otherwise not possible, without causing any damage, allowing you to fit large items of furniture through small door frames, or rest comfortably on a rocky mountainside.

Environmental troubles are mitigated; insects and other pests smaller than your hand will actively avoid you unless you will otherwise, and the temperature within your aura is adjusted thirty degrees in your favor.

You may alter 'cosmetic' functions of your body, preventing your digestive system from producing waste material or setting your refractory period to zero, at will.

As the power of your brief nova is spent, your transformations completed, you become aware of the world you are falling towards.
In the not-space you inhabit so briefly now, perception functions quite differently.
You see the weaves of power threading through the world below, eight unique sources of strength.

Now passing through the outermost layers of the world's existence, filaments of these powers pass through you, and you notice its nature influencing your own, adding to what you could be. At your will, the last of the untransformed material carried with you shifts, arranging itself into a platform to guide your descent.

You have a bit of time remaining before you land- enough to aim yourself at a place where one of these powers is ascendent, to draw it in and make it a part of yourself at this earliest opportunity.
The only question is, which one?

Choose One Option

Locations:

Storytelling:

Storytelling Section: Price Halved

Something is missing from the universe, something deep and intrinsic. And yet no one knows what that is, how it happened, and until the turn of the current century no one had even realized something was missing in the first place. Happening sometime in the second century S.H.Y, over around a 2 year period, its obscuration engulfed an entire star system, 13 rich and lively planets strong. Now a cabal of Storytellers lay claim to the region, trapping it in a two year loop, turning the collective might of some hundred masterful Storytellers to wipe memories, and even turn back the clock of time itself, trying to unravel this mystery. Why The Tale does not interfere with such total control is unknown, but it seems that its hand is truly off the scale here, the winds of fate and destiny deadened within its boundaries.

Upgrade - 50 CP

A blank white mask, that adheres to your face with a thought, somehow without interfering with your senses. While wearing the mask, all benefits of Roleplaying are enhanced greatly, many times over in fact, and slipping in, out, and between roles happens easily. Furthermore, the mask can be used to perform a minor degree of shapeshifting, really more a perfect disguise. When taking on a role, you can also take on a form and appearance fit for the role. Take on the role of a soldier and change your face into that of a hardened veteran, with uniform to match. This cannot change you beyond the bounds of your species, and cannot significantly alter your mass. The mask

also cannot manifest any abilities and equipment in its disguise that aren't largely mundane, though it can create powerless copies fine. You could manifest a kevlar vest, even one of somewhat beyond modern quality, but not power armour.

Unreality:

Unreality Section: Price Halved

An ephemeral realm, a planet forever deep in the Frontier. Within, reality slips and flows, and fantasy comes to life, a barren rock animated by unreal kings. In one region a black dragon with noxious breath might hold a beloved princess captive, and in another a verdant grove is ruled by a council of intelligent animals who killed the human owners of the land. Yet as all in the realm is fleeting, it is by the whims of the rulers that the inhabitants survive. And thus do knights face monsters, nations give bloody sacrifice, and all toil at the behest of a quintet of Unrealists, entertaining for scraps and the privilege of living.

Upgrade - 50 CP

A plant that dwells partially in Unreality has bonded with you in a symbiotic relationship. It anchors all things connected to you in reality, making them straightforwardly more real. Creations of Unreality devoid of attention slowly fade away, instead of crumbling immediately, and attempts by other Unrealists to counter your manipulations are stymied. Beyond Unreality, that which is supported simply requires less, buoyed as it is by your influence. Less energy to function, more damage while remaining intact, all needs mildly lessened.

Wild Epiphanies:

Wild Epiphanies Section: Price Halved

The universe is replete with wonders, from the simple majesty of mundane nature to the genuinely mind-bending horrors of the depths of Unreality. Despite what the cynical might say, there's a lot that even a singular person can do in the face of it all, but even if that's true, why face the darkness alone when there are people who would happily march alongside you. That is the pitch of Morkanon's Adventurer's Guild, based on the stunning planet of Seelu, known for its gemstone sands found in every colour of the rainbow and more besides as well as the semi-lithovoric sand sharks that prowl its dunes. Despite its name, Morkanon's is more a social club, one primarily for Epiphanists looking for peers to engage with, though they generally welcome any inquisitive mind amongst them. A few hundred members strong, they include both fresh Epiphanists newly awakened to the glory of existence, and the keen and experienced explorer-inventors who'd laugh in the face of an eldritch god, though none truly lack that essential spark of child-like wonder. If one wishes for help in an intellectual pursuit, a companion on an expedition, or merely a good bit of friendly conversation and banter, few places are as welcoming as Morkanon's.

Upgrade - 50 CP

A quantum supercomputer paired with a weak-precognitive engine has connected to you from its place adjacent to your reality. It works to supply a trail of breadcrumbs towards matters of interest, whether guiding you to potential adventures, or helping to solve a mystery. As a weak-precognitive engine, it is incapable of reliably giving certain information even in the short-term, but the engine always supplies some amount of useful information, even when it's guesses aren't perfect, and consistently following the crumbs will eventually lead to the truth, with chance and your own deductive ability determining how long that takes.

Regal Architecture:

Regal Architecture Section: Price Halved

The Zix Cloud is a truly gargantuan asteroid field, found in the Outer Rim of the galaxy. Already interesting enough for the sheer density of asteroids without a planet in sight, what makes it truly famous is twofold. One, it is host to a myriad of valuable resources, from the quantum crystals used in Transpositioning FTL, to some of the unique chemical compounds used in modern biofoam. Second, is the truly volatile political situation that grasps the region. Due to a mix of diverse cultures settling in here, long-standing grudges from both before and after arriving here, and the distant machinations of interstellar nations fighting proxy wars, no single people can lay claim to the region, instead housing hundreds of disparate groups settling in asteroid-based habitat-complexes both old and new. Even the long-lasting groups are only a few decades old, and many such groups fall in a year or two, if not a few months. It would be child's play to find an uninhabited station to settle into, if one is willing to deal with the neighbours, and plenty of interested interstellar parties if one wishes for a patron.

Upgrade - 50 CP

The power of the Chain steals space from reality, forms a dip in existence that only grows deeper as you press down. A pocket dimension, linked to your will, that expands temporarily at a rate directly proportional to the mass of the contents, such that if you alone were inside it might be the size of the average living room, while filling it with an entire two story building might give you a full city block. If you enter the dimension, you will exit in the same location you left. You can freely pull objects into and out of the pocket dimension with a thought, though this fails against the unwilling.

Edgerunning:

Edgerunning Section: Price Halved

On the planet of Varnus one can find the HQ of the Edgerunners' United Federation, colloquially known as The Family, a vast organization rivalling the size, power, and influence of even the mightiest megacorporations. It was on this planet that Edgerunning is said to have started, and in a formal and modern sense that's true, being the place where much of the process of Edgerunning was standardized. The Family helps to manage the work of all member Edgerunners, a list that includes an estimated 70% of all Edgerunners in the galaxy, with another 10% or so being at least in contact

and on good terms with them. Managing Edgerunners is however a lot like herding cats, and The Family spends a lot of time and effort performing a balancing act between instilling the fear of god in unruly clients and ensuring their members don't drag the organization into a costly war. While Varnus is nominally under the rule of a democratic council, and they do deal with much of the normal day-to-day affairs, the sheer power of The Family means they have the final say in anything they care to involve themselves in. The sheer number of Edgerunners buzzing around the planet and the degree to which The Family can take matters into their own hands has ensured an unbelievable low crime rate, the vast majority of would-be criminals too terrified of being pasted by a nearby Edgerunner to try things, and the rest either hunted down and eliminated with extreme prejudice, or in the case of users of Edgerunning, given the opportunity for likely more lucrative work as part of The Family.

Upgrade - 50 CP

A device filled with replenishing golden blood, that when present in the bloodstream will sacrifice itself, granting you an extremely powerful boost without requiring you to sacrifice anything. Used externally and injected, it gives a short burst equivalent to if you sacrificed the entirety of your physical body. Implanted into the body, a task easily performed and reversed with just a thought, it provides a steady but lesser boost, like if you merely sacrificed all the blood in your body, providing it continuously without fail.

Ego Blazing:

Ego Blazing Section: Price Halved

A planet composed of two large continents, with countless islands of varying sizes everywhere else. The world is technically under rule of a singular empire headed by a mighty divine Emperor, who conquered the world with the help of his mountainous Emanation. However, the Emperor's health is failing, and the empire's unity fails alongside it. Now countless nobles vie for control, trying every method to produce loyal courtly Emanators, as with the Emperor lacking any manner of rightful heir, all know that it will be the mightiest Emanation that claims the throne. Beyond the noble courts, pirates abound, rebellious egoists fight against the clans and polities that oppress the people for power, forming mighty pirate fleets that dominate the oceans, and huge swaths of islands. And between those two are plenty of independent people, Emanators amongst them, trying to live their life free of any yolk.

Upgrade - 50 CP

An old attempt to force Emanation artificially, it produced a vicious demon, only slain after a ferocious battle that cost many an Emanator their life. The half-dead remnants of the demon are stapled to your soul, bent to your will but unable to meaningfully influence you. While weakened terribly by its defeat, it is still a potent weapon, capable of independent action to protect you, though it will not act in such a way that you would genuinely disapprove of. It is a four-armed oni, and besides its impressive durability, speed, and raw strength, it is capable of producing four blades of supernatural sharpness, each one used to control one of the 4 classic western elements.

It still retains much of its own personality, but its new situation spares it much of the metaphysical agony that drove it to terrible violence in the past, and now merely has a predilection for cracking skulls and crude humour. An oni indeed.

Technocratic Inheritance:

Technocratic Inheritance Section: Price Halved

Under the moon Kalo, of the planet Kalokoko, is one of many outposts of an organization known as the Association for the Unsheltered and Wandering. Along with actually being a legitimate homeless association that spans much of the galaxy to some extent, they also are one of the only sizable presences of Technocratic Inheritance outside of the megacorps. They maintain bloodlines that hold a myriad of technologies, from medicine to firearms to transportations to stealth tech. While not as advanced in any one field as the megacorps due to a comparative lack of resources to dedicate to R&D, they have a breadth that no megacorp matches. While a known entity to the megacorps, their sheer size ensures they can never stomp them out, as for every outpost they have raided or otherwise destroyed, there's another dozen with families whose blood is filled with all the same knowledge.

Upgrade - 50 CP

An entire bloodline, woven into you seamlessly. The bloodline comes from a family of dedicated survivalists, and this is reflected clearly in what is stored within. The bloodline contains a wide variety of technologies, from medicine to shelters to transportation to weaponry. The focus is however found in their ease of creation and use, meant to provide a fully complete survival package that could let a singular determined individual of average fitness survive and thrive in all but the most absurd conditions. Using the technology stored within, one could live a near-modern quality life, alone, stranded in an endless desert or noxious jungle. This bloodline lays no burden on your body, with no negative effects on fertility.

Evolutionary Supremacy:

Evolutionary Supremacy Section: Price Halved

An artificial planetoid as large as a gas giant floating in interstellar space, split into vast layers from the core to the outer surface, each with a variety of vicious environments. Within this planetoid roams slightly over a billion super-beings, sophont people from across the galaxy that found themselves trapped here, and evolved rapidly to survive. The people of this world live almost exclusively nomadic tribal lives, traveling across regions and entire layers to avoid those dangers they cannot overcome, as the super-intelligence managing this station constantly adjusts the conditions of the layers to prevent any kind of truly consistent status quo, from the mild of extreme unending winters to apocalyptic events that scour entire layers clean like truly biblical floods. This is exacerbated by the fact that the governing intelligence destroys and prevents the creation of advanced technology, limiting the world to a pre-industrial level, though does

not hinder adaptations that reach the level of advanced technology. It especially seems hostile to any attempt to introduce technology that allows for travel between stars.

Upgrade - 50 CP

A varied toolkit of biological adaptations and enhancements, carefully implanted into your body, with a focus on survival and emergency needs. One converts ambient energy into a universal fuel for both biological and mechanical needs. The second floods your body with a regenerative fluid in response to trauma. A third seals your body for operation in vacuums and other environments hostile to respiration, and stores hyper-condensed oxygen sufficient to allow for 24 hours of moderate exertion in such conditions. The fourth lets you release a mix of a powerful flash, thunderous noise, and a biochemical substance that induces confusion in nearly all sapient life, though you are rendered immune to its effects, and your adaptations will render you resistant to the light and noise. Finally, a framework was inserted into your body, being what allowed for the seamless implantation of the above adaptations. This framework's only purpose is to smooth over the process of implanting foreign objects into your corpus, easing the initial process and preventing rejection entirely. This will significantly aid in any attempted transferring of adaptations.

Your arrival from a space beyond space has left your fundamental self wholly intact, but left the expression of that self into existence rather uncertain. As your corpus solidifies in your descent, it would be quite trivial to pull into yourself the essence of one of the many peoples of this world. Only a few stand out strongly enough to weave into you in your short journey, so the question remains

What are you?

Choose One Option

Human:

Gives 1 Special Token

Humanity is one of the most 'normal' of the Descendant Races, in that they lack any extreme overt adaptations, being of a rather average body plan, in particular having a distinct lack of overt defensive measures, even by the standards of sophont races. What humanity does have, in spades, is popularity. Humans are just, as a rule, more likable than others. Their visage is universally appealing, their voice soothing, and just their presence enjoyable, and that's without even considering the natural ease to which oration comes to them. It is because of this that while humanity is one of the weakest of the Descendant Races individually, they are at the head of the single largest alliance of nations in the galaxy, a collective of some two dozen distinct species, some of which even have sizable grudge against one another, working in impressive unison thanks to

humanity's sheer force of personality. Seemingly not much to look at, but in this interconnected age, it's so very often the spoken word and the gleaming smile that win out over the skill with which one slings guns and swings swords.

Veek:

The Veek are a race of small mammalian predators, around 3 feet tall, that live primarily as nomadic wanderers, not due to any particular need, but simply due to a deep inborn wanderlust that ensures such travelling became their way of life. While most are largely benign, there are a decent portion that take this lack of a set location to take part in less reputable acts, though anything violent is rare, such that having a Veek's paws is slang for being a pickpocket, generally a good one.

While not the nicest reputation, their array of abilities means it makes quite a bit of sense. Veek are naturally very agile, whether dancing across rooftops or branches, picking a pocket, or dodging attacks. They have incredibly keen eyesight, enough to put any animal on earth to shame. They can pull in large quantities of air into a number of small air sacs throughout their body. With this, they can reduce the effective force of gravity on themselves, allowing them to float for incredibly long times, or even indefinitely on planets with lower gravity. Finally, they have incredibly effective active camouflage, able to match their surroundings in nearly real time.

With the above adaptations, while Veek are perhaps most well known as thieves, they're just as effective as scouts, assassins, and snipers, and many a Veek makes good money selling their skills to militaries and corporations across the galaxy.

Of course, their small size and light weight do work against them at times, as they are considerably weaker and less tough than most other species, with blunt force in particular being a terror for them due to their semi-hollow bones.

Staukos:

A race of unique crystalline beings, similar in their shared traits, if not any comparable form. Born as rough, cloudy, basketball-sized crystals covered partially in rock, as they age that common stone crumbles away, a ball of light slowly grows within them and their crystal body clears up, continuing for about 30 standard years into an analogue of young adulthood. From there, Staukos grow endlessly until the day they die, something that simply does not occur from age alone, though their growth slows immensely at around 6ft tall. An important and interesting factor of Staukos life is in Cutting. While they grow bigger naturally over time, their proportions do not change naturally, and instead each Staukos undergoes occasional Cuttings, where a trusted individual uses specialized tools to shape their body into a desired form, in particular using an acid that forces the body into accepting the carved form as the correct default state. Staukos are animated by a sort of limited psychic force, no more powerful than muscles would be for their size, but less limited in range of motion and much harder to strike at.

Staukos, being living crystals, are highly divergent from most life, and have pros and cons to match. Staukos cannot generally be poisoned or otherwise debilitated chemically, barring some truly exotic and/or targeted substances. They likewise don't need to breathe, but seemingly possess a vestigial instinct that causes them extreme discomfort when in an exposed vacuum. Staukos don't possess vital organs, with the only part of them necessary for survival being the orb of light within their body, which functions as their brain. So long as a chunk of their body large enough to fit the whole orb remains, they will survive, while damage to the orb can cause severe and permanent mental health problems even when it doesn't kill them outright. Their crystalline structure is far tougher than one would expect crystal to be, and is highly resistant to many common forms of harm, like cutting weapons and fire, as well as directly feeding on the light of most laser weaponry. Staukos can see every known form of light, from gamma to radio waves.

Staukos feed solely on light, and thus live en masse only in those places where light is plentiful and strong, with those that move elsewhere often living difficult lives. Deprived of light, a Staukos will starve to death in around 6 months. During that time, they will grow more and more sluggish, until they are rendered entirely immobile in about 2-3 weeks depending on how much work they're doing. They are rather vulnerable to blunt force damage and hard impacts. Staukos cannot heal naturally from injuries, instead needing to fill injuries with a crushed equivalent of whatever crystal they are made of, which with enough time will be converted into pure unblemished crystal. While any non-lethal wound can be healed in this manner, even entire limbs being regained using molds, the process is particularly slow, taking twice or more as long to heal as comparable injuries for flesh and blood bodies. Staukos are the only known sophont race to have only two senses, sight and sound, utterly lacking any sense of touch, taste, or smell. This fact is lamented by many of them, the sheer number of life's experiences they miss out on being a constant source of sadness. Staukos entirely lack the chemically-induced fight-or-flight response found in most living creatures. They still experience lesser panic and stress, but don't have the instinctual urge to run or attack, though it also means they lack the adrenaline rushes that come with these instincts.

Tonkta:

The second largest of the Descendant races, and also the densest by far, the Tonkta are large mammalian beings somewhat similar to a ground sloth in appearance, walking primarily on four legs but able to walk fairly comfortably on two, with a long prehensile tail, extremely powerful jaws, and large claws. Perhaps their most striking characteristic is their colossal size, between 8-16 feet tall. While their size is perhaps the most obvious, it isn't their most impressive trait. The Tonkta, while generally omnivorous, also supplement their diet with sizable amounts of various ores. This is then used across their body in the creation of a number of robust semi-metallic structures. Teeth, claws, and bones are all heavily reinforced, and they possess a durable layer of subdermal armor across the whole of their body. In particular the fur of

a Tonkta is semi-metallic in makeup, and covered in even smaller spines that contain potent neurotoxin that causes horrible pain to those they touch. When threatened, Tonkta can tense up and turn their fur into a coat of hardened spikes, or shake their fur loose to release a cloud of sheer pain to anyone who breathes it in, and even without effort it presents a thick metal armour to any attacks. Because of this toxic compound, Tonkta in most civilized nations have to take specific medicines that neutralize the toxins in their fur, though the Tonkta government provides a supply of it to their citizens if they live on or intend to visit non-Tonkta worlds, and Tonkta settlements rarely ever have visitors other than those doing research of some kind. Tonkta tend to operate at a slower pace than others, a sort of species-wide lethargy that means they come to decisions, react and act slower. This does not mean they cannot go faster, there are individuals who don't act this way and the rush of adrenaline wipes away any sort of slothfulness regardless, it is simply a tendency of theirs.

Despite their sheer power, they do suffer from some downsides. While in combination with the right metals their body forms compounds even tougher than what went into making them, without them their body is comparatively very weak and brittle, a Tonkta deprived of sufficient metals able to be crippled by a common man with a sledgehammer, if still dangerous even then. This is particularly an issue because while some metals are fairly common, others are quite rare beyond the planets the Tonkta settled. This is exacerbated by the fact that they also have truly immense food requirements, as their digestive process is unusually inefficient, easily a dozen times less so than most other peer species. They also are quite bad at dealing with extremes of heat, and intense fires in particular hit an ancestral fear, though it can be fought through. Finally, they have notably bad senses, below the galactic average in all 5 common senses.

The Tonkta tend to be friendly and calm in much the same way a large dog tends to be calmer than a tiny one, their sheer size and durability meaning they have little to fear in day to day life and thus little reason for aggression, and their sheer strength is enough that they tend to act with extreme care when not in an environment made for them. Those few Tonkta with a more energetic personality are extremely valued for their sheer power and toughness, and quite a few of the most feared mundane mercenaries, and a couple of the superpowered ones, are Tonkta.

Draek

A reptilian species, the Draek are as if one interposed the upper body of a human between the head and body of an upsized komodo dragon, with some tweaks here and there. Rather large in size, they nonetheless rarely stand tall, naturally taking on a low, almost crawling position.

They have immensely powerful stomach acid, the composition of which also makes it a powerful toxin, which when exposed to air partially solidifies into a soft jelly-like substance. Since they are highly resistant to it and most other acids and toxins, they

can regurgitate it and use it as a potent weapon when applied to claws and teeth, external weapons, or even when just directly spat at an enemy. They have a sense of smell to match any bloodhound, and most importantly their bodies process cellular waste products like lactic acid so quickly and efficiently that they can exert themselves at peak capacity for as long as they have fuel to use up. Combined with lacking the physiological *and* psychological need to sleep, even if they can benefit from doing so, it means they can and will track prey for days on end without a second of rest, and end up no worse for wear.

Like most reptiles, they are cold-blooded, in this case to an almost comical degree. They live primarily on planets comprised largely of deserts a match for any on Earth, and struggle to survive on planets even moderately cool, let alone actually cold, growing sluggish and fatigued at best, and dying outright at worst. Those Draek that do wish to do so require biological and/or cybernetic enhancements to survive. Many that wish to travel to other planets do so under the employment of any number of mercenary groups, as their natural abilities make them a prized member for such organizations, and the payment to winterize one lizard is cheap in comparison.

Lacco

The Lacco are artificial organisms created by a now extinct civilization, meant to be servants able to adapt to myriad environments, especially so as to help develop otherwise inhospitable worlds for eventual habitation. Of course, this didn't go as planned, as they seemingly didn't think to enforce any kind of loyalty in the Lacco, who decided collectively to bugger right off, leaving their creators to pass ignobly in the polluted wastelands they had created. They've been welcomed with open arms from their isolated corner of reality, first politely, and then with much more interest when their particular talents came to light. The Lacco have yet to develop much of a distinct culture of their own due to their age, but are quite eager to take on the cultures of those around them, a species-wide fascination with other peoples and worlds.

The Lacco possess two key abilities, both stemming from their strange composition, a kind of matter stem-cell. The first is that they can take on the properties of any matter they come into contact with, whether that be wood, stone, or highly advanced super-alloys, though more complex materials can take longer to mimic. Secondly, Lacco can meld with most machines past the most simple, and in doing so control them to a degree, though a singular Lacco would have trouble with anything but basic machines. In groups however Lacco can not only finely control even extremely complex machinery, but even push it to act in ways otherwise impossible, bending and flexing it like one does an arm, or letting it exceed its limitations like a person high on adrenaline. Beyond the capabilities of individual Lacco is perhaps their most notable trait, their collaborative nature. Lacco on their own are rather insignificant, a block-like being of at absolute most a foot in length. This is why Lacco work in unison, like-minded Lacco joining together to form a singular being of greater ability. While any Lacco can connect like this, too much disunion in the mindsets can cause the resulting being no

end of psychological trouble. You will exist as a collective of almost unheard of compatibility, such that there is effectively no perceivable gap between one Lacco and the next, all joining perfectly into you, though you could break yourself apart to act as all your individual components if you wished.

While quite adaptive and resourceful, Lacco are generally not impressive in physical matters barring considerable outliers, the average Lacco collective being no better than a human, and an individual Lacco being a threat to little more than a small dog.

Suruma

Looking like an odd mix of the dragons of humanity's legend and a whale, the Suruma are a truly odd species, as besides being the undeniably largest of the descendant races, they are the only of the descendant races to reside naturally in space, living semi-nomadic lives in vast space station complexes in family groups of up to about a hundred, hopping between systems periodically as the need arises. Their natural ability to live in space, their size and strength, and their semi-nomadic lifestyle all mean they've quite naturally taken on roles as some of the galaxies premier interstellar transporters, as they travel in large groups alongside their massive homes, which makes assaults on a Suruma convoy a fool's venture.

The Suruma evolved with no need to breathe, instead possessing what amounts to a biological fusion reactor for a stomach, which they fuel with gases eaten from gas giants primarily, and which is supplemented by solar power taken in by their unique skin-composition. The byproduct of their reactor-stomach needs to be shunted out to remain healthy, and the Suruma accomplish this by expelling it orally. Basically, they barf up a pile of metal and stray gasses, and breathe out radiation like bad breath. When threatened however, they can push this further, and propel a beam of ionizing radiation and ultra-high speed particles, which plays utter havoc on machines of all sorts, and isn't exactly pleasant for most biological things either. If they have a particular excess of energy, they can focus that energy into incredibly powerful photoemitters in their body, and release vast amounts of focused light, literally just firing a laser beam from their mouths. Finally, as a byproduct of their bodily processes, Suruma produce an exotic form of matter that can bend spacetime, effectively letting the Suruma display a degree of control over gravity, which they use for both traversal and for collecting the gasses they consume.

Suruma don't just live in space by choice, as their bodies cannot properly operate in-atmosphere. The first issue is that their bodies don't do well with an overflow of gasses, as it can cause an overloading of their inner-reactor, hurting them and potentially killing them if pushed too far. They can seal their body off from the atmosphere to avoid this, but this also prevents them from expelling waste, meaning it's a temporary measure. This is exacerbated by the second issue, that their gravity manipulation isn't enough to counteract the pull of most planets, causing them to

effectively become beached on the surface. They can supercharge their body by intaking a lot of gas to amp their gravity manipulation, but that as mentioned will cause damage to their body.

Zeld

The Zeld are one of the strangest of descendant races, simply due to the way in which they live their lives, with their mannequin-esque bodies and elongated limbs being a relatively minor note in comparison. The Zeld are, to simplify it, temporally large. They exist within a short range of times instead of a singular point, and can contract and stretch themselves along a time axis like one contracts their muscles. To describe the Zelds' culture is an exercise in futility, as they operate on a mindset highly divergent from most other life due to their odd state of existence, which makes understanding their society a challenge even for seasoned xenoanthropologists.

Their state within space-time allows them to compress themselves into a shorter time to take multiple actions at once, or extend themselves to stretch the time a force or other action takes to apply to them. Of course, even without changing their time-state, this allows them a degree of foresight, even if the uncertain nature of the future ensures it is only an idea of potential future events, like feeling out the shape of a room in the dark. This all allows for a startling degree of flexibility in their actions, and makes them one of the most famed races in the galaxy.

For all their exotic prowess, the Zeld suffer a number of issues in turn. They are generally quite frail, not absurdly so but certainly below average in all physical aspects. They deal quite poorly with sensory assaults and overload, as their temporal nature forces them to experience it for far longer if they cannot stop it first. Finally, just like one can overly strain their muscles, causing damage, Zeld can do the same with their temporal-state, causing instability and erratic motion, which in extreme cases can lead to fates worse than death, trapping them eternally in the past or always a few seconds in the future.

Unreal Ones:

Not technically the name for any singular race, but rather the catch-all term for a category of sophont life. While a sizable portion of sophont species can be traced back to the 26 Ur-Ancestors, the rest came solely from Unreality, same as most other life. These beings, the ones accepted as beings that can live within The Tale, lack the extreme and powerful adaptations of other races, as they fundamentally lack access to Evolutionary Supremacy and the abilities it can provide. However, for all they lose out on from Evolutionary Supremacy, they gain in the form of a natural affinity for both Storytelling and Unreality, as these Power Sources are so intrinsic to their very being, such that they learn to use the Power Sources readily and swiftly and on average reach a higher peak than other users, and consistently push out a bit more oomph from the same amount of effort when using them. As an intriguing side note, perhaps due to their already slightly unreal nature, they just slightly blur the limits of Unreality such that it is

possible for them to learn to perform slow cosmetic changes to themselves, something the Descendant Races quite simply cannot do. They cannot make these changes quickly, and it doesn't go much farther than tweaking physical features within possible limits for their race. You can be part of a race of Unreal beings (there are at least 279 races legally recognized by the general galactic community and descendant races make up less than a third of those), or a distinct individual.

Power Sources:

You finally land, and a few pieces click into place.

Your arrival has already changed you on a deep level; as you are, you could wield any of this galaxy's power sources as effectively as a native.

But the vast majority of the power the Chain gave you remains.

As it is, bereft of form, there isn't much you can do with it, not with the weight of a world pressing down upon you.

Yet that which is formless can be given form, and your passage has imprinted you with many patterns just waiting to be filled.

There's no rush, here- especially as you can see the patterns clearly enough to read the nature of their source, and the effects of their completion.

Choose any number of options. Discounted 50cp perks are free.

Storytelling

The Power of Fate and Stories, it's what The Authors of The Tale use to make the stories they want to see happen, happen. Two forms exist; Talespinning, and Roleplaying. The first is what The Authors actually use, which works by the careful nudging of fate via the medium of stories, or more accurately it is the ultimate source of fate, writing a story with this in turn writing a new fate into being. Spin a story of two individuals meeting, and have events line up for them to bump into each other at an opportune moment. Tell a tale of the fall of a kingdom, and it would start to experience tragedies and betrayals. The skill of a user limits the scope and weight of the tale, the latter meaning the ease with which one might subvert or avoid the events foretold in your tale. If the weightiness was too low, those two people might take a different path or just take a few steps in the wrong direction and never interact, and that kingdom might be struck by tragedy, but it would recover in time. Tales are aided by being actually detailed and nuanced stories. Telling the Tale "Rob and Patrick bumped into each other in a tavern on the 2nd" would be pathetically weak and weightless, while spinning a detailed tale explaining their pasts and the events leading up to the point they met would work much better. This means that Story-Telling is best used on a very long timescale, and is generally useless in the short-term, unless one is very very good. While a skilled writer can get quite a lot of weight even writing stuff in isolation, to get truly impressive levels of weight one needs to spread their Tale, as the weight

of a Tale is bolstered for every person that tells it. Skilled Storytellers can also sense the story around them, detecting all sorts of things, most commonly the presence of important characters, events, and locations. You might sense the protagonist of a Tale from across a city, or be drawn to catch world-changing events as they're happening.

The other form of Storytelling is Roleplaying, which is the insertion of oneself or others into roles in a Tale. The benefits of slipping into a role depend not so much on one's own skill with the Power Source itself, but more on how accurately you play to the tropes of the character. No matter how skilled one is, they will get little to no benefit from donning the role of The Hero whilst they light an orphanage on fire, and likewise the role of The Villain won't help them much to save the world at the last moment. Properly playing into these roles however can lead to grand benefits, from eleventh hour power ups and plot armor during the start of a journey or adventure as The Hero, to natural, broad, and deep insights into tactics and strategy, full on RTS-like awareness, or even direct control of one's troops, as The General. Sinking deeply into a role can lead to weaknesses and drawbacks just as it gives you boons, however. The Mentor might become incredibly good at teaching, even those that would normally be terrible at absorbing information, but if you're teaching a hero, let alone The Hero, you're all but guaranteed to face death multiple times, and it'll be up to you to survive what fate throws at you. Roleplaying is strengthened greatly by multiple people in Roles interacting. The Hero might already have a decent advantage against those who commit terrible acts, but against The Villain, she'd be boosted to an insane degree, such that eventual victory was all but assured, the forces of Fate bending and twisting to allow her success, if not without some potential sacrifice along the way. This can of course work if they take on the role themselves, but experienced users of Roleplaying can also apply roles to others, declaring that one's opponent is The Villain, and they become as such.

Universal Access: **Self-Insert - 50 Chain Parts**

By writing the right Tale about them, you can guide people into making the revelations all Storytellers do about the nature of reality, giving them the chance to grasp the puppet strings if they have the mind to do so. This is not fast by any means, but you can use this on as many people as you can effectively incorporate into a coherent Tale. You personally experience flashes of incredible inspiration for creative endeavours, coming whenever you fall into a rut or bout of writer's block.

Booster: **Prolific - 100 Chain Parts**

As you write Tales and successfully implement them to a desired end, that success stays with you, woven into a kind of meta-Tale of your work that settles firmly around you like a fine cloak. Each story you weave with Storytelling adds to the power of this meta-Tale proportional to its impact. Ruining one man's day is almost nothing, bringing an ancient empire to ruin is massive. This cloak then bolsters and lends its own Weight to any story in line with the Tales that make it up, such that writing something a bit outside your usual wheelhouse would see less of a boost, and something completely novel gets nothing.

The other side of the coin, Roleplaying, works in much the same way, but with time spent in a Role instead of Tales you've written. The more often you fit yourself into a particular Role, and the more accurately you act to that role in that time, the more your cloak is empowered, in turn magnifying the benefits of any appropriate Roles you take on.

Special: **Quiet Place - 200 Chain Parts**

Storytelling is not a direct art, not something that requires one to look their foes in their eyes. It is also not a fast art, its best work being done over long stretches of time. Taking these two things into account, this should be quite the boon for you. What you have here is an extra-dimensional pocket, utterly untouchable and unreachable by any except for you alone, able to travel there instantly with just a thought. A space about the size of a large cabin, formed to whatever design would be most desirable for you, with everything you could need for any form of artistic expression and for comfortable and enjoyable living. While within you enjoy a number of ancillary benefits. Just being inside whips your muse into a frenzy, your imagination running on overtime. You likewise experience a minor but useful improvement to your ability for long term planning, predicting the course of actions quite a bit farther into the future than you would otherwise be capable of. Finally, beyond normal reality as it is, while inside time flows oddly, such that you can spend days or weeks inside writing a masterwork of a Tale and come out an hour after you went in, though this only seems to function while working on Tales and to a much lesser extent other creative endeavours

Limit-Breaker: **Flash Fiction - 300 Chain Parts**

By its nature Storytelling is a slow process, carefully weaving together a tale that directs the world around you as you wish it. You however have learned to leave an impact with as few words as possible. You can, whenever you create a Tale, choose to condense that tale into a compact form, delaying its impact and storing it for later. This causes it to lose Weight, but allows you to condense all the nuance of a Tale into a much shorter period. You can freely choose how much you wish to condense a Tale, deciding a good balance between brevity and effectiveness. There is no fundamental limit to how many Tales you can have prepared, you just need to be able to remember them all.

You can condense Roles in a similar manner, holding off on gaining the benefits for the Role you're playing to later release it when needed. When you release these stored Roles, taking the form of thematically appropriate actions or scenes, you are forced to act in an appropriate manner, but gain boons far in excess of what ordinary Roleplaying can provide, though also for a shorter time.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Speculative Fiction - 600 Chain Parts**

You possess an odd ability, to see what could happen. You can at any time refuse to make a decision in the moment and instead split your timeline, experiencing two or more possible futures from that decision onwards, until you eventually drop all but one timeline that becomes the real one, from which you can split again. The amount of branches and the length you can hold off on making a decision will expand with practice and time, but to start is two

timelines for about 12 hours. Being killed will also immediately close a timeline regardless of how long it's lasted.

Unreality

The minds of living beings have power. Not in the sense of a thinking man's philosophies or a crafty man's lies, nor even in a crafter's creations and inventions. No, they have true tangible power, all stored in the imagination. Even without trying to, the collective imagination of all people works to fill the dark corners of the world with monsters, whether that be fairy tales in the shaded woods, or horrors in the gaps between stars. When one reaches far enough beyond civilization, beyond the gentle glow of the kitchen light in your home and the harsh buzzing of shining billboards in the plazas, reality itself starts to fall apart. If the civilized world lies in a realm of stories and tales, then beyond that is that which is born solely of the unconstructed imagination. Fae-like creatures whisper ancient secrets and sweet nothings to gain your trust, though never should it be given, and vast abominations devour the very stars themselves. Planets where fundamental physical laws are twisted and broken, where time itself is naught but a suggestion. There is no real limit to what one might find here, if one were to look long enough. While this realm itself exists naturally, there are a number of individuals who have learned to call forth this fluid Unreality into the structure of civilization. It takes a certain mindset to accomplish, but in doing so lets one alter the nature of reality in many ways, letting one's own imagination bring forth various effects. One could turn earth into molten lava, air into poison, or call forth hordes of ravenous beasts, even those whose function and nature hardly make sense in the ordered reality they are summoned to. Despite the broad nature of this ability, there are quite a few limits.

First and foremost, it is of course limited by the imagination. This means if something is truly unimaginable, it can't be done. It also means that it tends to have problems with arbitrary increases in scale. A number might go up, but without a solid reference point in one's experience, one's imagination is prone to fail to properly conceptualize that as a realized alteration. Both of these limitations can be worked away, whether through external aids or specialized training.

Second, as an extension of the first rule Unreality tends to do rather poorly with precise science, more effective in the realm of metaphor and wild fantasies, as physical laws sort of break down by default in Unreality. That is to say that Unreality is really good at turning a street into an M.C. Escher painting and drawing forth your victim's greatest fears into physical form, not so good at doing precise interactions with atoms and molecules or anything that relies on specific physical laws.

Third, it cannot directly alter other living beings, nor the space inside them, their own concrete existence and awareness of self preventing them from being anything less than structured reality, the same applying to oneself.

Fourth, one generally needs to keep their alterations in mind, as they are by nature temporary changes to ordered reality, and the background influence of The Tale's Story will crush your imagination should you pull your attention away from it.

Fifth, if not done carefully, it has a habit of running wild, your unconscious mind manifesting, even when you would much rather it not.

Universal Access: **Dreaming Squared - 50 CP**

You can easily pull a willing participant into the appropriate mindstate for manifesting and manipulating Unreality with just a brief touch, though for them it takes a vision quest of indeterminate length, and they are guaranteed to remain largely sane, though not necessarily unchanged. You yourself are forever able to drop into this and similar states of altered thinking with utter ease, and you're guaranteed to be able to pull yourself back to your normal mindset just as easily. This also extends to other unnatural mindstates, letting you quickly shake off most mental influence, whether supernatural or from base drugs.

Booster: **Guide the Tide - 100 CP**

Where other Unrealists churn up Unreality in a localized area, you have an impossible degree of broad control over the Sea as a whole. You can give imprecise directives to the Sea of Unreality on an arbitrary-scale. This can of course let you make a current of Unreality that swallows entire solar systems in the Unreal, but can also allow you to set trends and ideas into the Roiling Maybe, such as Fae courts ruling over it, one for every sophont species, or that Unreal beings gains strength from devouring other Unreal beings. This is direction, not manifestation, however. You can direct the currents of Unreality to swallow solar systems, but it will take much longer for that tide to arrive than if you manually churned up Unreality in an area. You can set trends that will slowly come into fruition in the Sea, but you could not immediately create Faerie courts across its entirety. In short, broad directing vs precise manipulation. Be careful however if you plan to manifest Unreality on a cosmic scale, as The Tale won't take kindly to it in the slightest, and that's a fight you likely do not want to have. As a final note, while this is naturally tuned to the Sea of Unreality, you might in time learn to link this broad guidance with other similar realms and sources of power.

Special: **Voice In Your Head - 200 CP**

And a shoulder to lean on! You have a persistent bubble of Unreality that acts as your 'imaginary' friend. Since they are the Unreality instead of any particular manifestation of it, they can manifest just about anything within themselves, and unlike other forms of Unreality they are entirely self-sustaining even in the face of corrective forces like The Tale, not needing even a fraction of your attention to keep them going. Whether becoming a thundercloud to smite your foes, a mighty dragon to soar through the skies on, or just a blanket and hot chocolate when you're sad, they can do it all. They can enter incredibly surreal mind states and in turn call on incredible power through their imagination, but they get less and less personable and more and more eldritch and monstrous the more they do so, and so won't do so unless they absolutely have to for your sake, not even at your request.

Limit-Breaker: **Fluid Selfhood - 300 CP**

You are no longer prevented from altering yourself and others with Unreality, their and your conscious experience no longer enough to anchor the self against your power. This means that you could just as easily turn yourself into a roaring hound made of shadows that bleeds liquid gold as you could reduce a city street to molten rock. Altering others is more difficult, requiring touch at first, but now is at least actually possible.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Call Forth the Waters - 600 CP**

The Sea of Unreality is not some constant of reality, it is tied intrinsically to the imagination of conscious minds, and vanishes alongside them. It is by this collective power that the infinitude of the Sea was created. You can do something similar, in theory. By a grand investiture of your own power, a true, if temporary, lessening of total capability, not just of excess energy, you can spark the birth of a new realm, composed of and for whatever powers you made it from. Once this realm is given time to settle into a stable state, it will maintain its own level of power barring extreme circumstances, and even produce an excess of energy which you can freely draw on, or leave to let the realm grow ever larger.

Even more than mere raw power, you'll find that the greater nature of the realm, and the power that makes it up, coalesces at times into a sort of metaphysical lens, stained glass that colours that which passes through it. Each lens represents some aspect of the realm, and can be used to alter the nature of anything directed through it. A lens of Edgerunning, in how one is empowered through sacrifice, applied to your Storytelling could cause Tales to become weightier the greatest the sacrifices that occur within the Tale, while shining yourself through a lens of the indefinite nature of Unreality could let you turn your own condition into something of an uncertainty, ignoring outright those actions that were not definitive, a glancing blow becomes no blow at all. These lenses can only be used for so long, as existence beyond the realm that birthed them, paired with interacting with other powers, wears them away into non-existence.

Wild Epiphanies

An Epiphanist gains Epiphanies, the core resource of the Power Source, by being exposed to new information, gaining more progress towards an Epiphany the more significant the information learned. These Epiphanies have a 'flavour' to them based on what information went into granting the Epiphany. Epiphanies are used to create something, with almost no limitation on what that thing can be so long as it fits within the flavour of the Epiphany. Epiphanies allow one to vastly exceed the limitations of not just one's means and resources, but even the limitations of reality itself. Epiphanies cause a nearly irresistible urge to create and invent, such that it's almost impossible for a novice Epiphanist to not immediately start creating something when they get an Epiphany, and only masters can hold back long enough to use more than 1 Epiphany at a time. The simultaneous use of multiple Epiphanies allows for exponentially greater achievements than with just a single. One would let you build functional power armor in a cave with a box of scraps, two would let you build an ftl capable battleship in your garage. Wild Epiphanies builds off the existing resources available. Better means allow for vastly superior end results.

Universal Access: **Eureka! - 50cp**

With nothing but a hand on their head, you can awaken the ability to generate Epiphanies in any willing being with at least a modicum of intelligence. This includes more intelligent animals, like dogs and cats, birds, dolphins, and the like, who gain at least human-level intelligence and reasoning in the process. Any being you awaken this capability in

stays connected to you, and any information they learn can be passed back to you in an instant, what they learn you learn.

Booster: Elbow Grease - 100cp

You have a sort of mental tool, with which you can scrub the distinctness from non-physical entities, without necessarily lessening their potency. With this you could remove the 'flavour' from an Epiphany, letting it be turned towards any field or project with equally total efficiency.

Special: Compartmentalize - 200cp

You have an endless not-space always within reach should you think of it. Within this space you can store any non-physical, non-homogeneous energies, entities, and quantities that you possess. You could not store metals, nor electrical or heat energy, but you could store within any number of Epiphanies, or the tortured souls of a thousand thousand sinners, or the divine energy of three dozen distinct gods. What is particularly important is that within this space all such energies are quieted, such that they lay no effect or consequence upon you whilst within. A thousand Epiphanies would not force even the slightest compulsion to create, and the scheming mind of an ancient demon would be unable to so much as darken a single thought of yours while within.

Limit-Breaker: Share the Wonders - 300cp

You can use a second Epiphany to un-black box Epiphany-based creations, allowing them to be recreated and made by others with no loss in potency despite not being fueled by an Epiphany. This still allows them to function even when local physics would not allow it, just like any Epiphany-based creation.

All-Encompassing Capstone: - S-S-S-Super! - 600cp

Your actions build up a charge, which once fully formed can be used to perform an instance of those actions that is vastly and deeply superior. This applies to your mundane actions, running constantly building a charge that would let you run at superspeed or other similarly unnatural feats, while constantly punching would eventually let you use a super-punch. This also applies to powers of all sorts, such as churning up solar system-sized pools of Unreality in an instant, or manifesting an Emanation many times vaster than you are ordinarily capable of. In short, it allows one to perform a miracle. These charges, beyond their core function, are otherwise identical to Epiphanies in nature, being distinctly natured to some specific action, and more or less unable to be stored due to the overwhelming urge to use them, though these charges only trigger the next time you seek to do such an action, so you won't be compelled to randomly super-punch someone after the fight is already over.

Regal Architecture

Regal Architecture is a Power Source based on the steady improvement, empowerment, and fortification of a location, which in turn reflects on the higher metaphysical structure anchored to that location known as the Castle. Castles are established through intentional and

slow rituals, and improved quite simply by directly improving on locations tied to them, whatever the purpose of that location is. A Castle acts as somewhat like a second layer to a location, naturally untouchable via any dimension but interacting with and empowering every part of the space.

While a Castle can gain unique traits and abilities in accordance with the location(s) it encompasses, there are common abilities amongst them all. Castles act like shining lights to those with supernatural sight, beacons of importance to Storytellers, bastions of stability to those steeped in Unreality, and similarly of note to other such sights. Castles universally give a substantial degree of protection from deleterious supernatural effects to the location and those within it, though not from direct harm. You could light a home with a Castle on fire supernaturally, but not curse the location with bad luck without overwhelming power and effort. Castles tunnel through and into just about every single dimension, plane of existence, and realm in the setting. While at first little more than an infinitely small sliver of its presence, one can expand on this slight presence to establish full structures within numerous planes of existence, allowing at the very least very easy travel between these planes. All Castles have a King, usually being the person who created the Castle. The King by default has sole and absolute command over the Castle, which often leaks out into the real world even without conscious effort, making a King naturally more authoritative and commanding, particularly when within, but even without. In terms of conscious use, the King has awareness of everything under the aegis of their Castle, at first just as if they were there looking at any given location, but with time and practice letting them see even the tiniest microbe or potentially even into the minds of those within. The King has a degree of control over the actual location, at base letting them act somewhat like an omnipresent poltergeist. Doors, kitchenware, brooms, blankets. Generally, small to medium objects can be moved and directed to the limit of their ability to multitask, taking no more effort than it took to think to do so. With practice, a Castle can be used by the King to transmit other abilities they possess to anywhere and everywhere it covers. Finally, Castles holistically improve every aspect of what they encompass proportional to the degree of their development, even those things not related to the function of the location. A magnificent teahouse would have walls that most firearms and explosives don't even scratch, even if a similarly mighty fortress had walls even harder.

Beyond the above, further abilities depend on the specifics of the location. A fortress with a developed Castle might let one conjure mighty barriers around it, raise warbands of spiritual beings in line with those who man the fortress, and enhance those that fight for the King while within. If there were a blacksmith integrated into the fortress, it might grant the ability to further enhance defenders' weapons or manifest new ones that be controlled mentally, or grant the ability to manipulate a degree of the forge's heat and flame to those within. An inn could grant impossibly restful sleep to its residents, and with care and improvement let the King induce drowsiness and exhaustion at will, perhaps even entering dreams. Combine the two together under one Castle, and every soldier within the fortress could get 8 hours of rest with a 30 minute nap, while barely palatable rations transform into homecooked meals with all the same nutrition and calories as before, while the inn would find its walls orders of magnitude greater, phantom soldiers manifesting to defend it automatically, and such benefits are only the

surface level. In general, the more expansive and broad the territory a Castle encompasses, the more varied abilities and benefits it can provide, the improvement of a location enhancing the Castle, which it then reflects back onto the entire territory. The more a Castle is developed, the more the King can stretch it out to cover new land and locations. This way, Castles can in time come to encompass entire countries or more, to awe-inspiring effect. A note all would be druids and elven lords, locations need to have some degree of purposed development to contribute to a Castle. That is to say, if you wanted a mystical forest to enhance your Castle, you'd need to build treehouses or the like in the trees. Castles improve with intentional structures, not natural features.

Universal Access: **Arms Race - 50cp**

You can simply teach others the rituals to create and destroy Castles, after which they can do so freely and freely teach others as they wish, ad infinitum. You specifically are able to perform the ritual to create a Castle with just a snap of your finger. You also always know the rough direction of wherever you consider home, no matter how far away or how esoteric and hard to navigate the location.

Booster: **Druid Lord - 100cp**

Ordinarily your Castle only works through purposed structures, not getting any use from even supernatural landscapes and natural features beyond ancillary benefits from related structures, like a lumberjack's lodge having access to magic trees to harvest. Now however you can work with natural features just as you can with intentional structures. A mystical forest with illusionary mist might spread that mist through your Castle as a defense, one that only hinders foes and leaves allies unaffected, while the supernaturally hard wood of the trees replaces mundane lumber across your territory. These natural features can even be improved, consistent care and tending to them slowly enhancing them and their presence in the Castle just like improving a structure would do.

Special: **Fisher King - 200cp**

Like the legendary keeper of the Holy Grail, you and your Castle are linked to a degree far beyond what other Kings achieve. The condition of you and your Castle are connected intrinsically, such that your Castle could heal what it encompasses like it was a living being and in time perhaps incorporate other powers you possess into it like what it gains from its anchor, and you naturally benefit from all the abilities and enhancements of your Castle no matter where you are. There is to a degree negative feedback, wounds on either you or your Castle's anchor damaging the other, but such feedback is muted, such that an entire tower of a fortress crumbling under siege would only fracture a bone, while small cuts on your body appear as mere scuffs and scrapes in the wood of your inn. In short, for all intents and purposes, you and your Castle are extensions of the other, with all that implies.

Limit-Breaker: **Castle Migration - 300cp**

It can be said that a nation is not its borders, but its culture, its people. You hold that true to some extent, as anyone who spends considerable time under the aegis of your Castle as an friendly inhabitant, yourself included, can then be used to spread the influence of your Castle

elsewhere, travelling elsewhere and performing the usual Castle creation ritual to create new territory as a part of your Castle instead of a brand new one, despite having no direct connection to the original territory. This takes just as long as establishing a normal Castle, about a month of persistent effort, but can be done by as many people as can linger in your territory and then go travel elsewhere. After establishing territory this way once, they'll need to spend more time in your territory to let them do it again.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **P2W - 600cp**

Anything you create, alone or with others, can thereafter be improved by the introduction of more, new, and/or better materials, substances, and energies. An iron sword could be improved simply by shoving more iron into it until it's supernaturally sharp, and a bullet could be made to fire with far greater force just by pouring a barrel of gunpowder over it and letting it eat it all up, letting a 9mm fire with the force of a .50 cal without harming the gun or increasing the recoil. Introduce enough feathers to armour and it'll grow wings to fly with. Improving like this doesn't require knowledge of how one would do so, simply introducing material with the intent to use this will cause your creation to evolve and be empowered automatically, but appropriate knowledge in craftsmanship can amplify the effects of this Perk considerably. There is a limit to how far something can be empowered by introducing more of the same material however, though that limit is quite high. Once one reaches that point, they can simply introduce superior materials to cause their creation to incorporate it and upgrade immediately, and then the process can be continued by supplying more of this new material. Even energies can be incorporated, for interesting effects. If you for example had a system of stereotypical RPG magic, you could pump mana into your sword to enchant it even if you had no idea how to normally, and then improve the enchantment massively by simply giving more mana.

Edgerunning

Edgerunning, and the ones who use it, Edgerunners, are those who believe that a life lived well is infinitely superior to a life lived long. Well, that or they're desperate enough that they're willing to resort to any means necessary to achieve their goals. Edgerunning is a process by which one makes sacrifices of themselves in exchange for grand power, far in excess of their norm. The power gained is proportional to the sacrifice made, and the value of the sacrifice is relative to its importance to you. Reducing an already shattered and useless arm to ash is going to give far less than doing the same to a healthy one, and sacrificing one arm when you have 10 is going to give less than if you had 2. At the same time, while the sacrifices for great power are always relevant no matter your might, the power they give also scales proportionally to your base power, as the power gained is multiplicative, not additive. A common man giving everything they have could tear through the security force of a top megacorp. A cybernetically enhanced supersoldier doing the same could slaughter armies, slay legends, and quite literally obliterate buildings with their bare hands, if only briefly before they were reduced to cinders. Sacrifices are in no way constrained to the physical, only by their value and importance to you personally. You could boost your speed with the sacrifice of cherished memories just as you could with your blood and flesh. Sacrifices can be done gradually or instantly, a gradual release extending the duration of the boost of a given sacrifice, but doing so

immediately will give many many times greater return, flinging away all you held dear in pursuit of your goals. The reward for running along the edge goes beyond mere quantitative benefits, and starts to stretch the limits of what's possible as more is sacrificed. Greatly enhanced speed lets one run along perfectly smooth walls and jump across raindrops. Highly boosted strength lets one toss things with their full strength without any form of leverage, like in mid air, or catch objects without them crumbling or otherwise breaking from the rapid stop. Amazing durability starts to just nullify force outright, even ignoring momentum, letting one facetank speeding vehicles without even shifting. It is important to note that Edgerunning enhances you, not your actions. You can enhance yourself so you fire bullets with supernatural accuracy and precision, until you can bank shots to kill a man around two corners, but your gun won't fire with any greater force, nor will it gain any supernatural traits inherently.

Universal Access: **Rebellious Spirit - 50cp**

The essence of Edgerunning is in the metaphor, of burning your self as fuel, and such is the ease that people can use it accidentally should they be desperate and have the metaphor in mind. You can likewise spread its use simply by sharing knowledge of this metaphor, and others can then do the same. May everyone be empowered to rise up against their oppressors. You in particular have the spirit of a true Edgerunner, and have an innate sense on how to fight back against anything that oppresses you. As a slave in chains you might have your attention drawn to the key on your master's belt and broken glass that would make a very nice shiv in a pinch. Under the yolk of a tyrannical boss, you'd be drawn to their office when they were gone at just the right time to find some evidence to get them sacked in a heartbeat. This won't always guarantee you'll succeed, but it'll certainly show you the way forward.

Booster: **The Last Dance - 100 cp**

Generally it is considered a poor idea to sacrifice the same thing you want to boost, since that generally limits how long you can use your boost to a very short time, hence why Edgerunners generally sacrifice those things they don't need boosted. You have a very good incentive to do otherwise however, because when you sacrifice the same thing you're boosting with that sacrifice, you get orders of magnitude greater results, sacrificing your legs to leap over mountains, or sacrifice decades of firearms experience to briefly outshoot an entire army.

Special: **Gearshift - 200cp**

Via what feels sort of like a gearbox, you can jump up 'gears' to greatly amplify the boosts you get from your sacrifices. The only downside is that the higher the gear, the more volatile the boost is. That is to say, Edgerunning is inherently a finicky and precise practice, with even small mistakes being life-threatening. Going up in gears exacerbates that, making otherwise survivable errors lethal, and tightening the margin of error to almost nothing. This can be mitigated with practice, and by spacing out your gear jumps.

Limit-Breaker: **Overclock - 300cp**

You can trigger Edgerunning in non-living entities you touch. You can then make it Edgerun just like you would, with its own sacrifices and boosts independent of you, but still controlled by your will.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Reflexive Excellence** - 600cp

Once you've honed your body and mind to achieve the fantastical as the norm, many tasks become so simple as to be unworthy of your attention, and this is proof. You can, at will, automate any action you wish to take that could be considered simple and/or routine by a measure of your own individual capability, performed to the best of your current capacity, performed without human error. You may set any rules, conditions and stipulations you wish, though this cannot respond to that which you aren't at least subconsciously aware of. An experienced Edgerunner could automate his preferred sequence of sacrifices to loop endlessly, and not have to spare a second thought past that. There is no limit to the number of these tasks that can be performed barring logical limitations on simultaneous actions.

Ego Blazing

In a galaxy of grand empires and vast fleets, something has decided there needs to be agents of change, shining heroes to stand against the darkness. Ego Blazing is the process whereby one draws forth the power of their soul, filtered through the lens of the self, in the form of a mighty construct, stereotypically a mecha, but not necessarily so, called an Emanation. Users of Ego Blazing, called Emanators, gain their power during acts of genuinely great will and self-confidence, whether that be facing down an army or berating a tyrant king for the first time in his rule. In that moment some, though tragically not all, of these people are visited by a being, firm and powerful, urging them to push forward, to declare their selfness to the uncaring universe. In them the being imbues the essential spark that awakens their soul, and upon doing so that person becomes an Emanator. As a system, it has no mana equivalent, and does not improve directly through training. No, Ego Blazing is a power tied directly to one's growth as an individual. The only means of growing in strength are through asserting the fact of one's existence, as well as learning and understanding one's self. Naturally one's Emanation will grow as they live life and have self-affirming experiences, whether that be fun adventures with friends, quiet moments with loved ones, or alone time with hobbies, they all slowly empower you. Bigger jumps in power occur alongside personal revelations, whether that be understanding and accepting your kinks, working out the source of your persistent anger regardless of whether it's something to fix or just come to terms with, or even coming to realize the sheer depths of the love shared between you and another. Such revelations give massive boosts to your Emanation, more than years upon years of passive growth. Your Emanation grows in size proportional to its power, such that with a truly deep understanding of yourself and time spent living life, you could tower over mountains with ease. Beyond just raw power, your Emanation acquires new abilities and armaments as you grow as a person. The rage that boils within you at the injustice in the galaxy might manifest as a flaming spear, while the loyalty to your nation might become a mighty shield, and the unwavering love shared between you and your partner might manifest as an independent being reminiscent in some way to your partner to aid you, whether that be another mech or some mighty spirit beast. The abilities your Emanation manifests will always be filtered through who you are, so an honorable man probably wouldn't acquire a sniper rifle or chemical weaponry, while a cautious man is unlikely to have a massive warhammer or high-explosives. Importantly, not only does self-discovery and affirmation lead to greater base power, but your sense of self can directly impact the capabilities

of your Emanation, with self-doubt and denial weakening it, potentially to the point of not being able to manifest it for a time in serious cases, while self-affirmation and things that boost your ego and sense of self-worth can lead to jumps in power for a time. An Emanator's power comes from asserting the simple statement of "I Am" out onto reality, with all the implications thereof. Because of this, Emanators are very resistant to attempts to change or affect who they are. This includes direct alteration of themselves like transmutation or corruption of the soul, but also includes attempts to manipulate their actions supernaturally, like through Storytelling. This isn't all powerful, the degree of protection proportional to the might of your Emanation, but large gatherings of Emanators are known to be a nightmare for Storytellers to deal with. Despite an Emanation fully released being a rather distinctive construct, Emanators can draw on the power of their Emanation without fully calling it out. Emanators even by default are at the mundane peak of their race, and can draw on their Emanation to strengthen themselves further, generally to at most a percent of their Emanation's full strength. Other tricks are possible, like summoning resized versions of your Emanation's armaments, summoning just the immaterial presence of your Emanation to crush people beneath the weight of a massive mech without it actually being there, and other similar things, though these manifestations are never going to be even close to as powerful as your fully manifested Emanation. Interestingly, barring those Emanators whose nature lends itself to potent stealth and subterfuge abilities, Emanators universally wear their heart on their sleeves, because the power of their Emanation always pushing the statement of 'I Am' into the world hits people like a wave, ensuring that all around know what kind of person the Emanator is, whether that be a gentle hero or brutal tyrant.

Universal Access: **Ever Emanating - 50cp**

You can awaken the ability to Emanate in any being with a sense of self and sufficient self-worth to make an Emanation worth a damn. Your powers can never be prevented from leaving your body, nor can anything outright prevent their use within your body. Once it reaches beyond your form this protection ends, but nothing could stop your Emanation from bursting forth at least for a moment, nor could they stop you from drawing on its strength internally, or halt the flow of magical energy throughout its channels.

Booster: **Fueled by Rage - 100cp**

An Emanation is on some level bolstered by one's emotions. While self-confidence is a universal boon, anger could make your attacks stronger for a time, but less precise, while fear could theoretically hasten your steps in a retreat. Usually not incredibly powerful, but undeniably there, and at times a fairly substantial edge. You however are different. First of all, your emotions run strongly through you, your rage is like the sun, your love launches a thousand battleships, your confidence anchors you like a mountain. Just on its own this means your emotions can provide an impressive boost to your Emanation or anything else that draws on emotions. Much much stranger however, is that you take 'fueled by anger' very literally. You are capable of manifesting your emotions and feelings as a tangible substance that courses through your Emanation. This substance works as a substitute for any non-specific fuel or energy. It couldn't replace the blood of a man twice betrayed by three sequential lovers, but it could replace the food in your belly or the gas in a motorcycle. While all can fuel stuff on a base level, they'll have additional effects depending on what emotion they're made of. Fueling your

motorcycle with love could let you race towards those you care about, while explosive rage might let it soar even faster, but make it unwieldy and difficult to control. You are able to manipulate this substance with practice, such that you could use it to steady or fully deaden your emotions and only feel a specific desired amount of only certain emotions, and even refine these substances into more and more potent forms if you keep producing more. While fine-tuned to manifest emotions, nothing fundamentally prevents you from doing the same to other abstract traits and qualities.

Special: **Repression - 200cp**

Ordinarily, as your Emanation surges with your confidence, so too does it falter in the face of self-doubt. You however refuse to be weakened, bottling up those emotions until you can release them in a sort of dark-mode. In effect, it is a super-state empowered by self-hatred, doubt and other negative emotions, granting you immense power, tainted by its source emotions. Your abilities gain a hostile, vicious edge, swords becoming serrated, explosives carrying nasty payloads, and similar things. Entirely new capabilities might arise if you've bottled enough negativity up before release, capabilities in-line with this darker side of yourself. This is of course a temporary state, consuming your self-doubt to fuel it until you're cleansed of it, deactivating and leaving you reinvigorated once more. With work, you might learn to turn this repression to other things, mitigating the consequences and negatives of other forms of power, only to release them in appropriately themed outbursts. These further uses are not as efficient as when holding back your emotions, never enough to stop all of the effects, but nonetheless could noticeably blunt the downsides and kickback of any number of your abilities.

Limit-Breaker: **Esprit de Corps - 300cp**

Ego Blazing is highly individualized in nature. As a system it isn't strictly against working in the group, it depends on the person and one's social life can have a big impact on the nature and power of their Emanation, but nonetheless, collaborative effort is not something intrinsic or native to it. Every Emanation ultimately being sourced from one singular person. Not you however, you're a team player. You can join your hearts to others you share a connection with, pooling your natures and willpower into an Emanation encompassing your collective identity, with an emphasis on shared qualities, though differences are still incorporated. This is proportionally mightier than those same people's individual Emanations, each of you bolsters everyone else. This is best used with other Emanators, but even works for those who utterly lack the capability entirely at a reduced level. Other than that, this Emanation functions fundamentally the same as a normal one, but with individual experiences and self-discovery being replaced with experiences as a group and finding what it means to be a part of said group.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Friendship is Magic - 600cp**

Like an Emanation might wield friendship as a mighty blade, so too do close bonds possess real power for you. Any and all actions involving friends and other people you share a deep friendly bond with are empowered greatly and deeply. You'd run far faster to save a lifelong friend than an important but distant ally, your beloved uncle's old rifle from his soldier days manages to match up with models a decade more advanced when you wield it, even if it

lacks all the fancy features, and a collaborative attack between you and all your closest companions could let you batter an opponent you previously could barely scratch.

Technocratic Inheritance

Technocratic Inheritance is a system by which a certain technology is passed down as related knowledge and talent to descendants, inscribed by extended and willing dedication to a particular technology, the process happening automatically from there, and becomes empowered with each successive generation the technology passes to. Likewise it is empowered for every member of the bloodline that is born, their mere existence resonating with their bloodline's technology to empower it, though to a considerably lesser extent than what it gains over generations. Over time this process and the natural path forward it presents has led to mighty merchant houses with broad dominion over entire swathes of technology, as every member of their house can produce products that vastly outclass mundane competitors by virtue of the weighty bloodline backing it. This is exacerbated by what is known amusingly as the Copy Right, a sort of aura members of a bloodline can give off at will that hinders and even ruins outright any technology too similar to those their bloodline has in their sanguine archives. Enough family members maintaining a presence in an area can annihilate rival technology over an entire planet. Those of a bloodline have an innate baseline knowledge of their technology sufficient to make it given appropriate tools, and a natural understanding of and talent for it and its principles that aids greatly in innovating on the technology. The benefits of successive generations builds off the base of what's there, so innovation is still of great importance, as while the old technology might beat out the newest advancements, those new ones will be superior in a few generations, gaining more for every generation than less advanced technology. As the greatest advancements are gained from passing down technology to the next generation, and constant innovation is key to getting the most out of each generation, houses oft get stuck down a single path, as members branching into new fields are members that aren't helping to advance the existing technology, and even if they do branch off, that new technology would have to start from scratch as the first generation. This means that even for houses just 5-6 generations old, it's often more worthwhile to focus solely on the field they already specialize in, anything else a waste of time and resources. Because of this, the only time one will see a house break into a new market is when they merge with another house with a different specialization. More common in earlier times, by now there are enough centuries old grudges between houses that a merge of families almost never happens. When it does however, it's a monumental event that often then leads to an explosion in new products as the two houses can then combine their specialties for new and interesting creations. Members of a house enjoy noble like status on planets with a decent presence from their house, as even barring their obvious wealth and connection to a mighty bloodline, all members naturally have the ability to shut down and stymie any example of their bloodline's technology they can see or are otherwise aware of through other senses with just a thought. Computers shut off, guns jam, cars don't start or sputter to a halt. Given how ubiquitous most major houses' technology is, this is obviously very scary. For this reason there is ever a black market for non-house technology despite its general inferiority, their clientele both the paranoid as well as the revolutionary. A growing problem for the Houses is the fact that the more that is inscribed into one's blood, the

harder it is to have offspring or descendants. Fertility becomes incredibly low, and even those that are conceived develop horrific birth defects. This even affects things like cloning or other more exotic methods of passing on one's bloodline. Of final note is that Technocratic Inheritance can be used to carve advancement into a world where it might ordinarily be impossible. So long as one is building or innovating on the technology in their bloodline, they can do so even if the laws of the universe would not support it, the backing of one's bloodline sufficient, though a particularly hostile realm might require a bit more work of you to make progress.

Universal Access: **The Founder - 50cp**

You can bestow the full capability for Technocratic Inheritance in any being capable of higher-thinking by having them drink just a few drops of your blood, though conceptually similar acts will suffice for those who cannot drink as such, whether a being of fire burns it in the core of their inferno or an android has you smear it over where their motherboard is. This turns them into a member of your family, and passes your bloodline down to them as if they were your child. You have a natural sense for the status and location of all those in your House, from if they are ill to a sort of relationship tracker so you know if one of your kids is liable to shank their sister. You can even communicate telepathically with them, regardless of spatial distance, though particularly extreme conditions might muddy this, such as being deep in the Sea of Unreality or similar.

Booster: **Collective Effort - 100cp**

Ordinarily the tech tree flows ever downwards, each new generation inheriting more and more tech of greater and greater potency. This means that after a certain number of generations of advancement, older House members generally pull out of development and take on administrative duties, unable to keep up with the instinctive talent their descendants have. Your House operates on a different paradigm. Instead of one stream, ever flowing downwards, splitting and merging as it travels, your bloodline is like a vast lake, in a sense. Each member of your bloodline can access a collective pool of bloody knowledge, the same as a normal House member might tap into the knowledge in their own blood. This pool collects every iteration of every technology inscribed by a member of your bloodline. The pool exists so long as even a single member of your bloodline exists, and any member can tap into the entirety of its depths. This pool is empowered in its entirety each generation, in turn empowering every single technology in it, as well as immediately bringing every new technology inscribed later on to the same level.

Special: **Signature - 200cp**

Each member of your bloodline slowly develops a Signature, a unique quirk of their creations that gives additional or superior functionality in some way. It is effectively an additional specialization that overlaps across tech fields. It can be anything from the simplicity of extreme durability, to the complexity of reliable mecha-shifting technology, a flavour to any tech they make. This is encoded into their blood just like technology, but

each generation has the conscious choice to either develop this signature further, wherein they can empower it just like the technology they inherit, or discard it and create their own Signature.

Limit-Breaker: **Diversification - 300cp**

Ordinarily, Technocratic Inheritance is fairly physical in nature. The absolute most immaterial thing that one can normally inscribe into their bloodline is computer software. You ignore this entirely. Absolutely anything you invent can be encoded into your bloodline, including entirely immaterial things like techniques and processes. These are then passed down just as any physical invention would be, functioning identically.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Spiritual Successor - 600cp**

In all you do, others see a guiding light to show them the way. You can consciously choose to turn any of your actions into a path of sorts. From that point on, any that try and follow that path by repeating your actions can be granted some portion of your skill and success. Defeat an ancient evil once, and even if it were to rise again future heroes would march along the road you paved and slay it once more. Forge a blade, and give a bit of your ability in smithing to any who try and forge such a blade again. While any action can make such a path, the clarity of it and how much it can give a follower depends on the action, with grander actions creating grander paths. Your jaunt through a mundane forest would create a path that could do little but literally guide one in the correct direction. Your journey across a continent, through warzones, under the noses of vicious monsters, and past entire enemy armies, would pave a path so brilliant and mighty that it would grant true safe passage to all those who follow it, even in the face of vast and powerful threats.

Evolutionary Supremacy

What Evolutionary Supremacy *is* depends on how you look at it, as to interact with it is to have it adapt to your act, but can most easily be thought of as pure potential. To wield it is to adapt to the world around you, and refine it into a blade to slaughter your foes with. It is to push your natural form to the limit and beyond, twist flesh and bone and neurons into god-materials that engulf planets. To say that you are the one that survived, always. Past all the flowery language, Evolutionary Supremacy is a system in many ways similar to a form of cultivation, that let's one refine their natural body into the supernatural, as well as to adapt to oncoming phenomena, whether that be the environment one lives in or in extreme cases the attack your foe just launched, and incorporate it into your being to be refined and improved as well. In a more mundane world, it leads to cultivators that are very fleshy and organic in nature, bulging muscles and animal parts taken to unnatural heights, with greater cultivators taking more restrained forms as they compact and refine their body into a denser state in their advancement. In a world with Unreality and other power sources it can get considerably weirder, even if the former does still certainly exist. Technically speaking, Evolutionary Supremacy as a system is not learned or gained, though individual applications, uses, and techniques within it might be.

One is born with it, or they do not have it. This is rarely an issue for much of the civilized world, as a considerable portion of the intelligent species that have formed nations are ultimately born of this power source through a family of Ur-Beings at the dawn of time. For just about anything else however, any being entirely of Unreality, it is patently impossible to utilize Evolutionary Supremacy, the potential simply isn't there. Let's assume a human practitioner. Regardless of one's race, one would first need to learn to tap into the innate potential in their lineage, learn to grasp and harness it to initiate change. At first advancement is highly physical in nature, training one's body further and further, till your bones crack and muscles shred. Keeping a firm grasp on your seed of potential will let you certainly heal from this strain without lasting harm, growing in fact even stronger for it, until your muscles bulge and burst from your clothes, until you are a musclebound goliath. For many unskilled practitioners, this is where they stop, and many a mercenary amongst the stars can be identified by their 8 foot height and impossible muscle mass as an amateur cultivator. The next step is in Folding, to condense your muscles and bones into impossible tight and dense forms, all the power of a bomb in the relative size of a bullet, forcing your body to develop new and supernaturally superior materials to construct your body from in the process. This is also when more delicate body parts can be trained safely, as while you technically could train your brain into supernatural heights beforehand, most people don't like their brain being crushed against the inside of their skull, and at this stage casual biomanipulation is presumably beyond you, so it is now that you can safely refine the power of your brain and eyes and more, improving them and folding that improvement inwards immediately. This is the most basic of cultivations, steadily improving all the aspects of one's body, and condensing those improvements into impossibly refined forms. As many cultivators discover, such rising above the common man has its downsides. You are naturally incompatible in just about every physical way with those of a lower degree of cultivation than you, your impossibly refined body simply beyond them. A big symptom of this is that cultivators cannot bear children with those of lower cultivation without considerable effort spent to devolve a portion of themselves sufficient to conceive a child, which of course means such children do not inherit the level of cultivation of their parent, though they might still possess unrefined adaptations. Beyond that more problems arise. To give blood to a mortal is to kill them with certainty, as your blood cells destroy them from the inside like ravenous wolves, and even the bacteria within your body could cause a pandemic amongst non-cultivator populations. In all cases where your biology interacts with that of a weaker or non-cultivator, the latter suffers.

The second aspect of cultivating is in adaptation. While to improve what is already there is useful, powerful, and respectable, the true calling is arguably in incorporating the world around you. By drawing more greatly on the seed of potential within oneself, one can create new biological adaptations in response to things one is subjected to, with more extreme experiences being easier to incorporate due to a greater sample size. Being lit aflame would make it rather easy to adapt skin vastly more resistant to fire than normal, and being lit aflame a lot or being tossed into proper hellfire could let one create an entire new organ able to generate that flame, and with a bit more exposure another to freely manipulate it after generation. These new adaptations are of course just as able to be enhanced and refined as any other part of your body.

The final path to power in this system is in manipulation. Not to refine what you have, nor to add new things to your corpus, but to manipulate and alter what is present into new and powerful states. This is where one gets self-manipulation, twisting one's form in both subtle and extreme ways. But there is far more one could do with it, largely only limited by the imagination, training, and available resources. One could form entire landscapes from their body parts, create backup bodies in case of death, combine the two to become a living terrain feature or even full planet, and much much more. One of the ancients that adapted into a much more exotic form lives on as a sapient ideology, ever resting in their descendents minds, able to bend their thoughts to its whims and even fully take control, a sort of hive mind if a subtle one most of the time. A race that still practices Evolutionary Supremacy much more commonly than other races uses bio-manipulation for many of their industrial practices, from living metal to massive organs that manipulate gravity for ship-based artificial gravity, realspace FTL travel, and quite a few other uses.

Universal Access: **The Tree of Life - 50cp**

With no more than a touch, you can awaken in any living being the fundamental potential to grasp the seed of potential and evolve, though those without a mind sufficient to train properly might only draw on that seed instinctively in times of high stress. Those you awaken share a connection with you and others, developing with time into a true tree of life. Those connected to this tree have their adaptations stored into its structure as they develop them, from which they and others can tap into immediately or at a later date to develop those same adaptations even if they weren't in the right situation to adapt them themselves.

Booster: **Perpetual Chrysalis - 100cp**

The fight to evolve is an endless struggle, one the most powerful have been a part of for centuries if not millennia. You possess the incredible ability to start anew, cannibalize your cultivation to birth an even greater seed of potential. When you do this, sacrifice the entirety of your cultivation and start from scratch, you retain some remnants. Your body keeps a portion of all quantitative changes even still, your flesh and bones and organs still fundamentally superior in nature to their original state, to be compounded upon with more cultivation. Likewise, qualitative alterations to your fundamental nature can remain should they be able to function at this lowest stage of cultivation. You may repeat this endlessly, retaining a small fragment of your previous might as a new baseline that you build upon to achieve even grander heights than you reached previously.

Special: **One-Winged Angel - 200cp**

Sometimes your carefully designed adaptations just don't cut it. Sometimes you need not look to the future, merely survive. In cases like that, you have this. If you were to die, you would be raised again, with immensely powerful adaptations meant to help you survive what slew you to begin with. Be incinerated and come back with enough resistance to heat to bath in magma. Cut to ribbons by impossibly sharp claws and you might turn into wind to render the sharpness of the claws a non-factor. This is not

endlessly-scaling, a powerful enough foe might punch through or work around your adaptations, but it is orders of magnitude more powerful than the ordinary adapting process, and will adapt in such a way to bypass threats rather than overpower them if it has to. The downside is that these adaptations are completely uncontrolled, guided by an ineffable force with a prescient knowledge of what is likely to save you, but it doesn't care in the slightest for your quality of life afterwards, so turning to wind might protect you from those claws, but it likely won't come with an off switch, and figuring out how to alter your state to give it one will be up to you. There's no explicit cooldown on the activation of this perk, but every time you use it in quick succession the adaptations have worse and worse side effects. It will always ensure you're stable enough to survive the initial trouble, but push it far enough and it won't leave you in a state to survive more than a few seconds past whatever you adapted to overcome, and this power won't trigger to protect you from itself.

Limit-Breaker: **The Shaper's Touch - 300cp**

To grasp the seed of potential is to develop one's own body into godhood, it does not lend itself particularly well to external manipulation. Now however that changes, for you radiate an aura from your corpus, weakening as one moves away from yourself, and strengthening proportional to your degree of cultivation and evolution. This aura extends the range of what constitutes your body, giving you the ability to affect others by grasping your own seed of potential in all the same ways you would use it for yourself.

If you wish, you can twist this aura into an inversion, forcing life on the non-living instead of making the already alive into another facet of yourself. Turn buildings and weapons into constructs of flesh and blood and bone, turn entire mountains into vast living crystal goliaths, In effect, you can force the state of your own body onto non-living things, whether that body be flesh, crystal, or light itself. This ability likewise scales proportionally to your level of cultivation and inversely to the distance from you, but with enough power you could theoretically turn an entire planet into one living organism.

All-Encompassing Capstone: **Natural Synergy - 600cp**

On the macro-scale a living being, at least looking at flesh and blood examples, is a collective of innumerable other living beings working in harmony, specialized and precisely incorporated to work for the greater whole. That concept has integrated into every facet of yourself. Your powers, whether vast powersets or individual techniques, blend so to speak, each working to complement and support everything else, even manifesting entirely new capabilities from those components. Were you to have separate water and lightning manipulation powers, they might seamlessly coalesce into a storm manipulation power while still leaving those individual functions open to use as normal. If you had the ability to conjure durable energy barriers, and superstrength, but not the durability to use that strength at full capacity safely, you might start instinctively creating barriers around joints and other key places to protect your body, without even needing to think about it. Even distinct techniques are affected, an array of supernatural martial arts techniques combining into a flowing style that allows for all the power of the techniques with all the flexibility of normal freeform combat.

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Special:

You, in particular, are more than the Chain of Isekai thought you to be.
More than it planned for you to be, as much as such an entity plans.
Exposure to its power, to the link of itself it has given you, has awoken something special,
touched by the Chain yet all your own.
A few very special dreams call out to you.
All you need to do is look closely, and see which among them are real.

Gain 1 Special Token.
Choose any number of options.

Jamin

Costs 1 Special Token

Jamin is a young woman, 20-ish years old. Orphaned at a young age, she wandered the galaxy in search of adventure and wonder. By all accounts she looks like an ordinary human being, if a very fit and attractive one. Despite this, for some reason she seems to be the Main Character of The Tale. Not a main character of a tale/story, but THE Main Character of The Tale as a whole. She seems to be absolutely beloved by fate, chance, and circumstance, the alien and enigmatic Tale bending over backwards to get her through just about anything you care to mention. She stumbles into events that she'd have wanted to take part and interfere in, learns any skills she turns her attention to at a truly ungodly pace, and gets unending lucky breaks when needed. Furthermore, she seems to emanate a massive and irresistible field of Roleplaying, forcing everyone and everything into a continuous and open-ended Tale with her in the middle, her foes becoming Villains and her allies Hearts and Lancers and Mentors as appropriate. She does seem to run into an appropriate amount of trouble for a protagonist, but given how it generally turns out it can be argued these are just sent as opportunities for her to grow stronger. She isn't genuinely invincible, she's had plenty of close calls despite all the help she's gotten, especially during the start of her adventures, and she's lost more people than she'd like to admit to her own poor choices, but nonetheless she's accomplished a lot for a girl who as of now is an unaugmented human that hasn't even touched a Power Source beyond her natural use of Storytelling and Roleplaying. It seems her story involves you in some way, as she stumbles into you one day and falls for you harder than the women in cheap romance novels. Part of it is The Tale seemingly manipulating events so that you always seem to do the right thing or be in the right place to pull on her heartstrings, and the other part is that she's just an utter romantic who absolutely wants to believe in love at first sight and by now has gotten used to running with the situations her life throws her way, knowing it usually turns out well in the end.

The Empress

Costs 1 Special Token

Something in your nature calls to them, this royalty beyond the Real. You have drawn the attention and favour of a mighty fae Empress, a veritable goddess of the Sea of Unreality, and ruler of a nigh-endless Court of the Fairfolk. One of the three mightiest beings within the local portion of the Unreal Sea, progenitor and ruler of all Fairfolk, and ancient enough to have traded words with the Ur-Beings in their younger days. Never has she been summoned in full to The Tale, but even her partial manifestations brought chaos and ruin to entire planets. She seems to possess an innate life-bringing quality to her, everything from her blood to her breath to her tears just a step from pure Unreality that manifests life once released from her body. Given how The Tale would react to a constant fountain of Unreality, she works very hard to avoid doing this, though still has the annoying tendency to bring your furniture to life when she's not paying attention, and suffers measurably terrible luck whenever she slips. She finds herself rather intrigued by you, in part because she rarely sees the denizens of the Real outside of particularly extreme situations, in part because of your nature as being beyond this universe, and of course in part because you've managed to anchor her nigh-perfectly into the Real, without separating her from Unreality. Even once the initial curiosity fades, there's something she seems to see in you that she can't let go of, and finds herself ever coming back to you despite the air of aloofness she puts on. Were you to prove yourself capable, you'd likely find yourself given greater and greater power and duties in her Court should you accept, along with a growing respect from her. In time might you discover hidden depths beneath the steely visage of the Empress?

Muosa

Costs 1 Special Token

Muosa started her sizable career in mad science by turning a local museum into an M.C Escher painting, and hasn't slowed down overly much since. She's a madwoman high on the deeper mysteries of reality, with a natural predilection for grasping eldritch and cosmic truths without any considerable harm to her mind, beyond what she's always had at least. Her left arm is replaced with a mount for mechanical replacements, and a pocket-dimension stores and lets her hotswap between her creations in an instant, whether she needs a grasping claw or an implosion-induction cannon. She doesn't travel the cosmos alone mind, ever accompanied by her trusted companion, a colossal mechanical bear that only responds to Chuckles. Chuckles is the size of a main battle tank, with the strength to tear such things to pieces with ease. He's powered by an anti-matter reactor where a bear's heart would be, and makes heavy and broad use of a mass-projection device, that lets him tuck away much of the exceptional mass of his hyper-dense construction, enough to let him run on a pane of glass without cracking it. On the other hand, he could briefly increase his apparent mass immensely, making him as much as a hundred times as heavy to all outside observations, without increasing the strain on his frame. Whether Chuckles is actually sophont is uncertain, Muosa certainly won't tell, but he does seem to be more aware of the world than a bear should be. Muosa never really gave a clear reason for why she decided to accompany you, but when you first met you got a sort of glint in her eyes, as if she was being presented with a truly fascinating mystery.

Kent Rivers

Costs 1 Special Token

Kent Rivers, a young man of little renown, very much the 'boy-next-door' sorta person, kind, relaxed, open-minded. The exception is when one gets ships involved. Kent is a genuine prodigy in all matters ship-related, their piloting, their building, their use in kicking ass. This is exacerbated by one simple matter; that being that he's piloting around a ship that could fit an entire small nation within. The Princess Incorrigible is a 28 kilometer long demigod of a ship, carrying within it one of if not the single most developed Castles not found planetside. It is entirely self-sufficient, and able to remain so while supplying basic needs for an entire planet. Its weaponry is mighty and varied, more than enough to ward off entire fleets of opposing ships, or batter a planet into submission with ease. In every aspect of a ship, it excels. This is without considering the sheer development of its Castle, which does everything from auto-repair damage to the ship at rapid speeds, to manifesting advanced mecha and supersoldiers on command when in need of forces. Incredibly, it even acts as a mobile afterlife, a safe haven for the spirits of the deceased, of which many tens of thousands linger, eager to lend their aid to the Captain who protects their souls from dissolution in the great beyond. The ship, by some development of its Castle most likely, has formed a kind of consciousness, not particularly human in mindset, but deeply loyal to its Captain. He's always been one to put his trust in his vessel, so when Princess took to you like an affectionate cat, he figured you must be a good enough sort, and decided to stick around.

Serge

Costs 1 Special Token

Serge has done....a lot, to put it simply. He's lived fast, died young, and crawled back from the grave for seconds, thirds, and fourths. Entire megacorporations tense at the mere idea of him opposing them, and his retribution is so feared that the rubble that once was OracleTech HQ, back in the day the galaxy's largest producer and distributor of surveillance and other optical tech, still hasn't been cleared after he ruined them. Even outside of his terrifying feats, he's a legend even for the simple fact that he's still kicking at 113 years old, starting as an official union-member Edgerunner at age 19. Despite his rather advanced age, he looks more in his 40s, thanks to spectacularly fine use of Edgerunning allowing for pretty precise rejuvenation of his body to counter the effects of aging. He takes a surprising shine to you, occasionally grumbling light-heartedly about getting nostalgic in his old age. You ignite a spark in him that was fading recently, associates surprised at the energy to which he takes to life now.

Zul & Raja

Costs 1 Special Token

Zul is a quiet boy of 19, preferring most days to focus on honing his body and mind, with martial drills and practice in the arts. He's found purpose in the concepts of the samurai of mankind's homeworld, and holds himself to his honourable conduct quite strictly, though it always defers to his loyalty when required. Projects an Emanation in the form of a heavily armoured samurai, wielding two blades, a naginata, and a bow. He can cut foes well beyond the reach of his blade, travel leagues in a step, anchor himself to withstand blows that should by all rights launch him.

To his verbal shame, much of his arsenal is tinged with the flavour of subterfuge and trickery, the cunning bound by chains of honor. His blades can become as cutting winds, bypassing countering blades and carving numerous enemies in a single swing. His naginata curses its targets with increasing weakness with the wounds it inflicts, and his bow fires arrows that are as insubstantial shadows, slipping in even the most miniscule gaps in armor.

Raja is a spitfire of an 18 year old girl, an energetic and cheerful lass, a social butterfly with a love of new experiences, and an even greater love for extremes, whether swelteringly hot food or the pulse-pounding thrill of combat. In between bouts of intense action, she harbours a secret fondness for slow, methodical murder mysteries. Her Emanation is very stereotypically 'military'. Rugged, with thick armor plates and a colour scheme of olive green and gunmetal gray. Various designs litter the chassis, from wings on the back to a demonic visage where its face would be. The most obvious feature isn't the actual design, but the arsenal she walks around with. She has some 2 dozen assorted firearms on her, from straightforwardly impossibly powerful rifles to a grenade launcher that creates brief singularities, as well as a spattering of other weapons. Any modern or later weapon she wields works better in all metrics, she can briefly duplicate any of her Emanation's weapons many times over and control them telepathically, and she can go into a sort of overclock state to make all the functions of her Emanation threefold greater for a short time.

The two of them are the children of a legendary hero, her Emanation the radiant avatar of a sun god, with the strength to match. When she passed, she left her two children with her fortress base to live in, and a prophecy of sorts to guide them. You just so happen to perfectly match the description of the central figure of that prophecy, and they cling to you with a determination to honor the wishes of their beloved mother, and they aren't liable to budge.

Auris

Costs 1 Special Token

Auris was a young woman of truly startling genius, born of a long bloodline focused entirely on biology. With the death of her bloodline, she was left alone, yet thrived nonetheless. She advanced her family's technology by leaps and bounds, characterized by twofold feats above and beyond even the already impressive norm she sets. She developed means to transfer perfect copies of her mindstate into near-arbitrary biological forms, and has used this to experience everything from alternative sexes and countless forms of gender expression, to entirely inhuman bodies; wolves, and bats, and even a strange flowing ooze on at least one occasion. There are some hundred or so versions of her around, all the same fundamental person, but with slightly different brain chemistry and life experience leading to differences from the base personality. They're all individual minds, but consider themselves just one facet of a larger entity. Perhaps even more incredibly, she found a means of stably externalizing the information stored in a bloodline, removing it from ready access but also preventing the normal issues that members of a Technocratic Inheritance bloodline have with fertility. She was burned badly by her first love, the emotional pain being part of what pushed her towards her current state, wanting peers who wouldn't hurt her again. They're in a healthier mindset now, and

actually quite enjoy their state, but still remain rather withdrawn and distrustful. Something about you reminds her of the good of that past love, and after years isolated, she's quite determined to reach out once more, though if burned twice, who knows when, or even if, she'll open up again.

Adam

Costs 1 Special Token

Adam is, to condense his personality into as short a description as possible, your bro. To expand, he's perhaps the single most supporting, down for anything person you'll meet in the entire galaxy. He's a user of Evolutionary Supremacy, and a truly sublime one at that, with a nigh-godly physique, a speed of adaptation unseen in the modern day, and an overall unmatched grasp of the mechanics and nuances of the System. Of note is that he displays his adaptations through a very weird lens. As he explains it, a long time ago deep in the Possible Sea he adapted so much to such exotic phenomena that he now lives as not so much a discrete person, but as the ideal of excellence and perfection itself, currently manifested in an appropriate and willing vessel. His adaptations appear not as physical organs or other lasting changes, but as discrete manifestations of his all-consuming perfection, each an impossibly mighty technique suited to defeat a given threat even more perhaps than a more grounded, physical adaptation, but balanced by being temporary techniques as opposed to constant mutations. If questioned about his past, one of the few things he isn't excited to talk about in detail, he'll admit to having a large family, 25 siblings in fact, who he misses terribly. Apparently you give off a feeling just like his siblings, which is what drew him to you in the first place. He considers you his kin in all but name, and nothing is going to change that.

Drawbacks:

Journey of Hearts - 200cp

Oh my, isn't this dramatic? Your story here seems inextricably tied to love, lust, and romance. Where it doesn't saturate it at least tinges, flavouring almost all of your adventures in this galaxy. The murder mystery you're embroiled in comes around to be about a jilted ex, while that war on the horizon seems to be much more about star-crossed lovers rather than the expected sociopolitical factors. Meanwhile, you personally can't seem to avoid falling into whirlwind romances, which are inevitably fraught with drama and passion, simple relationships seemingly beyond your reach. If this seems a bit tame, consider that this means that not just your life, but conflicts and situations across the galaxy will become much more emotionally charged and fraught with drama, which isn't great when we're talking about whether two interstellar nations go to war. Calm logic and cold rational take the bench for passion.

End in Immortality - 200cp

Not literally, mind you, but metaphorically. The Tale is an ever-evolving story, adding and discarding elements constantly, and given the scale it works at those elements can be entire planets. The Sea of Unreality beyond is even more fluid, infinitely vast and endlessly deep,

lacking much in the way of structure even in the shallows near The Tale. You must do something, anything, to truly make your mark on The Tale, an impact so vast and significant that The Tale is forced to consider it in all future stories, so big it cannot simply throw it away. Do as the Ur-Ancestors did and give rise to a mighty new species every bit the equal to the Descendant Races. Wreak havoc and destruction on the megacorporations of the galaxy so tremendous that you alter the balance of power lastingly, not merely for one megacorp, but for megacorps as a whole, becoming the model that all Edgerunners aspire to. Advance technology so greatly that it radically alters the livelihoods of the majority of civilization for the better.

Journey of Kindness - 300cp

The galaxy is massive, and complex, and despite the efforts of the Great 5 and other well-meaning nations, humanitarian crises pop up with depressing frequency. You will find yourself constantly faced with these tragedies, sometimes on the order of a few hundred lives, sometimes many millions, suffering and at risk. Moreover, while nothing directly compels you to help out, you'll find your life gets measurably worse when you ignore these situations, proportional to the scope of the tragedy. Intentionally ignore a beggar on the street, stub your toe *really fucking hard*. Ignore a million refugees in need, the A.I. superbeing a group of them manage to create to protect them all goes rogue and cripples your home nation beyond recovery. In effect, you have extremely laser-guided karma.

End in Victory - 300cp

The three local gods of Unreality need to go. By hook or by crook they need to no longer oppose the progress of The Tale by the end of your stay here. They are all aware of you, at least vaguely, though they don't know your location or capabilities, merely that an extra-universal being is out to get them on behalf of The Tale. These beings are as follows: The Empress, the embodiment of the life-bringing properties of the Sea of Unreality, ruler of all the Fae, a shifting, seething court of tricksters and malevolent fair folk. The Longing Man, the representation of the nature of the Churning Question as being born of dreams and imagination. He is a free-floating consciousness transmitted through Unreality into the minds of his cabal. He speaks to the people across the galaxy in their dreams, luring them away to dark corners and wild areas where they sink into Unreality, reappearing hours, days, months, sometimes years later, a new member of his cabal, which works subtly to undermine ordered reality. The Reckoning Beast, the manifestation of the eternal conflict between Reality and Unreality, the endless juxtaposition between the Roiling Maybe and The Tale. It is a combination maelstrom-hurricane, ripping apart order and structure and leaving churning Unreality behind. Not truly pure Unreality however, as perhaps as a means of sowing further chaos, from those churning waves rise the unliving of a sort, known as the Reckoners, twisted mockeries of that which was destroyed, possessed of capabilities no less potent than before, now twisted in a seemingly deliberate flaunting of everything that was. It never stops attacking The Tale, even when beaten back and forced to recover its winds churn the edges of the Real.

Journey of Horrors - 400cp

There are many strange things that dwell in forgotten corners, and the wildest of lands, but in general The Tale does a good job stamping those out. You seem to run into everything it missed. Your picnic in the woods is interrupted by a peckish cryptid, your stroll through the park lands you in the middle of a cult ritual to summon a monstrous god, and your enemies keep finding themselves with eldritch aid. Effectively, while there are plenty of eldritch and monstrous elements in this world already, this cranks them up a few notches and ensures that you, specifically, run into such things constantly.

End in Salvation - 400cp

A truth that cannot be denied, something known to many, is that the soul is an undeniable reality in this galaxy. Yet for what purpose is unknown, as the soul serves no observable purpose to the lives of the people of the galaxy, lending no aid nor enforcing any curse unto the bearer of the soul. Meanwhile, after the death of the connected body, the soul, still as self-aware and feeling as the being they separated from, drifts off into the ether, where they get ground down and dissolved in the Unreal Sea, if they aren't devoured quite painfully by one of the Sea's many inhabitants. Regardless of why souls exist, and why they seemingly have so little purpose in the world currently, the current situation cannot be allowed to continue, untold trillions of thinking, feeling beings are being effectively tortured and killed, without end, without reason. Within your stay here, you must construct some form of safe haven, capable of protecting at least half of all souls currently in the galaxy from their current situation, with room to expand to protect all souls, now and in the future.

Journey of War - 500cp

Despite plenty of tension and hostility, the galaxy has largely managed to avoid any particularly widespread warfare, by the efforts of many determined people always pushing for peaceful resolution. The narrative is pushed slightly further against such things however, and across the entirety of the galaxy, conflict will be inflamed. Wars and even just smaller battles are more common, what was already happening expands to greater scope, and peace is harder. Even the Frontier becomes more dangerous, Unreality somehow managing a concerted war effort against the Real, not perfectly united, but even just being aimed in the general direction of reality is much worse than before. There might not be only war, but war will quite quickly become a constant in most people's lives.

End in Freedom - 500cp

The Tale, for all that it is the ultimate source of ordered reality, is nonetheless a cruel thing, in some ways made worse by the apathy with which it enacts its cruelties. While individual freewill is generally intact, on a broader scale entire nations and peoples are as puppets on strings, caught in the currents of The Tale's stories. Untold billions suffer for the sake of a dramatic story, mere set dressing when their torment isn't the focus of a tragedy. You must, by any means available to you, evacuate at least 10% of the galaxy's population beyond the reach of The Tale, and bring them somewhere entirely free of any sort of narrative force, destiny, predestination, or other comparable effects. Civilization must be allowed to advance under its own direction.

Journey of Decay - 600cp

This took goading from your Benefactor to convince The Chain to do it, but it has struck a deadly blow to The Tale, crippling it in ways it lacks the means to recover from. Not immediately lethal, The Tale instead dies very slowly, metaphysically bleeding out, and warping in the process. To put it as bluntly as possible, The Tale has become what amounts to a zombie, and its nature reflects in the metaphysics of reality. That which is lost, destroyed, or perished fights against the end, and instead is prolonged, warped, and driven to spread this state. People become the walking dead, though generally still just as intelligent as when they died, ruined buildings reform as dark edifices that wear on the mind, even the razed and salted earth is corrupted. There is no cure barring sufficiently total obliteration, no end goal beyond the corruption and decay of all things, forever.

End in Conquest - 600cp

Oh boy, well it seems The Chain has found a potential path to vast amounts of dreams, but it isn't a nice one. You are tasked with conquering the entirety of The Tale, the whole galaxy, end to end. There must be no region of ordered space that is not effectively under your control, though underground resistances can still exist, and the Frontier doesn't count against you. The Tale, not being at risk inherently, won't just try and annihilate you, as this is still a source of good stories, but you will be faced with greater and greater narrative opposition, becoming a greater and grander villain in the eyes of fate. Great heroes will rise to oppose you, growing mighty at lightning speed, accomplishing seemingly impossible feats, being showered with aid and boons. Mutiny and sabotage will cripple you at key moments, while you struggle to find low-level subordinates of actual value. In effect, you are, or at least will quickly become, the biggest bad, and all the natural narrative tropes that come in a conflict of Good vs Evil will apply in full. This occurs through the natural in-universe system of Storytelling, so one can resist it by in-universe means to an extent, though past a certain point the vast Weight of The Tale will likely force the issue. At the same time, for all that Villains are so often narratively doomed, there are advantages to the Role, and with the great weight of The Tale behind it one might benefit from playing the Villain here and there.

Choices:

Go Home - The Chain would happily send you home even if your Benefactor didn't bother, you've more than repaid its investment in the years you've been here. You appear with everything you've collected on your journeys, right when and where you left.

Stay - The Chain will continue on its way, whatever Benefactor you might have will unfreeze time in the worlds you left behind, and you will be left to spend the rest of your days in this universe.

Continue - The Chain thanks you for your help and service, informing you that it would be open to further such deals in the future, and hands you back to your Benefactor to be whisked away to another adventure.

By your friendly neighbourhood bear OhNoMySanitea (DonChief on Spacebattles)

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