

Atlas To Infinity



A Jumpchain Lore Supplement

Disclaimer: Literally everything here is homebrew from the recesses of my brain and a few others. You can use, disregard, or mix-and-match any of this any way you like or even come up with variants or adjustments that aren't in here. I am not an authority on Jumpchain, just someone who has spent upwards of six years on this weird and eclectic hobby.

Have a duck. It shall keep you safe.



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Intro

Jumpchain is a weird, oddly persistent hobby about random individuals being plucked from their home worlds to be sent on decade-long journeys across individual worlds that span everything from popular anime to obscure literature to very occasionally entirely made-up settings. It is most commonly used as a self-insert power fantasy about the so-named ‘Jumpers’ accruing various powers, skills, and allies as they travel to settings both familiar and new. It is also, in theory, a writing prompt.

A theory I was determined to prove no matter how many headaches and self-inflicted torment it gave me. What came from these many, many attempts to make sense out of a lot of conventions of Jumpchain turned into a somewhat shared continuity and various ideas that went against the commonly-accepted grain of the hobby. This document is the result of that, a collection of various ideas and discoveries that turned into something of an expanded universe (more like an expanded multiverse in this case) dreamed up by me and several others. It provides all the tools needed to participate in said continuity, or at least to provide fodder for possible ideas and ways you can write your own chain.

If you’re not a fan of this approach to Jumpchain or don’t see much point in it, that’s perfectly fine. This is just an optional document and has no bearing on however you want to play Jumpchain. But if you like the idea of making a large story with cosmic stakes to your chain, or want to narrow it down into a more personalized drama while providing unexpected twists and turns: Read on. This is for you.

Whatever the case, I hope you enjoy this little journey into several years of creative mania in trying to make Jumpchain a bit more expansive for myself and a few others.

I welcome you to the Atlas to Infinity.



The Anatomy of Infinity

Anything that can exist or will exist, does. Anything that can't or doesn't exist, too. Even if it doesn't.

Okay, let's try that again. We're starting from the top-down here.

At the very top of all existence is The All. It is, as mentioned, everything that does or does not exist. Everything that is, can be, was, or cannot be is contained within it. It is everything you can imagine and everything you can't. It is existence and non-existence in its totality, a place where things like time, sense, comprehension and nouns all break down. The Greater Multiverse is contained within the All, as is everything that isn't. Since this is sort of a gray area where existence itself is a question of philosophy, you're not going to see many types operating at this level. Supposedly, the mechanisms that dictate the whole of all creation is contained within The All or whatever being that made the whole mess to begin with, though it is unknown if this is actually true and not just a linear mind's desperate attempt to make sense of it All.

Below the All, or at least slightly more comprehensible, is the Greater Multiverse. Sometimes called the Omniverse, it contains everything that can or may exist. Different from The All is that the Greater Multiverse is united by 'clusters', near-endless numbers of worlds with close ties or similarities to each other. As an example, the entirety of the DC Multiverse would count as a 'cluster'. When other people talk about a local multiverse, this is usually what they mean. What unifies a cluster tends to have similar people, events, and Natural Laws. Natural Laws are, in summary, the sort of physics and logic a given universe or multiversal cluster operates on. Thus, a world where the hard physics of modern day Earth reign supreme would be extremely different from that of a fantasy world where magic is alive and well, or even a world full of supernatural powers simply accepted as fact to ones where such things are rare and difficult to muster.

In short, the All is 'everything and nothing'. The Greater Multiverse is 'everything and anything'. Clusters are 'almost everything that you could imagine for a given world(s)'.

Below clusters themselves are their own multiverses, which are usually an extremely dizzying number of universes based on different events and choices by the individuals in said world, though they are usually (not always) still similar in people, events, and natural laws. Occasionally, some multiverses within a cluster become aware of each other and travel between individual universes, though very rarely do they move beyond that. When a threat is about to extinguish the entirety of said multiverse, it is almost always limited to its own cluster, only including those unfortunate enough to be within its orbit. And even if that cluster were erased, a near-identical one where such never happened or had failed would either come into existence or have already been there since the start.

Kind of takes the wind out of their sails, doesn't it?

Within said multiverses are their own universes, in said universes are galaxies, within said galaxies are solar systems, and finally we have the planets where events take place in. This is not always the case, but it is the most common denominator. And here we end at the most common denominator of all:

Planet Earth.

As it's impossible to really describe infinity in a way our minds can comprehend, the ultimate take-away is that if a universe can be conceived of, it exists in some form in the Greater Multiverse. Clusters based on works of fiction on your world are a matter of course. Worlds of gods and monsters, of dragons and science fiction, of multi-color anime hair and eldritch abominations all exist somewhere out there in Creation. Unfortunately, traveling outside of one's universe when its natural laws and events don't support such is almost unheard of, and even if you can leaving the cluster that binds your life and its events to certain laws and physics is even rarer.

But it is not impossible. In fact, if all of that sounds interesting to you, there's a certain collection of beings that may be eager to tell you more.

These are the Entities.

The Entities

There's no better word to describe them. Some may call them Gods, but they eclipse or are sometimes eclipsed by other beings called such. They rarely ask for worship, though some may do so with gusto if they're particularly egotistical. Although their origins can differ wildly, an Entity is defined by two things: They are the primary benefactors that create the events of a Jumpchain and have the power to do so.

Beyond this, a few core things unite Entities:

They are extremely powerful. Near-omnipotence and near-omniscience is a common trait between Entities. I say 'near' because there are limitations to their vast power, usually in relation to each other or when Entities come into conflict. However, from the perspective of an ordinary mortal, these differences are almost completely meaningless. A single Entity can snuff out an entire universe or multiverse at will, though they often cannot prevent a new one from coming back into existence from The All...but they can keep trying or doing so, anyways.

They exist on their own logic. Entities do not originate from a single cluster or its laws, or if they did it has long since stopped mattering. Some are created as a final stage of being a Jumper, many more simply 'are' and exist as if they always have. Regardless of their origins, they can subvert, steal, ignore, or even combine the Natural Laws of different clusters as easily as a human may build a tower of Lego.

They cannot directly influence or harm each other. This particular sticking point is one of frustration to a few. Although Entities have different origins, causes, and purposes in what they do, they are unable to actually harm or affect their fellow Entities. It's not known why this is, perhaps some attempt by The All to force harmony between them, but Entities are unable to use their vast power on each other...directly. They can, however, opt to smash each other's toys or interfere in each other's agendas, though this is largely seen as immature and futile. After all, if one destroys a universe another was working on, they can just recreate it as if nothing had happened. This usually continues for several eons before one or the other gives up and is largely just seen as a waste of their (infinite) time.

They operate on the scale of the Greater Multiverse. Not only are Entities aware of other clusters existing, but they can move between and influence them as easily as an ordinary mortal would go shopping for groceries. They have near-total awareness and knowledge of events in a world's canon, down to an almost encyclopedic degree. Indeed, only the most exceptional or clever of beings in a given world are even aware of other Entities or can even sense their interference, their attention usually focused on the Jumpers that seemingly cause the ruckus to begin with. Only the most miraculous or horrifying of circumstances lead to an Entity's involvement or existence being discovered, or them allowing such to happen in the first place.

Entities are immortal, timeless, and invincible...unless they don't want to be... Not much to explain here. An Entity exists as long as they wish to, sometimes even beyond that. If the ability to kill or destroy an Entity exists, they either choose for it to do so or no one has dared to tell the tale. Most attempts at harming an Entity end in one's mild amusement before the being responsible is either snuffed out or offered a job. Sometimes, an Entity will tire of its mode of existence and disperse, reincarnating into the world temporarily or permanently as a mortal. Other Entities tend to be dismissive of this and the risks involved, looking down on those who 'step down' from their lofty

existence. Either way, the only way to ‘kill’ an Entity is if one voluntarily and willingly chooses to stop existing...and even this may be a temporary measure, just to explore the sensation of death or nonexistence before popping back into their original forms. Very few will ‘go’ and stay gone.

...except. Of course, in a world of infinities, nothing is truly set in stone. Entities may indeed have weaknesses and could be defeated outside of their own will, whether through indirectly thwarting them or even forcing mortal death upon them. However, if such methods exist, they are rarely spoken of and often well-hidden in an uneasy agreement between each other. Such a thing happening would likely involve the most esoteric, unlikely, and extreme of schemes and circumstances to happen. The only thing that’s certain is that one weakness or bane to an Entity is unlikely to work on another, needing to be tailored to harm, hinder, or slay a particular one before a new method or scheme needs to be devised.

Needless to say, all Entities have a vested interest in this not being commonplace, so self-styled ‘godhunters’ are even rarer before being quashed or directed elsewhere.

The Great War

This tale happened. This tale isn’t real. This tale has happened or will happen.

With all of the above, one might wonder if Entities may create Jumpers for the sole purpose of harming or killing each other, bolstering their proxies with the might and wit needed to do so. Such a conflict, if it were possible, would likely kill truly endless worlds in the collateral damage as Entities attempt to establish dominance over one another or kill their rivals while an infinite number of nascent godlings attempt the same to each other, enemy Entities, and even allied Entities. Indeed, such a thing may happen. Or has already happened. Entire worlds dying in hummingbird heartbeats, terrors beyond imagination, time and space rent asunder.

If such a thing were possible, most Entities agree it is a waste of time and needless mutual destruction. If such a thing has happened, those who remain have a standing ceasefire in favor of not pursuing such a thing again.

If such a thing is going to happen, do you really want to be part of it?

You can decide for yourself if this tale is real or not. But I will not be elaborating on it further.

Don’t wake The Eldest.

Known Entities

Name: The Benefactor

Aliases: None. Only refers to themselves in the most vague possible terms. ‘That person’ or ‘a certain individual’.

Associations: Keys, physical and metaphorical chains

Personality: Capricious. Sadistic. Curious. Bully. That Guy/Girl. Challenger.

Desire: Entertainment. The Benefactor has been observing a certain cluster of multiverses containing the planet Earth and their total isolation from each other. Believing most iterations to be stale and in need of some excitement, they recruit Jumpers primarily from this pool and want them to explore and do as much as possible before inevitably losing interest in them and choosing another. Though they wish to see others ascend, this is tertiary compared to their own amusement.

Style: Conventional. Though their ideas of what constitutes a linear challenge is...questionable from a mortal perspective, they ultimately want to create an ascending ladder of difficult jumps that ends in a climactic finale. This usually goes on for no longer than a few dozen jumps or even as little as four or five, but they follow an escalating rhythm. Jumpers who do not ascend or reach their potential are usually sent home with their gains, often without fanfare and sometimes with a consolation prize. Despite their extremely abrasive attitude, they are one of the least cruel Entities when it comes to ‘failed’ Jumpers, creating a large number of The Retired.

Word:

It began with a dream and a key
Beams of silver across eternity
I’m still searching

Quote: “Hello, there. Nice to meet you. My name isn’t important, but I have a business proposal to offer you.”

Perhaps the most well-known of the Entities and the one who popularized the idea of recruiting Jumpers from the cluster containing many mundane iterations of the planet Earth. Though not the first to conceive of taking those from this area, they were the one who conceptualized chaining various jumps across worlds together and using said worlds as conduits for a growing number of powers and skills to be given to the Jumper-to-be. Rarely do they interact with other Entities, often avoiding them entirely and carrying out their chains in a vacuum. They tend to be strict and frown heavily on trying to circumvent or take shortcuts around challenges they prepare for a Jumper, while also being the sort of person who mocks and laughs at failures and screw-ups. Thus, their chains tend to involve traumatic or difficult experiences, but are otherwise very straightforward.

Name: The Romantic

Aliases: Jump-chan, Her, 'The Waifu'

Associations: Keys, doors, metaphorical chains

Personality: Curious. Excitable. Impulsive. Moody. Daydreamer. Adventurous.

Desire: Entertainment and generosity. Though she largely gets a kick out of seeing what others do with their given powers and abilities, she also wants to see what others become when they move past their limits as mortals or mundane individuals. Also, is a little TOO interested in the love lives of their Jumpers.

Style: Conventional. Though they usually don't have an end goal in mind, they instead tend to have their Jumpers go through as many worlds as possible until they seek to stop, ascend, or can go no further. Tends to be very relaxed and only gives challenges if their Jumper actively seeks it. Often doesn't understand the meaning of the word 'enough' and tends to overestimate their Jumpers or their desires. It's not a coincidence many of her own Jumpers become hedonistic or at least as powerful as can be. A Monty Haul sort of Gamemaster to its logical extent.

Word: I know what you want

Because I want it too

Let me open the door for you

Quote: "Heya! Ready for another world? You'll love this next one, I promise!"

Oddly similar to The Benefactor to the point it is theorized the two may have been siblings as mortals or even two halves of the same Entity, The Romantic is the glass half-full benefactor. The one who likes to spoil their mortal charges and let them experience a chain as pure wish fulfillment, whatever that may be. The Romantic often loves their Jumpers one way or another, whether the adoration of a parent or the...other kinds. Often to the point of matchmaking their Jumpers with a large number of partners or even creating off-shoots of themselves to act as personalized friends or partners to them. While this unconditional affection may seem warm on the surface, they don't really have a solid idea of right or wrong from a mortal perspective, merely wanting their Jumpers to become what they believe will be the best versions of themselves...usually as a result of being able to satisfy desires and appetites they otherwise couldn't before.

As mentioned, many of her Jumpers tend to be hedonistic or at least extremely powerful by the end of her chains. That said, she is still prone to mood swings, especially when she perceives a Jumper as ungrateful or needlessly cruel to her in particular. Comparisons to Aphrodite are unwise.



Name: The Kingmaker

Aliases: Keeper of the Ashen Forest

Associations: Trees, crowns, and royalty. Also a strong association with death.

Personality: Impartial, but curious. Will only help exactly as needed. Believes allies are important.

Desire: They give the opportunity for others to become royalty, and wish to see what kind of rulers others can become.

Style: Sink or Swim. They'll give someone the tools needed to succeed, nothing more and nothing less. If someone is incapable of using those tools successfully, they were not worthy of royalty. Should one fail, they will be interred in the Ashen Forest for the foreseeable future. The Kingmaker thus has very few Exiles, many damned to imprisonment within the Forest itself. The Forest's occupants will whisper and attempt to influence any Aspirants who enter, but the Kingmaker will not stop them.

Word: Every ending can create a new beginning, but a person's story cannot be written by another. Only you can write your own ascension, or your own destruction.

Quote: "IT WOULD NOT BE YOUR AMBITION IF I TOLD YOU."

It is difficult to surmise who the Kingmaker once was, and those scant few who know aren't speaking up. But compared to many enigmatic Entities who scheme and plot, the Kingmaker is extremely straightforward. They find an Aspirant, and bind their soul to the Ashen Forest as part of their path to

Royalty. If the subject succeed, the multiverse witnesses the transformation from Aspirant to King. If they fail, then they become part of the Forest and the Kingmaker starts anew. It is a method that has been used for as long as it has been an Entity and it shows no signs of changing this formula.

What does change, however, is the pool of potential Aspirants it draws from. Every so often they will pick a different variable to sift through selections, and stick with them until their curiosity has been sated and they move on. Regardless of the origin, every Aspirant has been noted to possess the scent of death in some form or manner, no matter what kind of path they have been taken. When questioned on this, the Kingmaker simply states that no king's reign is without blood and bone to pave the way... yet Gods of Death will insist the scent is nothing so meager.

Name: The Playwright

Aliases: Usually European names, the most common being Adrian Schmidt.

Associations: Shakespeare, Theater, Literary Classics, Screenplays

Personality: Melodramatic. Self-described visionary. Excitable. Optimistic. Idealistic. Plays favorites.

Desire: Inspired by a chance encounter as a mortal, Adrian wishes to prove that an interloper like a Jumper can not only be the protagonist of their own story, but it can be a compelling drama for an audience. What he considers a compelling drama tends to depend on his mood on a given day, but that remains his goal the entire time.

Style: Adrian treats his Jumpers as favored employees while seeking not just to challenge their mettle, but to put them in situations where they inevitably clash with strong wills like other heroes or villains. Whether they succeed or fail is irrelevant, what matters to him is the drama resulting from said conflicts in all possible stages, whether in love or war. Despite this and his own claims, he does play favorites and does sometimes create situations where the deck is stacked in the Jumper's favor, or allowing them to rest in simpler worlds between the more stressful situations.

Previously, he was much more heavy-handed with his 'employees', but bad experiences with his first two Jumpers have compelled him to try to have more empathy for them. Though he does not care about how powerful his Jumpers become, he becomes discontent if they do not challenge themselves or others in a way that creates drama and becomes worried if they show signs of long-term depression or ennui.

Word: All creation is a stage, and we its players.

Let us not mire in the endless expanse nor sink into the void

Let us all shine like stars

Quote: "If there is nothing sacred about existence as it is or as it could be, why not make it as grand a drama as possible? Comedy, tragedy, there is a place for it all!"

Long ago, the being that would become The Playwright was a struggling amateur playwright. A chance encounter would inspire him to write works derivative of existing ones, but he would eventually discover The Truth when he saw all of creation itself as an infinite stage, becoming one of the youngest Entities on record and one fairly close to his original humanity. This shows in his relative inexperience in using his own abilities as well as only having two previous Jumpers...one of whom rebelled and became Forsaken, the other of which chose to retire all the way to the grave. Despite this, his appetite for drama of all stripes has not been quelled, and despite the growing pains therein The Playwright continues to work towards making a grand play that he believes will shine even in the infinite.

Name: The Eldest

Aliases: Unknown.

Associations: Green Eye Sigils(?)

Personality: Unknown. If they exist: Mysterious. Silent. Stoic. Wrathful.

Desire: Unknown.

Style: If the Eldest has ever taken a Jumper, it is not common knowledge. Assuming they had any, it's unlikely they would ever reveal themselves or explain their actions. They may be pursuing an agenda, they may not be. The jumps and their events are seemingly random, yet connect to each other in ways those with vast, Entity-like perspectives may understand.

Word: Everything begins

Everything ends

We are no exception

Quote: N/A

There is a popular saying among Entities who interact with each other on any regular basis: 'Don't wake The Eldest'. It is an inside joke, a caution against warring uselessly with each other, and a threat all rolled in one. It's not known where it began, but the implications alone imply that not only is there a 'first' Entity or one who is older than all known ones, but that they could somehow openly circumvent the rules binding them and enforce harmony on their younger peers. Some consider them a boogeyman made up to avoid creating conflicts between Entities. Others believe they had perished or disappeared long ago and the phrase is a holdover from a lost time period. Many more openly mock and challenge the idea of The Eldest, only to suddenly fall silent on the issue at some point in the future. It's not known if they are real or if these events are coincidence in all creation, yet the phrase remains.

Don't wake The Eldest.



Name: The Firelight

Aliases: The Candles in the Caves, Light at the end of the Tunnel

Associations: Prayer candles. Forest Fires. A warm fireplace.

Personality: Bemused. Warm. Righteous. Poetic. Vigilant. Observant. Fluid. Despises immobility.

Desire: The disruption of status quo. The fire that washes away stagnation and ossification, destroying the static and the inflexible. The unexpected force that turns the tides.

Style: Guidance with a purpose. They will often place Jumpers in situations where the state of affairs is stifling or even destructive, and guide them to disrupt it with as much as they can. They tend to also have their Jumpers work flexibly, and they are known to favor putting the Jumper in scenarios where they must adapt or otherwise not rely on their same tactics for too long - while it isn't going to be every jump, if there's a long streak of them relying on the same trick, they may put the Jumper in a situation where it doesn't work, or potentially even take the toy away and grant something new in its place that requires growth.

Word: God speaks in tongues of fire. It liberates, tempers. Removes what is no longer needed. it remembers, as candles left in a cave. It flickers with desire, the genesis of all change in this world, good and ill. Fire is the illuminator, the protector, the destroyer, and the creator of all life.

Quote: "Eternity imprisoned in the self is lonesome. And life was not meant to be lived alone."

There are certain constants in the worlds of The All. Heroes do battle with villains. The sun rises in the morning. Although symbols and physics can differ fantastically from what a mortal from Earth would consider sane, these constants can be seen across the scope of creation. One of these strongest constants is the power of the elements, particularly that of Fire. Fire is dynamic, transformative. It can warm, forge, destroy in equal measure. So evocative is the idea of flames of knowledge or destruction that even in worlds where powers strange and new reign supreme, the idea of flame is within all who can dream or think of it.

The Firelight is a very old Entity, one who embodies that element. Their personality alternates between that of an affectionate but firm parent, a warrior poet eager to do battle with good or evil, to a raging terror full of wrath towards the unworthy and especially the stagnant. They claim not to recall their origins, but those who came before them claim they were once two Entities with conflicting natures that engaged in an on-and-off romance, always being drawn together only to pull away from one another when they could not reconcile their views. One day, this barrier was supposedly overcome, and the Firelight is either the result of both Entities becoming one or their offspring. Whatever the case, The Firelight embodies their element with gusto: They are transformative, destructive, warm and terrifying when displeased. And for their chosen Jumpers, they ask only one thing: Change. Power is to be used. Stagnancy is to be broken. And those who sit on their laurels risk drawing their ire and impatience.

Woe to those who displease their patron when granted the blessing of Fire, for it is not a merciful element.



Name: Unknown. One Playwright has been spreading the myth that she is called “The Glutton.”

Aliases: None. “Glut-chan” is occasionally used, at least when they’re not in earshot.

Associations: Consuming shadows. A silhouette against the void. Stars.

Personality: Nihilistic. Fatalistic. Cruel. Mocking. Habitual. Secretive.

Desire: Unknown.

Style: Anything and everything, all of the time. There is seemingly no rhyme or reason behind her choice of jumps, tossing the Jumper to as many worlds as possible to see as many possibilities as possible. After all, if the result is unfavorable, she can simply consume that timeline and begin anew.

Glut-chan treats her Jumpers with a mix of amusement and irreverence, frequently referring to them as "toys" or "dolls", while taunting or prodding them in the space between worlds. However, past her tendency to cannibalize them, she frequently provides no direction or guidance, preferring instead to see what direction the jumper will take of their own accord, at least until she gets tired of that particular path's direction.

Word:

All for nothing, all or nothing,
Let us play, dissect, devour, sing,
On and on, until our thirst is satisfied

Quote: “Are you still searching for meaning? Hah. Hah. How interesting. I wonder if you'll ever find it. I'll look forward to watching you fail, again and again.”

The Entity known as “The Glutton” has never actually chosen a title to refer to herself as, the name itself but a moniker created by one of her peers. Of course, not all Entities bother interacting with or keeping up with their kin, but this seemingly nameless Entity has almost entirely sequestered herself away from others, adapting and modifying the Jumper creation system to an extreme extent, ignoring the presence of other Entities almost entirely unless spoken to directly.

Instead, she chooses to endlessly amuse herself with only a single jumper; That is, an endless number of said jumper. If most Entities would choose to ignore temporal off-shoots of their own Jumpers, this one went the opposite extreme, monitoring and pruning innumerable iterations of her own. Should she decide that any have “failed,” for any reason whatsoever real or manifested, she makes it a point to devour the entire timeline containing said iteration, killing all with the misfortune to be apart of it – Jumper included. It is not known why she does this, as Entities do not normally require subsistence, and any worlds lost will be restored by The All, minus the Jumper or their influence. However, it has been a routine practice of hers for as long as she has been known for.

No chain of hers has been known to actually end, merely continuing on and on. It’s not even known if she has ever taken more than one Jumper, or merely keeps countless iterations of the same one, always devouring all but the extremely few that can escape into Exile. And while she makes no effort to hunt these Exiles down, she is quick to correct the ‘error’ upon locating them.

Even now, her motives are a mystery, many assuming her sadistic projects are merely a mortal habit or a way to sate her own boredom. The Playwright, in particular, seems to bear grudge against her and is quick to insult and belittle the so-called Glutton at every opportunity. But if she notices or cares, she has yet to display it.

Name: The Conductor

Aliases: N/A

Associations: Journeys, Train Tracks, Discovery

Personality: Cryptic. Curious. Manipulative. Nurturing. Punctual.

Desire: Their motives are kept exclusively to themselves. They most certainly have a goal in mind, one that requires their Jumpers to grow as a person as well as in power. They often ask a number of philosophical questions of their Jumpers between each visited world. The current theory is that The Conductor simply seeks a friend they can call a peer.

Style: Unconventional. Rarely does The Conductor leave Jumpers in a world for their full decade, often picking them up after a few years or half a dozen. They also maintain firm control of all aspects of the Chain. They make all choices about what powers, items, difficulties, and even where their Jumpers get sent. The only part of the Chain free from this is a Jumper's Companions. Any who come to the platform while the Jumper is getting picked up will be offered a ticket to ride along on the journey as far as they wish to. Despite this rigid control, most of The Conductor's Jumpers find themselves happy with the choices made for them, as if carefully tailored to their wants and needs. This style has other Entities refer to them as the 'fussy parent' of the bunch.

Word:

You will know me but not remember me.

Secretive but a friend who cares.

Come, this ticket is for you.

Quote: *"Ah! One sees this one has found a new friend. One thought this one might."*

There is very little that can be said about The Conductor directly, but much that can be observed indirectly. Their Jumpers can never hold onto memories of The Conductor unless the Entity wishes that they do so. What they look like or even much of most conversations simply slides out of their Jumpers' minds as soon as the conversation is over. Jumpers often remember the words themselves accompanied by the strange sensation of having lost some time as well, as if minutes or hours went by without being recorded in the mind. Despite this ominous amount of mental manipulation, The Conductor is often kind to and interested in the well-being of their Jumpers. They will occasionally send their Jumpers to brutally dangerous worlds, but will always provide much time in gentle worlds for recovery. They do not perceive their actions as particularly malicious, always having an air of compassion for their Jumpers.. Their choices always have a purpose and often it seems to be cultivating their Jumpers into the best possible versions of themselves, occasionally with trial by fire.

The Conductor has few Jumpers at any one time due to the personal interest they take in each one. Consequently, their Jumpers tend to stay on their Chains for an extended period of time and come to have quite a versatile set of powers tucked away. Those who do become Exiles are most often those who have Retired in a world they have become enamored with. The rest fall into the Lost category as The Conductor does not abide tardiness when they come to pick up their Jumpers. If any of their Jumpers do become Forsaken, The Conductor keeps it a well-guarded secret.

Template, for those who want to make their own

Name: Most Entities have a title in the format of 'The <x>', a trait they not-so-coincidentally share with some Jumpers. Their true names are long-lost.

Aliases: Other monikers and titles they like to go by.

Associations: Symbols, phrases, or events they're tied to or like to be near.

Personality: Short collection of one-word nouns giving an idea of their behavior and personality. Occasional sentence clarifying their attitudes and biases.

Desire: Their 'goal' when creating Jumpers, their drive as an Entity and where they focus their energy.

Style: How they tend to structure their chains. If your Entity was a DM, what's their playstyle and how do they tend to present it? Do they drift towards particular kinds of settings or merely use as many as possible? Do they use a gentle hand and prefer coziness or do they make you regret ever meeting them?

Word: Cryptic poem, conversation, or quote that describes their strength and their weakness. Character summary in vague, Kingdom Hearts trailer-like sentence.

Quote: A direct quote from the Entity.

Jumpers

If Entities are the cause of a Jumpchain, then naturally it is the Jumper that is the star of the show. Usually but not always a mundane human being chosen from an iteration of Earth that lacks in supernatural qualities, chosen usually for their dissatisfaction with their mortal lives. They sometimes have mundane talents or traits of note, but most are of average stock. Indeed, Entities very rarely recruit those completely content with their original lives, preferring those who are likely to stay with a chain for as long as possible. This can be anything from the adventure-hungry dreamers, the greedy and the ambitious, to even those who get excited at the idea of meeting their favorite no-longer-fictional characters. Sometimes it's even all of the above.

Regardless of the how and the why, a Jumper becomes what they are when they arrive into the new world. With each jump to a different world, they will gain a particular set of skills, items, and allies before moving onto the next and repeating the process. As a result, even the most passive of Jumpers will usually amass a large host of abilities and assets over a long period of time. Mechanically, they are living conduits of different Natural Laws shoved into a single being as well as those who accompany them, contradictions and conflicts sorted out by the power of their sponsoring Entity.

Things like the length of their journey, their goals, how they respond to challenges and even what sort of abilities they acquire are as infinitely varied as The All itself, so trying to narrow them down to a particular archetype is near impossible. So we'll instead talk about the Why of Why Entities create them in the first place. Though each one has their own goals and drives, the most common are...

Entertainment. The omniscience of certain Entities fails once an outside element is introduced, whether the emergence of an Apostate or the arrival of a Jumper. Though they can make fairly accurate guesswork of what such beings will do in a given world, their perspective becomes more linear and uncertain. Some Entities find this annoying and a sign someone is interfering with their work, but many more get a kick out of it. What will this person do? What will happen to this world? These questions don't have clear answers, thus an Entity will create a Jumper to create this scenario as many times as possible until they tire of it...which, for some, can be several eons.

Experimentation. For all their power, even Entities don't have all the answers about existence or the nature of mortal beings within them. They're not even above superstition and personal biases. Thus, they may choose particular Jumpers to try and discern something about the Greater Multiverse and its inhabitants, using them as a primary factor in these scenarios. What they're trying to find out and how depends on the Entity, being anything from trying to figure out if there's something special behind mortal existence or attempting to unearth something fundamental about all existence. They might even be especially petty or just bizarre.

Reproduction. This used to be a fairly popular reason, though it fell out of fashion after a while. There are three ingredients to creating an Entity: A large combination of normally-contradicting natural laws or the perception thereof, an extremely strong ego that is firm in its personality and beliefs, and the potential or power to contain all of the above without shattering like an egg. Whether by accident or design, it is easy for a Jumper to fulfill all conditions and transform into a brand new Entity. While Entities are near completely immortal, it is easy for them to grow tired of what company they have in their peers and create a friend, rival, or even potential partner in their Jumpers as they ascend to a higher plane of existence. Others dismiss this as a waste of time and energy when they could just create a companion from scratch, albeit not a true Entity, to fill the void. Still, some Entities will allow such ascensions to happen, whether out of tradition or still wanting a peer they have a strong understanding of.

Journey's End



Whether through escape or retaining their ego between incarnations, Jumpers are removed from the normal cycle of reincarnation and afterlife shared by their mortal peers. While some may find a complete form of immortality or fashion a personal domain for their souls to escape to, countless more die before they reach that point in cases of hubris, bad luck, or even willing sacrifice. If the Entity chooses not to revive them as a consolation prize, what becomes of these lost souls?

Within countless worlds and mythologies is the idea of the Underworld. A primordial idea of a domain where the souls of the dead go to rest. Hidden deep within this idea and worlds where it is a very real thing is a singular nexus connected to all of infinity. It is a starless, endless, infinite void connected only by chains that vary in length and size from a human-sized bridge to the length of entire galaxies. Sometimes, dark clouds separate its many layers and a pale sun can be seen in the distance, yet never reached. Connecting these chains are spherical worlds, shining colors from a bright blue to a dark violet

depending on their contents. In the 'lower' worlds as these darker colors become more prominent are spheres bound together with unbreakable chains forged in the heart of eternity, only the most clever or powerful of beings able to unlock these prisons...or other Entities, if they had the inclination.

This is Journey's End. The resting place of Jumpers excised from the cycle of existence who did not have the time to escape the Reaper yet still had a soul left behind.

Getting In

Journey's End can be entered through any existing afterlife, particularly ones themed around an actual 'Underworld' where the afterlife is a cthonic, mysterious, and dangerous place. The difficulty of finding its entrance will depend on how closely it matches this idea, a utopian Heaven requiring the greatest effort and abilities while places matching the Greek Hades may eventually come across the entrance after some searching or happenstance. Any existing God of Death across the Greater Multiverse has instinctive knowledge of its existence, but know it mainly as a place that 'must absolutely not be disturbed'. Thus, such Gods often take great pains to hide the entrances to such worlds, refusing to even allude to their existence.

As mentioned, any Jumpers who perished along their chains without having an escape plan or an Entity giving them a consolation resurrection all fall here, so long as there was something left of their spirit by the end.

Getting Out

If the living would happen to enter Journey's End, it is hypothetically easy to leave. One simply needs to walk out the way they came. However, Journey's End is particularly dangerous to Jumpers, for the void saps away at abilities that allow easy traversal: Flight, teleportation, creation of portals more all fail here. The gravity between individual chains alternates between oppressively strong to about the same as the Moon in most Earth-based worlds. If one should fall into the void and not be pulled from it, they will fall forever, eventually joining the damned souls among the other spheres. Thus, someone visiting Journey's End is often best accompanied by a chaperone familiar with ferrying souls that does not rely on Entity-given powers. Charon is a popular choice, often happy to accompany a visitor...in exchange for an extremely large bribe of wealth, of course.

The dead, however, have no recourse. Even if one should escape their 'world' in Journey's End, no exit will avail them, no door leading back to the world of the living will swing open. Potentially, an Entity could easily resurrect a given Jumper from this world, but this is extremely rare. Very few have the patience for failed iterations. If one of the living were to gain the sponsorship or approval of an agent of Death, whether a deity or a servant, it would be possible to locate an individual and restore them to life, though this would be an extremely risky and grueling trial.

An interesting note: If one can find the other exits, it is entirely possible one could escape to an entirely different afterlife across the Greater Multiverse, but this would require either fantastic stealth or power, for any agents of Death are quick to sense anything alien or new emerging from this forbidden pocket of their domain.

The Ego Worlds

Each individual world is tailored to the soul within it, born of their final moments in life. One who died at peace, often in bed or making a voluntary sacrifice for something they believed in, would be graced with a peaceful domain containing what gave them happiness and joy in life. Peaceful countrysides, libraries of endless stories, even something like an infinite plane of amazing yet constantly interesting new video games. Conversely, those who died in terror, rage, or negative emotion are placed in personalized hells where their own fears and torments torture them. Those who die uncertain or with a balance of emotions end up in worlds that are close to those they knew in life, alternating between peace and torment as life would in a constant rhythm. These worlds are not static, changing depending on the mental state of their inhabitants. Those who hold onto their attachments in life or desperately wish to return to life will find their worlds changing to torment and tear into them, while those who find peace or acceptance in how their lives ended will find these worlds gradually become a paradise or a place of rest.

The actual lifespan of these worlds vary, but when a soul reaches a peak in its tortures or its peace, they are given the offer to return to life as a new person just as they did when their journey first began. Those who accept are reborn as new individuals with only the vaguest recollection of their previous lives, though some souls do retain more memories than others. Those who decline remain in their worlds, but become aware of the rest of Journey's End and may move between other worlds at will, or temporarily leave to visit or say their goodbyes to the living. The strange way time works in Journey's End would enable this easily, only days having passed since their death even if they spent millennia locked in their worlds. These traveling Shades do not suffer from any of the perils of Journey's End, moving as easily and quickly as a walk down the street. Sometimes, these Shades form communities or gather in The Other Worlds, even some cities resembling their old homes forming around them.

It is not known why some worlds are actively chained and locked away as opposed to being easily traversed like the majority of other Ego Worlds. Perhaps they committed some horrible sin and the chains are a manifestation of that guilt. Perhaps an Entity wanted to ensure they would never return to life. Either way, these are the least likely to escape their worlds or their torture.

The Other Worlds

These personalized little ‘cells’ of the afterlife are not the only things in Journey’s End. The mysterious and unearthly Ashen Forest where The Kingmaker reigns is one such example, little pockets of worlds created by Entities or seemingly nothing at all. Mysterious cities full of skyscrapers, endless skies with floating islands and airships, to even Valhalla-like arenas and battlefields where former Jumpers test phantoms of their old abilities against others in a never-ending contest of bloodsports and athletics. These are almost always inhabited by Shades or whatever creatures or beings may be native to them, some even escaping having Ego Worlds entirely and resting in these worlds...voluntarily or not.

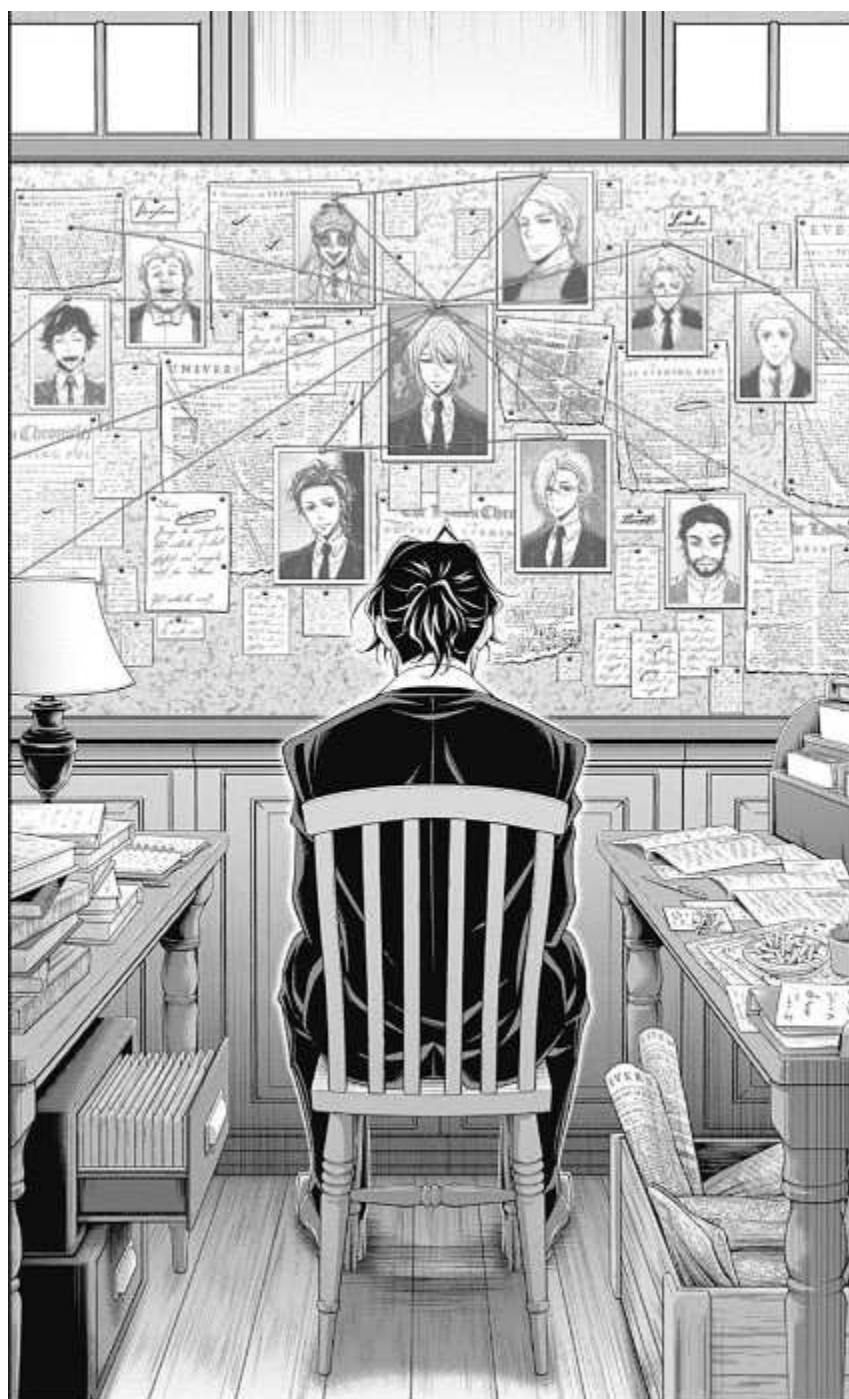


Name: The Ashen Forest

Associated Titles: Crucible of Kings

Despite the landscape being bathed in eternal night, its twin moons reflect enough light that one could almost see as if it were daytime. Its eternal generation of ash is comparable to snowfall, even though there are only faint clouds at best. There are trees of crimson leaves and alabaster bark as far as the eye can see, yet each one is different and unique in its own way. At first glance it is a tranquil land without a single soul in sight, but closer scrutiny reveals it for what it is.

Every single tree is the twisted body of a failed Aspirant, condemned to spend eternity bound to the Forest. They are conscious and aware of their situation with crystal clarity, with only their memories and other failed Aspirants as company. It is an extremely hostile land to any who are not an Aspirant or there with the Kingmaker's blessing, but such circumstances have never stopped rumors from forming before.



Initiates

An anonymous note left on a Jumper's desk, detailing the time and place of a meeting they're very interested in. Whoever wrote it erased their fingerprints and more. Sometimes, more notes are left with flowers and gifts.

A thief and a scavenger grins to themselves as they watch from a safe distance with binoculars, the mysterious stranger unleashing technology and powers never seen before. When they see parts fly and machines wrecked in the battle, they know they will have plenty of salvage this night.

The alien from another world has begun to glow with an otherworldly aura and threatens to crush the wizard with their might. They raise their hand to unleash a devastating attack. The wizard, unimpressed, waves his wand and the light leaves the alien's eyes as they become blind and their blast becomes angry snakes. This is not his first encounter with such beings, but it will be this one's last.

Initiates are aware of Jumpers.

That's it.

There is no otherworldly awakening to insanity and power, burning embers of once-great glories, nor a sudden ascension to fantastic near-omnipotence via apotheosis into an Entity. They aren't even the result of being empowered or tipped off by an Entity to give their proxy an added challenge. Initiates merely gained an inkling of such travelers and the powers they tend to wield.

There is very little that unifies them, many having different levels of awareness and ways they use it. They tend to be most common in worlds already familiar with multiversal travel or some sort of dimensional manipulation, though this is not always the case. Opportunists, self-appointed defenders of their own worlds, potential allies or future companions and more occupy the ranks of Initiates. They are everything from the bystander realizing he's occupying a job or classroom with a potentially dangerous creature that was once human, the starry-eyed hero (or villain) fan gawking at their dreams coming true, to even known and named individuals of power and potential realizing a potential new pawn has entered the game.

The one thing they share is that they reverse the advantage many Jumpers consider their strongest asset: Knowing what to expect. An Initiate's existence isn't a guarantee of dark times or even a notable change in events. More than a few may even try to help a Jumper, depending on how well their goals and attitudes truly align. Other times those who may seek to exploit this interloper and the goodies they bring to the world will work to get what they can out of the ensuing mess. Perhaps even drop a tip or two directing this do-gooder or living hurricane to their foes and rivals? Worse still, it may not be new or unexpected individuals who are Initiates...it might be named, competent, and even malicious individuals.

Of course, something to remember: Worlds already well-acquainted with multiverse hoppers likely have SOME idea of what a Jumper is and what their motivations are. It isn't like a traveling and powerful individual is a new concept. Thus, tracking who is and isn't an Initiate in such worlds is likely an act of futility.

Initiates in the context of Jumpchain are...

...anything, really. Someone who has even an inkling of what a Jumper is can change everything or nothing in a story. Are they ranting and raving like a conspiracy theorist about how the seemingly ordinary high school student with a huge number of talents will doom the world while others roll their eyes? Are they a named and important individual who starts factoring the Jumper into their grand plans or even try to recruit them to save or damn the world? Friend, foe, someone who chuckles inwardly from a safe distance? It will be up to the world and the ones who are aware of such things what this turns into.

...usually in worlds used to strange things. Show of hands. Before factoring Jumpchain into anything, how many individuals can you point to that fit the description of 'reincarnated or traveling person from another world who amasses fantastic powers?' Odds are, more than a handful. While not everyone will jump to this conclusion right away when a Jumper makes themselves known, others will build a profile based on that idea either from their own foreknowledge or investigations if such travelers are already a known fact in a given world. Meanwhile, those who know of Entities and the games they play likely have a more complete – and more terrifying – knowledge of what to expect and how to adapt accordingly.

...seemingly random when they're isolated. Symbolic dreams and visions of the future, or ones vividly detailing a Jumper's journey so far. Mad scientists who manage to make the right predictions and calculations without succumbing to Apostate-hood. Wizards whose divinations provide insight into the chaos that will unfold in the coming decade. This may not even happen before the actual jump, as some quickly realize something is fishy without needing to do a long investigation. Meanwhile, it doesn't take a genius to figure out that the shining being assembling a massive cult of personality or just happens to show up to every major event is probably a little strange. Even moreso, dissecting the motives of those who wear their virtues or sins on their sleeves isn't difficult for the clever or the insightful. One thing is clear: The Initiate knows them, but the Jumper may or may not be aware of the Initiate.

But wait, there's more!

You know what's worse than an Initiate? It's an Initiate who gains the ability to travel to other clusters. Whether through magic, technology, or even careful study of the mechanics behind Entities and Jumpers (assuming they don't go mad in the process), they gain the ability to traverse to other worlds consistently. We call those Travelers. They may get a more expanded section in a future edition of this Atlas, but just imagine the problems or benefits of an Initiate and give them the ability to follow a Jumper...or worse, plunder other worlds for their knowledge and power before coming back for round two.

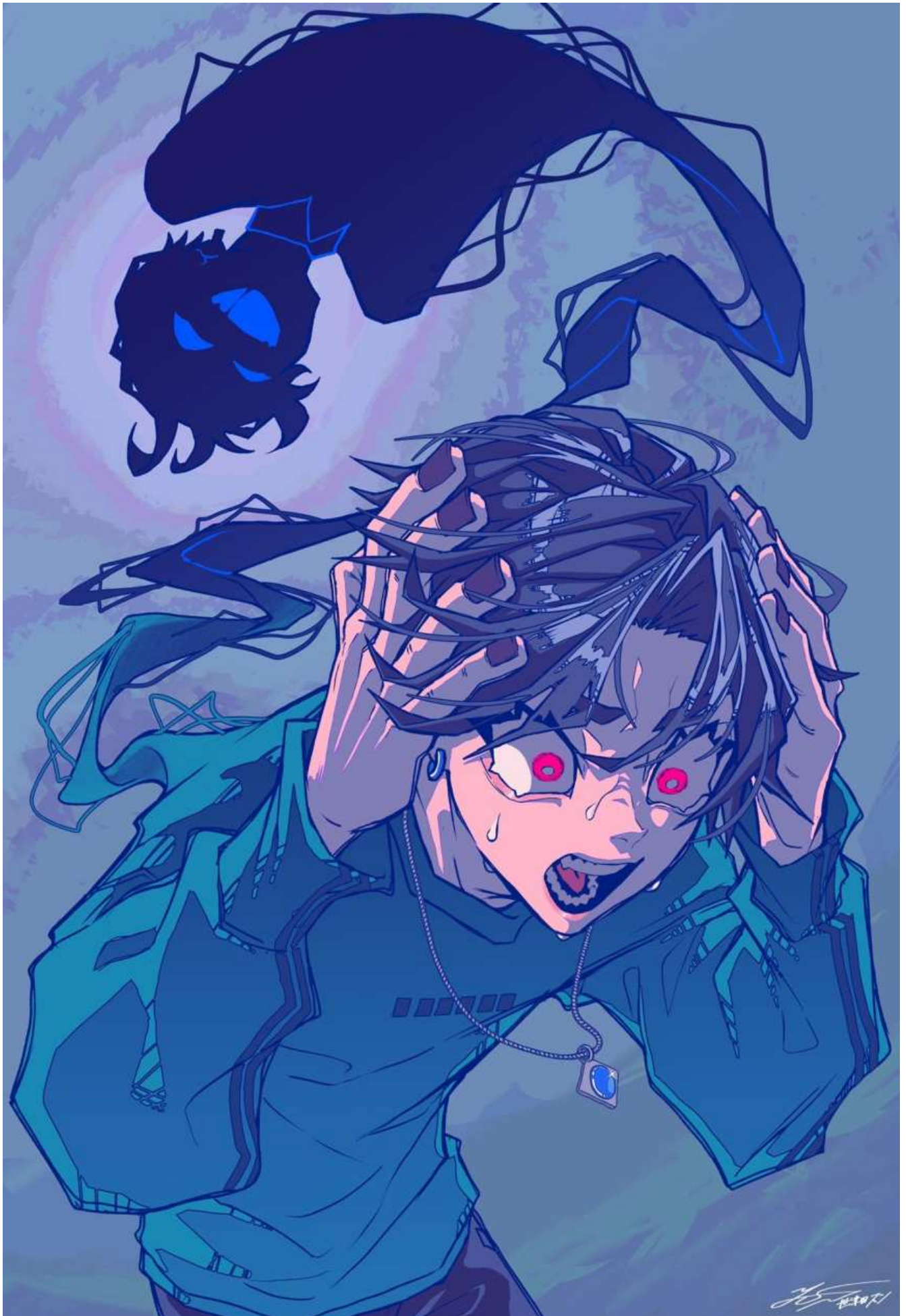
Awareness Levels

Roll a 1d20 once for Awareness and Influence if you want to randomly determine an Initiate.

1-4	Seems Weird – Vague omens, some clues something strange is happening or will happen. No solid conclusions or ideas. May become suspicious if they find the Jumper.
5-10	Who Are You? -- More concrete knowledge on the Jumper and their personality, as well as a vague idea of their capabilities.
11-15	Oh God Oh Fuck – All of the above, except now they have an idea of your personal goals and objectives for their world. If it's something to the effect of 'just relax and chill', this is probably the end of it unless they have their own ulterior motives.
16-19	Not My First Rodeo – This is when we cross into problem territory. Not only do they know your nature and have a solid idea of your most commonly-used equipment, tactics, and abilities but they have some awareness that you're not the only one of your kind and something is empowering you. They haven't found out everything, but they've already got a hell of a head start.
20	Hey, That's My Shtick! – You know how Jumpers playing 'optimally' are assumed to have a complete playbook on canon characters and how to beat them? Guess what they've got on you. They're even aware of Entities and may have ways to circumvent perks beyond countering individual powers. If they can fight or invent, they're likely to be a difficult foe without outside help. Re-roll if this result. If it's 20 again, this becomes [ERROR].
N/A	[ERROR] – They stared too deeply. Roll on the Apostate table and add three to the result.

Influence Levels

1-6	Literal Who – A random background NPC has realized they're in an SI fanfic. The horror.
7-10	I Need Your Help – It's another low-key character, like a mundane friend to a known character or someone who isn't hugely involved in things. Their word doesn't carry much weight, but it may travel to certain ears.
11-14	A What? – It's a named character who has mild relevance to the current plot or situation. Their friends or allies may be skeptical or believe them immediately. This can potentially upset the balance of power.
15-18	Heroes and Villains – It's a named major character whose actions and decisions are highly relevant to the plot at large.
19-20	Just As Planned – Not only is it a named character but it's one of the most potentially dangerous or helpful ones possible.



Apostates

A once-faceless minion looks into the eyes of the face staring back at him in the mirror. He can see the numbers behind him and his reality. He knows how to change them.

A scientist smiles with manic glee as she sees the device come to life. A technology once thought impossible has been made real in just days of work. She's going to change the world with it.

A man remembers an entire lifetime that hasn't happened yet. His shadow springs to life at his command.

Jumpers are born from everything from wanderlust to ambition, pursuing their heart's desires in exchange for entertaining or serving the agenda of their given Entity. Entities are given fantastic power and seemingly omnipotent to a mortal observer. Jumpers have all that in potential and more, while still starting as themselves and dictating the pace of their change.

Apostates are those, by accident or design, those who came into contact with Entities or worlds outside of their own multiversal cluster and had a very different reaction. Like coming into contact with hazardous materials, the experience has a potentially devastating effect on their minds and bodies. Some simply accept the existence of such a thing with little fanfare and no transformation. Especially strong egos will catalyze into new Entities, especially if the person or individual was already possessed of great power. Many more fall into denial or simply don't think much of it. Apostates had their worldview shaken by the experience, enough that it warped their brains and mortal bodies.

This is a double-edged sword. Apostates often become smarter and stronger than they were originally, even a dimwit potentially becoming a world-changing genius after the experience. The brief contact with Infinity sometimes gives them the knowledge or abilities from a different world's natural laws, letting them use powers or invent technologies that otherwise stood no chance of existing in their world beforehand. A single Apostate can drastically change the course of history if allowed to operate for long.

The downside is that, usually, they tend to fall into a manic-depressive state after their realization or otherwise fall into great insanity. A previously patient scientist introduces a dangerous new technology with zero care for consequences or the suffering of test subjects. A boy with a big imagination and a big heart does his best re-enactment of It's A Good Life on his own hometown once he gains the power to change the world with his thoughts. A harmless minion to a villainous organization that wanted just to get by soon gets big ideas when he uses a magic spell to turn his boss into a stone statue. Though sometimes well-intentioned and calculating, many Apostates tilt towards self-destructive madness in one way or another, often taking many others down with them.

In the context of Jumpchain, Apostates are...

An uncomfortable foil for a Jumper. They, like a Jumper, have been blessed (or cursed) with great power and the ability to change the world for better or worse. They also tend to spiral towards going mad with ego or power fairly quickly, as well as providing a look at how someone destroys their own life or warps it beyond recognition without the reassurance it's just one world out of many. Sometimes there's not even any malicious intent and it's just a show of someone getting in over their heads. Either way, a Jumper who is still close to their humanity in some fashion is likely to feel discomfort or pity. What's worse, worlds not used to the idea of multiversal aliens may have trouble discerning between the two.

An antagonist. It's easy for Apostates to become antagonistic to many Jumpers up and down the moral alignment scale. They're destructive, they're unexpected, they tend to create problems for anyone making a long-term scheme or wanting to blend in while relying on familiar events. It's even worse if an Apostate became active before a Jumper's actual arrival, having potentially warped the world beyond recognition or changed the flow of history in a way that makes their original frame of reference much less useful. And when they finally meet...well, does the adage 'this town isn't big enough for the two of us' ring any bells?

A wild card. While the majority of Apostates sink into gleeful or tormented insanity while dragging down those around them, this is not always the case. Some retain a surprising amount of self-awareness and control over themselves, only a few slight tics hinting at any madness or eccentricity. This can both make them more dangerous and calculating as a foe, but also make them neutral or even allied figures to a Jumper. This is more an exception than a rule, and will require some amount of trust considering the oddities an Apostate's abilities have when interacting with a Jumper's powers, but it is certainly possible.

An Apostate's Abilities Are...

Perks, I Got 'Em – An Apostate tends to acquire random powers or knowledge from other worlds, usually those symbolic to whatever issues or desires they have in their home worlds. This runs the gamut from individual superpowers, the ability to make superscience or magic, to even terrifyingly vast reality warping. While they're fast learners, these often lack the subconscious control and memories of training many powers given to a Jumper in their own builds, which tends to lead to early tragedy.

Multiversal Awareness – Apostates, having peered past the veil, know that quite literally countless worlds exist beyond their own. Aside from the existential horror or glee this can create in a person, it also comes with the ability to sense things that are 'out of place' in their own world. In most cases, they can tell when someone is a Jumper or a Companion from another world or remember changes in history no one else does. They don't know the exact term or origins, they can just tell on sight that the person or thing in front of them is not of this world, regardless of how well-disguised they are and what their memories claim.

Radio Noise – Another side effect of an Apostate's presence is that they don't just tend to derail canon or 'destined' events, but they also are a natural blind spot in a Jumper's outside abilities. That's not to say they're immune or somehow able to shrug off anything thrown at them. Throwing a semi at a human Apostate without any kind of defense is liable to kill them just as much as anyone else. Instead they're much better at resisting perks or powers that change their bodies or minds, or return nothing but 'static' on clairvoyance or ways of reading into their presence, as well as areas miles around them or even entire cities. Radar or cameras with strange outside context technology return nothing but empty footage. Magic spells fail to scry their location. This resistance or immunity doesn't extend to powers native to the Apostate's universe, which will function and track them just as well as they would normally.

Apostates are created by...

Peering past the veil. Whether by total accident or some long experimentation, the Apostate came into contact with the greater multiverse beyond their own 'cluster' or established canon. Exposure to this caused them to become an Apostate, usually after using technology or magic involving experimenting with dimensions or teleportation. These tend to be the shortest-lived Apostates, most destroying themselves or their minds without time to master their newfound abilities.

Contact with an Entity. Sometimes, an Entity will interact with a mortal and reveal what they truly are. This is usually by design to create an Apostate deliberately to act as an antagonist or problem for a Jumper of their choice to encounter. They will occasionally choose one to act as their proxy on a given world, though this is rarely done by most Entities.

Examining Jumper perks or technology too closely. This is an extremely rare occurrence and only tends to happen when the person doing so was already the right mixture of brilliant and insane, thus normally happening to mad scientists or scholarly types known for eccentricities. When given a chance to investigate the abilities of a Jumper or their companions, especially ones they didn't originally have or aren't native to the Apostate-to-be's worlds, they may eventually stumble on the realization their natural laws do not mesh with their own knowledge and are completely impossible, even if their models were updated. This epiphany will usually create denial, an attempt to categorize or explain it in their worldview, or cause them to awaken to The Truth.

Can an Apostate be healed?

It is possible to heal an Apostate's madness, but the nature of said madness and the source of their powers means that any outside perks and methods of alteration fail. Even aborting the moment they found The Truth from time would cause them to remain the same, even if everyone else had forgotten the event. However, a combination of therapy, helping them come to terms with the nature of the world, or erasing the memory using an in-universe method would 'fix' them. Their powers would steadily dissipate, but their insanity would gradually fade with it. This is easier said than done and is best done by natives close to the Apostate, for they can instinctively sense something is 'wrong' with the Jumper, companions, or followers and are likely not willing to listen.

What if I companion an Apostate?

Should an Apostate not only survive but agree to become a companion, an interesting thing happens. On the jump to the next world, the mental 'wound' causing their insanity and powers is cauterized and healed. Though memories and psychological scars may remain, they revert back to whoever or whatever they were before the transformation, losing their Apostate abilities while gaining the ability to recover from their experience. In most cases, anyways. Some Entities may feel generous and allow them to keep their ill-gotten gains without reverting them, but otherwise most tend to be normal companions or revert back to their original selves and forms. It's not known if this is a natural process or a mercy done by some Entities. Perhaps as a happy (or unsettling) side effect, this also makes them extremely fast learners when it comes to new perks and forms the Jumper gives them from then on.

Can an Ex-Jumper become an Apostate?

Short answer, no. Former Jumpers, AKA Exiles, have their own section.

What the hell is The Truth, anyways?

Mainly full comprehension of the existential dread of realizing your universe is one of infinite worlds. Or, in worlds already acquainted with multiversal travel, encountering something that flies in the face of all expectations. Still, as a result, Apostate and Entities-to-be tend to be rare in worlds already well-acquainted with multiversal travel.

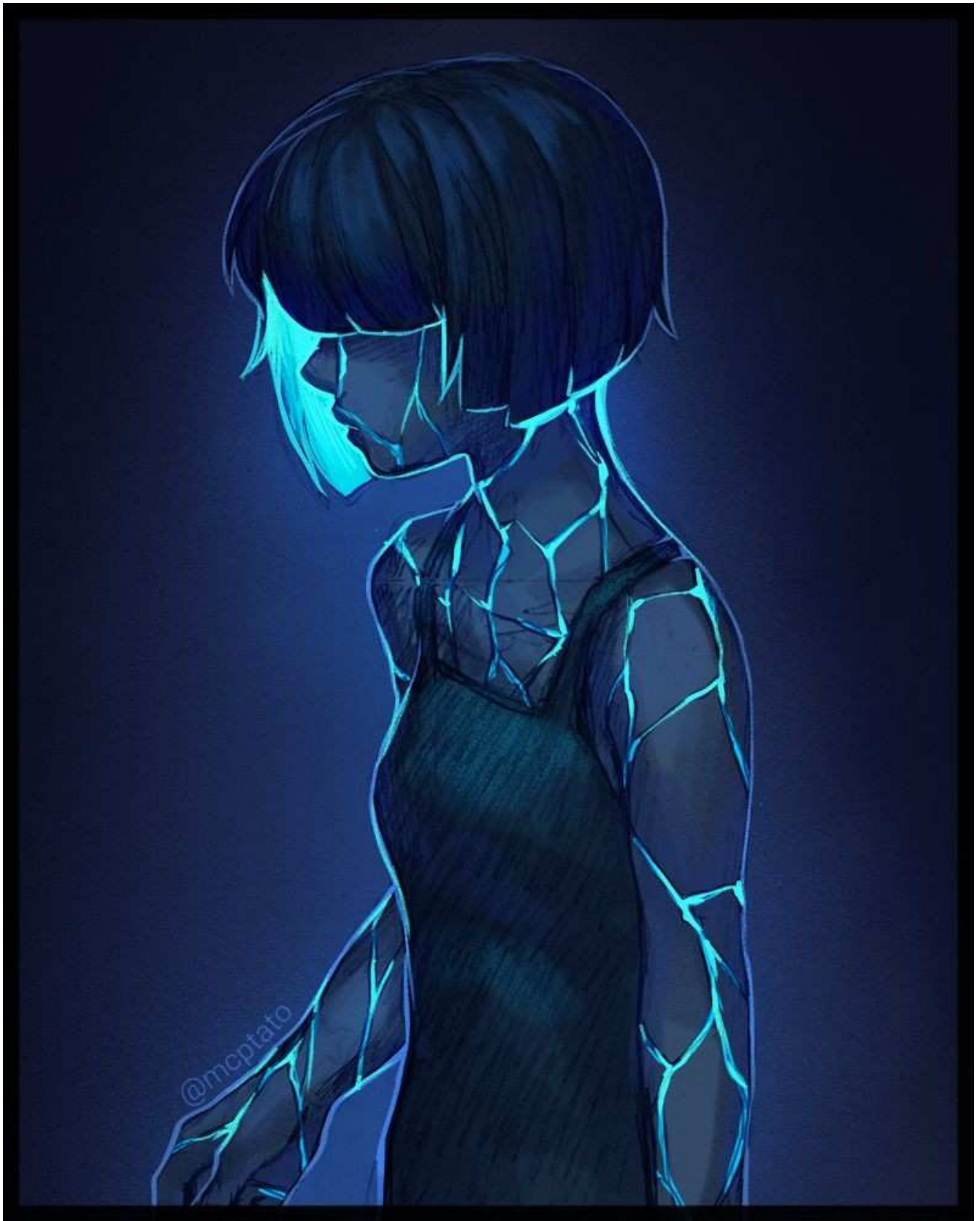
Apostate Encounter Table

For those who like depending on luck and randomness.

Roll a 1d20.

1-5	No Apostate has manifested in this world.
6-8	An Apostate will awaken not long after your arrival. Although eccentric and troubled, their powerset isn't a large threat to you or they're mostly harmless.
9-15	An Apostate has awakened and their powerset is slightly dangerous to you or will spell trouble for your plans. They can be reasoned with, but are driven to accomplish a goal of theirs that may clash with your own.
16-19	Dangerous. An Apostate has awakened to a powerset beyond their world's capabilities or is nearing parity with your own. Alternatively, they have gained a versatile ability that they quickly learn how to use to its fullest extent, on par with a dedicated munchkin. They are driven to a destructive goal and believe you to be a threat if they know about you.
20	The Apostate's awakening has totally shifted the balance of power. They will likely replace the Jumper's primary antagonist in the jump. Alternatively, they awakened years before your arrival and have totally derailed the plot. They firmly believe you're a threat. Unless you flee, conflict is inevitable.

Disclaimer: All of this lore amounts to glorified houserules and background for things that originally had none or were up to individual chains. Use or disregard this years-old writing insanity your own leisure.



Exiles

The most common fates of a Jumper are threefold. They will see their chain to its conclusion and make a messianic or apocalyptic return to their home world, ascend into an Entity, or be scattered into Journey's End after meeting death unexpectedly or with preparation. Some 'lucky' few may never truly leave their chain, failures and death being scrubbed away by their Entity as the game continues onto eternity, never truly ascending or escaping their fate.

Now, we will talk about those who do not meet any of these fates.

Exiles are Jumpers who did not see their chains to their full conclusions yet lived to tell the tale. Either through a conscious decision to retire, an extremely lucky escape from their Entity's influence, or even being forsaken or forgotten by said Entity, Exiles are the remnants of a now-ended chain that have either returned home, remained in a given world, or even manage to become Travelers on their own terms. They are the wandering heroes, the family-driven elder who tells tall tales of their glory days, the monarchs and leaders who rule over their surviving domains, the desperate trying to restore what they once were, the ancient monsters who still have sharp fangs. They are mentors, allies, and potentially the most terrifying antagonist a Jumper can face on a chain. More than any Apostate or Initiate, an Exile is both a potential asset and a journey-ending foe.

The most important things to determine when talking about an Exile is the Why and any Burnout to their Entity-gotten gains as a result.

Why Become An Exile?



The Retired

This is the most mundane explanation for why an Exile would come into existence and is usually the least tragic result if they were on favorable terms with their sponsoring Entity. The Jumper lost their appetite for adventure, conquest, or whatever they were seeking in their chain. The human urge to settle and possibly raise a family cannot always exist alongside a multiversal journey. Or whatever hunger or need they sought with their chain has been satisfied and they no longer pursue the journey with the same fire they once did. They decide to return home or stay in a given world after being given the normal decision at the end of a given jump and the Entity obliges. If they suffer any Burnout, it tends to be one of the less severe or lethal variants if this was done gracefully. Those who make this decision tend to be content pursuing their own agendas or living peacefully through their remaining days, either existing as ageless immortals or letting their bodies finally move to the march of time before death takes them. Interestingly, the Retired very rarely fall into Journey's End, most moving on to either a prepared afterlife, that of a deity they were aligned to, or simply return to the cycle of reincarnation as normal.

Although the least likely to be openly hostile to all but the most malicious of Jumpers, they are also the least likely to have lost any of their powers and treasures from a chain. Woe to any who think the Retired have dulled any in their rest. Many Jumpers of that stripe find this out the hard way as they mistake a Retired for an easy target for stealing power and items from, their souls sent screaming in impotent fury down to Journey's End.



The Forsaken

On the opposite end, there are those who are willfully abandoned by an Entity. This is almost always the result of a punishment, often from seeing the Jumper as not fulfilling whatever hunger or desire the Entity wished them to satisfy or growing bored with them one way or another. Especially cruel Entities may do so for no reason at all, not even announcing their departure until the Jumper realizes they're now stuck in a given world with whatever trouble they are in or however much they gained. The Forsaken always suffer Burnout from some degree or another, the Entity no longer expending any effort or energy in holding their existence together as they turn their attention to whoever their next candidate soon. Some Forsaken are able to make due and live as the Retired as best they can. Many more desperately try to re-establish contact or restore themselves, especially as their bodies and minds start to break down from Burnout. Although some manage to gain a new sponsoring Entity, many more can only scream into the void of the infinite as everything they had and stood to gain became dust in their hands.

Occasionally, a Forsaken will be recruited by an Entity to act as an antagonist for a Jumper in return for a chance to regain who they once were. Very few refuse. Of all Exiles, these are the most likely to be antagonists for a Jumper, especially if they possess the Siphon.



The Lost

Somewhere in the middle are The Lost. Despite the vast power of Entities and their seeming invincibility, they are neither infallible nor totally omnipotent or omniscient, though they may appear as such to mortals and outside observers. They can make errors, lose track of things and people across the multiverse, and fail to predict outcomes. For many of them, this is the appeal of having a Jumper in the first place, introducing an unexpected factor and seeing what happens as a result. It is thus the peak of irony that these Exiles either escaped their influence or simply became displaced enough that they could not be found afterwards.

The Lost are those who escape, willingly or accidentally, the influence and attention of their benefactor Entity and manage to live to tell the tale. This is often the result of some multiversal storm or event displacing the Jumper from their original location if it is accidental. Conversely, doing so intentionally and succeeding involves the Jumper either having outside help from another Entity or being of power. Only the exceptionally clever, lucky, and strong-willed have managed to successfully rebel against an Entity alone using the powers and items they themselves granted the Jumper, many such revolts quelled with a metaphorical fingersnap as they're reduced back to their original forms if not outright put into a tortuous punishment or Forsaken.

Most of the time, an Entity will re-establish contact with an accidentally Lost Jumper in short order, though sometimes they cannot locate their charge or lose interest in them when they realize effort is needed to track them down. This leaves the suddenly abandoned Jumper to adapt to where they are now or try to find a new sponsor. Meanwhile, those who escape willfully must evade the attention of their chosen Entity, for they're unlikely to be merciful if they're found again...at least, assuming they haven't already forgotten about said former Jumper.

The Lost, no longer being held together by an Entity or even holding their attention, almost always suffer Burnout to various degrees. This can be gradual or near-instant depending on the stress of their escape and how much they had gained before said escape. Only the extremely lucky totally retain what they gained, even if it isn't always in one piece.

Burnout



As mentioned, Jumpers are a collection of various contradicting natural laws and temporal contrivances held together by the power of an Entity. One way or another, an Exile loses the sponsorship and power of said Entity, which leads to Burnout. Without the power of their Entity to smooth the changes over and guarantee their success, a Jumper's powers can potentially begin to malfunction and unravel, sometimes even being lost entirely. The most severe cases feel their own bodies, minds, and souls break down as centuries or even several millennia of experience and power can no longer sustain themselves, turning them into burnt out husks of their former selves.

It's hard to determine how much Burnout a given Exile will suffer, but the Retired tend to suffer the least (unless they, for whatever reason, choose to escalate said Burnout) while the Forsaken get the absolute worst of it. The Lost suffer it at random intervals between 'not at all' to 'turning to ash a day after escape'. This can either begin at a certain level and remain there, or progress further and further through the stages of Burnout as time goes on depending on how damaged their connection is.

An interesting note: The suicidal or depressed tend to progress through stages more, as if their bodies are reacting subconsciously to their despair. It is thus possible to 'will' the Burnout to become more severe as time goes on, though only the supremely self-destructive do this.

Burnout Severity Levels

Level 0: Old Save Bonus – The Exile retains their perks, items, and skills gained from the end of the chain. Although they no longer grow beyond what is normally possible and success from certain abilities is no longer guaranteed, they are still the same individuals they were when their journey had ended.

Level 1: Muscles Sores – A subtle loss of ability. Most perks and items remain intact, but if they surpassed or cheating existing limitations somehow, those steadily come back into play. Changing between forms is more difficult or painful. Combining contradicting powers or laws is more painful and risky. Old weaknesses begin to come back into effect.

Level 2: Missing Pieces – The loss of power is now very noticeable. Some of the Exile's abilities fade away entirely, usually the ones of cosmic importance or world-destroying power, while others simply become weaker. 'Perfect' abilities like bottomless memory or invincible immortality start to break apart and fade. Items of power become dull or breakable. This tends to have a noticeable effect on the Exile's mental state. After a fraction of their abilities have faded, the Burnout will usually stabilize and cease, letting them keep whatever is left. If it continues, see Level 3.

Level 3: Running Empty – Like the fire of a candle starting to go out, this starts as a spike or an increase in power or ability. If the stages have been progressing up to this point, some perks return and it may start to feel as if they're returning to their old selves or regaining power, but this rally is temporary. After this, energies and powers become 'spent' when used up, never to be wielded again. Energy pools do not replenish, training no longer yields gains, skills begin to become forgotten. This stage continues until nothing remains, reducing them to bodymod or their original bodies.

Level 4: Back to Earth – At this stage, the Exile has been reduced to their original mortal selves and bodymod if they're lucky. If they have been long-lived or immortal, the aches, sores, and wrinkles of their spent years begin to catch up. While they don't immediately perish unless they hit Level Die, the long toll of their adventures and exploits up to this point finally reach their mind and body. They are a flicker of what they once were and while mundane skills and muscle memory may remain, they are nothing compared to what they were before.

Level 5: Just A Burning Memory – The Burnout has become terminal. The former Jumper's body, mind, and soul begin breaking down even past their core selves. This can manifest as mundane medical symptoms or obviously supernatural ones, like coughing up ash or their skin beginning to crack into glowing pieces like glass. They will die soon in anywhere between months or days. They will almost certainly fall into Journey's End or cease to exist.

Level Die: So Long And Thanks For Playing – The Exile's body dissolves into nothingness, either as a result of progressing Burnout symptoms or the Entity choosing to prematurely complete it themselves. They are dead and no resurrection method is possible without an Entity's help.

The Siphon – A little-known dark secret of Burnout is that it is the result of losing whatever eldritch energies fueled the Jumper's journey. Levels 0-2 can potentially reach a stable, self-sustaining state without an Entity from that point on if secured by the original benefactor or even the Exile themselves, hence why the Retired tend to peaceably keep their gains. Level 3 to 5 is the result of the energy being spent eclipsing that of what is kept or regained, creating a 'hunger' that cannot be satisfied.

But it can be stalled. It can even be reversed.

The obvious way is to get a new Entity to act as a benefactor. Most Entities tend not to like having the 'sloppy seconds' of their peers, so this is a rare occurrence. Another way, and why Forsaken are such common antagonists among Exiles, is to feed off the ambient energies of another Jumper or Entity-sponsored being. This is an ability that is used instinctively, the same way a desperate animal may hungrily bite into the first source of meat it can find, and can potentially be controlled. The Exile regains a fraction of their original powers and selves from this energy, the severity of the reversal depending on how much is absorbed. They can potentially return to Level 0, but they will progress to their original stage and beyond depending on how much they use until they find another energy source to consume from. The more powers their quarry uses at once, the more energy the Exile will regain.

Thus, it may be a source of immense distress when the seemingly insane hobo screaming about taking back what's theirs suddenly turns into an extremely powerful demigod in the middle of a battle.

Why No Dice Tables?

Exiles are as diverse a lot as can be, much like Jumpers themselves. They can be mentors, neutral figures, allies and friends, to even terrifying enemies desperate to regain who they once were. Thus it feels like a disservice to make a simplified dice template for them. I highly recommend, if you use Exiles in your chain, to take a lot of time to flesh them out and decide their role in your story.

Closing Words

There is only one path and that is the path that you take, but you can take more than one path.

Cross over the cell bars, find a new maze, make the maze from it's path, find the cell bars, cross over the bars, find a maze, make the maze from its path, eat the food, eat the path.

Anonymous, Marathon: Infinity

It's easy to accept inevitability.

Inevitable victory. Inevitable defeat. Inevitable continuation. Inevitable end.

Inevitably, the Jumper will continue their chain and receive another host of blessings and treasures. Inevitably, their enemies will crumble. Inevitably, they will crush the feeble and static world beneath their boots/feet/tentacles or fend off any opposition as they carve out their little slice of heaven. What do they have to fear? They know every trick, they know what to expect. Every individual can be reduced to predictable archetypes, every enemy a lesser minion or a list of known abilities and powers you have a counter for. Those who dared offend or threaten them will get their just desserts. You win, they lose, the end. They are without peer, without rivals.

But this Atlas, with its collection of rogues and the pitfalls it creates, can bring this into question. Apostates can create danger where there was none. Initiates watch and wait for an opportunity to strike or exploit. Exiles can be your greatest allies or your worst enemies at any point in the chain. Even if you never encounter these beings, a given world may turn out different or more robust than you had imagined. This imbalance can create conflict. Conflict creates story. Where there was certainty, there is now a question. A question you can answer for yourself.

And that is what this Atlas is for. I want you to tell your story.

Whatever you do, if you do use anything within this Atlas, I encourage you: Tell us about it or write about it. Make a story. If your victory is already predetermined, then do it with style and make it eventful. Whatever you do, whatever hero or villain you play, make it as grand as a world-traveling badass should be.

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