There is a world that resembles the modern one, and it is an elaborate illusion designed to keep you quiescent. The humdrum of daily living is your prison. The demands of your body it's bars, the oppression of its society the labyrinth that houses them and the worst elements of society it's malevolent gatekeepers. Those who see through the illusion seldom like what's out there. Grim buildings and darkened doorways lead to eldritch border worlds where malefic beings yearn to torture all mankind. Condemned men make pacts with fallen angels. Old gods linger in the slums. The homeless are rounded up as sacrifices or breeding stock. Smiling strangers hide their flayed bodies under robes.

This is not the world you know. It is the illusion crafted by the Demiurge, who quelled mankind's divine fire and fed it's souls into an unholy infrastructure wrought from ten principles named the Archons, its own emanations and creations. Abstract and tyrannical, these cosmic jailers command armies of fallen angels and grotesque Lictors to carry out their ordained task of keeping humanity quiescent, but for how much longer?

For as the system of faith and politics that kept mankind began to weaken, as the Age of Enlightenment brought with it the barest rediscovery of it's true potential, the Demiurge's own power did as well. By the 20th century, the Demiurge itself had disappeared-either having fled reality, or simply died. Even its servants could not say for sure, and matters only dovetailed with the emergence of Astaroth, the Demiurge's unholy twin or shadow, from his slumber in Inferno and his bickering Death Angels.

The true nature of the cosmos beyond the veil of illusive normality is not merely a blasted, abandoned waste torn apart by divine power struggles. It is one so malefic towards humanity, that it is no exaggeration to say nearly every being in it harbours a sadistic hatred of mankind. The existential dread you feel waking up every day is nothing more than a shadow of your gaolers' earnest desire to butcher your soul to shreds.

Worst of all, under duress many of these beings will earnestly claim that *mankind deserved this*.

You are not going mad.

You are simply remembering how crazy the world really is.

KULT: DIVINITY LOST

Age is an illusion. Gender is irrelevant, whatever your broken body may think. Location is a function of limited perception. So you may choose these freely as you take your place in either Elysium, the plane inhabited by the humans where the Illusion has taken hold, or any of the true realities. Take 1000 Choice Points (CP), and begin your desperate struggle anywhere among the blind throngs of humanity.

Origins

Drop-In: Long way from home, aren't you? That's alright, the Illusion always has room for one more. On a long journey from nowhere, to nowhere, so long as you don't aggravate the already unstable power structures supporting the Illusion you're unlikely to draw much attention with your apparent lack of attachment to any of the secret masters of the world. As for *what* you are, the worlds beyond the known are many and mysterious; suffice to say that you're sufficiently alienated that the Illusion has no hold on you. You may be any humanoid being between the scope of a human suffering under the strictures of the Illusion and a Lictor, with aesthetics and perhaps unique powers up to you to define…though perhaps, there's more to you than meets the eye?

Prisoner: You *wake up.* It's time to work, or go to a school full of people you hate, or shoot up on something vile, or just stare into the cold light of the monitor promising yourself that today is the day you'll turn your life around. It's all so tiresome. It never gets better, the responsibilities of yesterday making today all the worse, and all around you are the world's going hell. You want to just go back to bed. When you look out the window, you sometimes fantasize that you were made for more than this humdrum daily grind. That one day you'll just wake up ant it'll all be okay. But then it's time to do the taxes, or cover up your bruises, or take your medicine, and once again the anxieties and burdens of your miserable little life pile on you like weights. Until you crash on the mattress, shut out the cruel world and go to bed again.

You are just another human being, going through the motions in between eating and sleeping.

But soon, you just might **wake up** for real.

Exile (+400 CP): THEY'RE WAKING UP. Who? You know damn well who. The tyrant gods whose passion consumed countless civilisations, and continued enslaving them in the universes of their dreams! Some may have collared you and kept you as a pet, a slave, a bedmate or something less in times past-or at least, your parents or neighbours. Others may have massacred your kind for sport. Either way, you are part of the many extradimensional civilisations devastated and driven to huddle in the Underworld-for the only safe place from the almighty god-king-queens that killed and shouted freely was on the brink of Achlys: The nothingness that waits beyond pure chaos, that promises annihilation or perhaps enlightenment. Your race, like the others here, is dying. She Who Waits Below, the aspect or daughter of Achlys, dwells near your realms-and she is beyond the power of the Demiurge or Astaroth, her siren promise of peace in nonexistence touching many worlds. You cling to the brink of life, not knowing what to do if *the true rulers of the Metropolis* return in glory.

Gaoler: THEY'RE WAKING UP. Impudent brutes! Thieves of time, and space-warping bandits! It was only right, only JUST that the Demiurge once bade the Archons to bind the lot of them in paradigms forged of their own flesh and blood. Or so the party line goes, anyway. You are a humble servant created by the Archons or the Demiurge to serve a certain purpose, whether you are one of the

few surviving angels or an entity such as a Lictor with a knack for blending into the Illusion while pulling it's strings from behind the scenes. You may be a small cog in the vast, inscrutable machinery that the Archons use to keep those pitiful apes mired in their current state of being. But with the Demiurge gone, the harmony that once guided the Archons has given way to infighting. Already three Archons have died or disappeared in the ensuing power struggle, while Malkuth has rebelled against the Illusion itself for mysterious reasons. Perhaps like the Lictors, that's the reason for your independence? Will you continue to loyally serve your Archon's principle, or will you join the rebellious in the hopes of usurping your masters?

Ten were your rulers, among the Archons. Seven yet remaining, three destroyed by infighting.

Kether. The first Archon, the eternal and divinely chosen ruler. He who awaits the Demiurge's return in the hope of recouping his depleted power through a new age of feudalism, and whose principle is **Hierarchy.**

Chokmah. The Thousand-Headed god of religion and divine delusion. He whose lies are stoked by the desperation of faith in an increasingly chaotic world, and whose principle is **Submission.**

Binah. The Black Madonna, who is ever-present wherever mothers coddle their newborns and where the rights of the many stamp down on the individual. She whose principle is **Community.**

Chesed. The Merciful One, the Archon tasked with luring humanity into a false sense of security, and making them thrive in captivity-one of the Demiurge's most important servants. When Malkuth rebelled, she annihilated him, her former colleague-driving a crack through the Illusion. Yet the principle of **Safety** still remains.

Geburrah. The Labyrinth of Laws. The maintainer of the enormous machine that represents the conservative forces in society. Though weak among his kind, his influence has strengthened with the rise of the nation-state, as has his principle of **Law.**

Tiphareth. The Spider in the Web. She who makes mankind lust, yearn, dream and forget the real world. The controlling, secret benefactor of Yesod who sheltered him upon his expulsion from Metropolis-merely so she can enslave her ally when the time is right with her principle of **Allure.**

Netzach. The Conqueror. Once a general under the Demiurge, he now harbours ambitions of shouldering the mantle of Demiurge through the military complexes he builds in Elysium. Right after the Allies' victory during the second world war, no Archon could measure up to him-for he was **Victory** itself.

Hod. Father of Honor. The provider of meaning, conviction and etiquette. When he refused to step aside after the Demiurge's abandonment, the other Archons destroyed him in glorious battle. Yet **Honor** remains throughout the Illusion.

Yesod. The Marshal of Cogwheels. The insatiable hunger for material wealth is, ironically, himself so badly wounded in battle that only a pact with Tiphareth saved him-and the destruction of the World Trade Centre brought further backlash upon his wounded self. As long as **Avarice** has a hold on mankind. Yesod yet maintains ambitions of manifesting his Citadel back into Metropolis.

Malkuth. The Rebel. The Physical World. Some claim, the mirror image to Kether and therefore among the most consistently powerful Archons. The transience and cycles of the natural world. The Archon tasked with taming a portion of Gaia. Who channelled the other Archons' Principles and fused them into the machinery that sustains the Illusion. Alone among the Archons, Malkuth chose to rebel against the system she helped shape and liberate humanity. None know her motive, though her methods remain harsh and extreme as any Archon.

Perhaps she has succumbed to the influence of a Death Angel. Perhaps she has fallen in love with the humans. Perhaps she realizes the Illusion is doomed to collapse, and wishes to curry favour with humanity before it inevitably destroys her and her siblings. Perhaps she is simply disgusted with everything and wants to raze what the Demiurge has wrought.

Whatever the case, she who was once **Conformity** now promotes **Awakening** with equal fervour.

Torturer: THEY'RE WAKING UP. The mad, beautiful things are about to burst from the Illusion like a sprawl of intestines from a badly sutured wound. *Ahhh*. Such suffering they will bring on all the worlds, the thought of it is…exquisite. It's almost a pity that your dark creator has other plans. You are a native creature of Inferno under the Death Angels' reign such as a nepharite, or one of the damned souls mutilated and augmented by exposure to its exquisites tortures that has somehow won a place of privilege. When the Principles of the Archons were proclaimed, the hellish dimension that was Inferno and it's ruling Death Angels also came into being as their counterparts. When the Demiurge disappeared, it is said Astaroth searched all the known worlds for his twin only to find confused servants. He finally plunged into the Abyss where the Demiurge's Citadel once stood, only to drag himself back grievously wounded. Whatever Astaroth learned it made him declare a war on Elysium for all its souls, and demand the downfall of the Archons so his Death Angels could replace them as the pillars of the cosmos. Which might be easier if discord, infighting and betrayal weren't the norm in his dark realm.

Ten are your rulers, who like the Archons erect Citadels of their own in Inferno. It may say something amusing about the nature of the world that where the Archons are fractured, the Death Angels are intact.

Thaumiel. The Twin God. The Inequitable Ruler. The essence of extreme individuality and creative ennoblement of the self, who rules a political meat grinder of a realm. He has always been powerful, but now more than ever **Power** is recognised as paramount by mortal governments.

Chagidiel. The Empty Word. A dark deity who traumatises children until the litany of assault and fear becomes their life, then goes on to awaken forbidden thoughts in adults. He has always been strong, and simply put he is **Abuse** personified.

Sathariel. The Goddess of Destiny. Binah's shadow nourishes the outcasts, the suicide and the self-destructive. There is a connection between her and the Underworld, for it is that void where she bestows weapons that lets outcasts take vengeance on the world. She is **Exclusion.**

Gamichicoth. The False Helper. He who spreads alarm and mistrust in people's hearts, being strongest where groups fear the ideals they uphold are threatened. In an age of information, the principle of **Fear** is alive and well.

Golab. Screams of the Abyss. The purest expression of unbridled sadism and herald of suffering, he inspires others to injure and kill without remorse. The principle of **Torment** does not discriminate, even if it's enactors do.

Togarini. The Laughing One. A weakling among the Death Archons, his is the inspiration that produces distorted and macabre art that breaks the artist on its yoke. Paying little attention to the intrigues of his fellow higher beings, his joy in humans destroying themselves with **Compulsions** is all he needs.

Hareb-Serap. The Raven of the Battlefield. The atrocity of all war and conflict, who intoxicates with bloodlust and inspires anger wherever he goes. For he is **Conflict** itself, restless and ever in motion.

Samael. God's Poison. A relentless, intolerant avenger that exacts a terrible fate on the greatest of injustices and the pettiest of slights alike. Avoided and feared by many of the other Death Angels, his conviction is matched only by his dark intellect. **Vengeance** is not a force to be trifled with lightly.

Gamliel. The Dark Side of the Moon. He whose essence twists passion to the dark and destructive crossroads where it intersects with suffering and death. Tied intricately to Limbo where humanity's desires accrete, his **Desire** has come to the forefront.

Nahemoth. The Shadow of Earth. The chaos, storms and revolutions to Malkuth's cycles, order and stability. Tied to the untamed parts of Gaia, she was once worshipped as a goddess of the night and storms, and now finds equal shelter in Chernobyl's toxic ruins. Ironically, where Malkuth has a clear endgame Nahemoth herself is mostly ignored as she behaves in an alien manner, with no visible agenda. Such is the nature of **Discord.**

Wild Thing: You hunt. You eat. You mate. That is all. You were created or shaped by Gaia: The untamed, unrestrainable elemental force that promotes survival of the fittest, creating merely to destroy like a mad toymaker who drives every living thing to kill for survival and whose merest attentions batter on Elysium-whether as weeds that crack asphalt, or through the huff of her breath igniting stars into supernovae and her great chews ripping apart celestial bodies. Like She Who Waits Below, neither the Demiurge nor Astaroth have ever fully mastered Gaia, and her

atavistically alien thought process is comprehended only through the basic instincts coursing through every living being's veins. Whether you were once human or not, you are a terrifyingly organism that may be anywhere between the size of an ant and a blue whale-and physically mutated in various ways to survive in the portions of Gaia that lie beyond Elysium. You eat, you kill and you breed. The progress of escapees or the machinations of angels and demons is of little concern to you.

Perks

All perks are discounted by 50% under the relevant background header. One 100 CP perk becomes free, while the other can be purchased for 50 CP.

Drop-In

Menacing Figure in the Distance (100 CP): In a strange and uncertain world, anonymity is a blessing. One you now enjoy, because you have a mild perception-dampening effect around you. At will you can make eyes slip from where you are, memories fog up around you and even electronic devices go on the fritz slightly. Don't expect to sneak past guards in plain sight with this or merely delay anyone with a good reason to locate you at best-but if a shadow could possibly hide you this will make you be as one with it, and as a face in the ground this is a good way not to attract suspicion. It's as if a little clump of the Illusion clings to you, like a tattered veil.

A Breath-Stealing Stare (100 CP): There's something undefinably *other* about you. Something that screams not exactly danger but-otherworldliness. Even if you have no other power to your name when you make eye contact with someone and focus your will on them, they'll find themselves gripped with an unearthly terror. It is the irrational impulse not to look behind you in the dark woods, the fear of the nightstand in your room that looks like an observer. With either your concentration or gaze broken this effect quickly fades though, and while a man might be able to startle a lictor with this it would be unwise to provoke those greater than you with no way to back up your threats.

A Mood That Shakes The World (200 CP): The coming of divinity is often presaged by fey moods and strange thoughts. From the revels of Dionysus or the morbid fascination with entropy that Coatlicue brings, such passions are often too great for frail physical bodies to bear. Whether or not you are a genuine divinity, you have the power to spread a pervasive emotion or passion across a wide area; even a salaryman could blanket most of a suburb's worth of territory in a strange obsession with spheres, euphoria or a sudden calling to don medieval arms and armour. Those who pursue these passions whole heartedly, feeling them more intensely than others or giving up their mundane life to pursue them, obtain supernatural powers comparable to the least of lictors or nepharites and are similarly compelled to serve you as they do the Archons and Death Angels. Keep such beings around long enough, and they may slowly gain more power to better serve the mood you personify.

Trinkets From Beyond (200 CP): To wield power over reality is no small thing, and both magicians and extradimensional entities frequently create artifacts designed to channel or amplify their power for various means. Through some mix of mystical ritualism, innate power and a mechanically inclined mind you've gained the know-how for creating the artifacts of this world. Creating artifacts is generally time-consuming and ritualistic, comes easier the more overall steeped in divine and mystical power you are, and is weak in the hands of laymen. Even experienced magicians can generally only create minor artifacts with least powers like seeing

beyond the Illusion reliably, while the greater powers that be can engineer objects that warp time and space-or what humans understand to be reality.

Radio Eldritch (400 CP): There are certain deities that choose to offer deals to a certain stripe of mortal. Such deals come with very persistent offers, as you know well. Choose a limited but invaluable sort of mystic pact-something like reweaving fate subtly, or the provision of physical items mundane and supernatural from nowhere, or bringing violence upon someone else's enemies. Whatever other powers or lack thereof you have, you are able to fulfil such deals. You also have an unusual means of warping communication mediums to attract those inclined to make such pacts, whether by letting your voice be heard on any radio around you for miles, your image along with your contact information appearing in print or simply coming to others in a dream.

This is mostly unconscious but when others respond you can intuitively address them and make your pitch; time and space are no obstacle to the art of the deal, and you always make your best sales pitch even if you respond before you've technically heard the request. Should you have any supernatural powers, those in a deal with you are much easier to affect with all of them in the course of your dealings-including to punish them if they're unable to uphold some of the terms and conditions in your trade, which need not be fair-but must always be initiated by the customer.

Always Together, Together Always (400 CP): Ah, it's you. Coming up the road to see you, greet you, check up on how you've been and what you're doing. Had any interesting human sacrifices lately? Like the Dancing Gods Iaineivsa and Asvieniai, you've somehow acquired a counterpart entity very similar to your identity and all its powers from this world. It even resembles your form in this world, although it may have minor differences like a different gender and skin tone-and whatever your nature, always looks a little otherworldly. You are entwined at an abstract level, and so long as you live the other may not die (though it may suffer greatly and be greatly harmed). Your counterpart coordinates inhumanly well with you as a second pair of hands, matching you step for step, blink for blink, easily finishing each other's sentences and being able to combine mystical powers with you for greater effect. As a kind of spiritual symbiote this counterpart of yours is deeply loyal to you, and even if this loyalty may express itself in unusual ways it will be inclined to support your endeavours.

Quell the Divine (600 CP): It is such a burden to be an immaculate being in a filthy, heathen world. The cosmos requires discipline. Blessed order, imposed on chaos. And you are just the being to grant it. With a great effort of will and focus you can radiate a shining glory from you-one that renders your features indistinct within that same radiance. But above all, wherever your light falls the supernatural, anomalous and ultimately what is hazardous or chaotic in your eyes is quelled like a torch in a rainy wind-happening faster when you focus your will on what you find unclean. Spells short out, the Illusion itself can be strengthened or weakened depending on whether you deem it or True Reality more worthy of preservation, and supernatural beings can potentially be stripped of all they have. With even greater focus you can permanently remove the powers of supernatural beings, reducing them to mortal forms with their own abilities sealed within themselves-

and when defeated in such ways, these beings' very memories of themselves can be snuffed out too and become very susceptible to manipulation of all kinds. Such radiance is exhausting to maintain, though your endurance and the strength of your nullification will rise with your overall power. A mortal man would nearly collapse from illuminating a city block for a few minutes-yet be able to greatly weaken a nepharite in its own purgatory enough to slay with its own tools of torture.

In Our Own Image (600 CP): It is not good for the almighty to be alone. A being of your stature requires companions and worshippers, heralds to tell others of your grandeur. And so you have the power to create lesser supernatural beings in the image of your values for a minute expenditure of energy. If you were a particularly devout mortal for example, they might resemble tiny hummingbird-sized angels. These beings are not particularly powerful, but they are fanatically loyal to you above all else-and seemingly sustain themselves off worshipping you or celebrating your principles. And of course, it's so easy to keep making more of them even a mortal could raise a vast flock in his backyard. Such sprites will grow in power proportionate to you yourself, but you also have a more substantial power for creating helpmates that benefit from this symbiosis far more greatly. By focusing deeply on up to 10 essential principles you find essential to the very essence of yourself-principles like kingship, or strength, or rebellion-you can incarnate that principle into an abstract being devoted to emanating it's principle into the surrounding environment. Such beings have much more power-perhaps a mortal could create one as physically powerful as a large wolf and as skilled in emanating it's principle as a mortal adept of magic, in addition to having many lesser supernatural powers-but more importantly, can gain power by integrating themselves into reality and other living beings, and making themselves prominent in their operation. As externalised parts of yourself, you grow in power as they do-though as the part cannot be the whole, you may choose to remove yourself mystically from them at any time.

Prisoner

The Truth Is Out There (100 CP): You've never been one to take things for granted or let sleeping dogs lie, and in this world your curiosity may be the end of you-or your ultimate salvation. In this world you've had quite a lot of experience in gathering information of some sort-and generally the type the authorities wouldn't like you to know about, whether you're a moderator on the local darknet or an investigative reporter with tremendous talent for cutting past red tape or avoiding the authorities to scope out that crime scene with an awful whiff of sulphur. Whatever you are chumming it up with mundane academics is second nature to you, you have a natural talent for making connections some professional analysts trained for and you have all the skills of a crime scene investigator. Just know that sometimes, it's better to let sleeping dogs lie. A lot of people who've gone looking for the truth here have met fates worse than death.

I Can (Not) Cope With This (100 CP): Don't stare too hard at the shadows in the alleyways when they start to move. Don't ask what goes on in that red-tinted window. Don't respond to the wet screams at night. Saving your own skin's hard enough already. You're a quick thinker and a good face reader if you weren't already, your intuition and reflexes as good as a mortal could hope for. You may not be an action hero, but in a pinch you've got a MacGyver-like talent for improvising objects around you into useful tools to get you out of any simple jam. Improvising plausible alibis, covering up your trail and generally winging your way out of a chaotic situation is second nature to you, as if you'd grown up on the hard streets of Elysium itself. And when all else fails and you need to get out, you can run like hell and escape like a parkour artist.

Field Agent (200 CP): Back from service, are you? You have the training and experience of a professional soldier of some sort-and the kind governments entrust with special operations like wetwork or high profile extractions to boot. Whether you served in the Marines or were a former Spetznaz member, you've come out of it with the kind of physique that can march for days through a harsh environment while remaining in fighting shape. You can repair and maintain any firearm you know how to use, build and disarm bombs, take apart most living men in hand to hand combat and endure pain that would make lesser men break or black out. Even if you're no soldier in truth, you're a bonafide modern warfare expert with what is likely quite an interesting past.

People Person (200 CP): There are motivational speakers, and there are chairmen of the board, and then there's you. When the mood strikes you you're a world-class seducer, being attractive enough to keep all eyes on the dance floor on you or wind strangers around your little finger after a few conversations. Quite frankly you're easy on the eyes, enough that if celebrities and fitness models knew you they'd want to know your secret, and there's few who wouldn't object to seeing you in either a tight-fitting tux or swimsuit. And when you give a public speech, you can read mood and raise the mood enough to get people railing about something they only just found out from you. You're so pleasant to talk to and good at talking, it could save your life from suspicious guards catching you snooping around somewhere you shouldn't be at night. You're also an excellent manager and leader, and could get a couple of strangers hustling in the middle of a

life or death situation like a drill sergeant or professional executive. All this boils down to being able to take charge with little resistance in the mortal world, and sell ice to Eskimos.

A Good Samaritan (400 CP): Who says good things don't come to good people? Not you, for sure. While you might not have the chaps to necessarily take charge and lead, you'll find that there's something ineffably calming about your presence that draws people to you like sheep to a shepherd. The trust you inspire is supernatural in nature, some element of your soul touching even inhuman beings with a sense of amicability. Around you the mad are soothed with a few reassuring words, the angry keep their tempers and the wicked sheathe the knives they would have stabbed you in the back with.

Helping, genuinely helping and looking out for others' problem helps you too-soothing any burden on your mind or soul, to the extent of speedy recovery from any mundane issue of the mind while greatly alleviating the trauma of any supernatural one. Your powers to aid verge on the supernatural; already when you observe and focus on one you can perform a feat of miraculous healing-with a dire cost, for you must transfer the wounds to yourself or a nearby target. And given trial and error, you may discover other ways to heal with different costs and reagents. Best of all it seems your selfless spirit is being reciprocated by the world, for you invoke a passionate adoration from divine beings. Many of the Forgotten Gods who drift through this world have fond memories of grander times among the human passion plays, and your selfless spirit in particular ignites the ardour of puppy love in them. Though mankind was both beautiful and terrible in its prime, you are a living example of why even some gods who were victimised by its onslaught yet yearn for their reawakening.

Vestige of the Divine (400 CP): There is something about you that hints at the awakening of a greater power. Something indefinable aura of untameable greatness, which makes you mighty in the eyes of the monstrous things beyond reality's veil. When you command a supernatural being you can speak in thunder and frightening certainty, forcing it to obey your orders-or soothing a shambling horror from devouring you or your allies. You harbour a mysterious inner power too, that lashes out at all who would harm you when you need it; no damage greater than an electric shock or a knife to the throat, but enough few mundane adversaries would press an attack without good reason.

The faintest hint of divinity touches all your attributes, mundane or supernatural-always tantalisingly hinting at some buried potential. If you are charming, you can exorcise spirits with great ease, tame supernatural beasts and make others forget what they're doing to stare at you. If you're a fighter, you can freeze others with your deadly stare or very briefly move and hit like a sonic boom when pushed to your limit in a fight. And even if you know no truth about the occult, you can perform functional rituals and any human participants will always at least slightly bolster your efforts. While such abilities are always supplemental and supportive to your existing ones, you'll rapidly earn new mystical traits for whatever you turn your hand to or are already capable of. As if your very being was urging you on to fulfil your destiny.

Beyond These Feet of Clay (600 CP): Those facets of human existence that humans think absolute are, in truth, the seeds of their divinity. Instinctively each human journeys inwards, awakening parts of their slumbering souls, reflexively using mathematics, magic and natural sciences alike to slowly reweave the forgotten form of their divinity. Choose one of the following aspects of humanity. You are mystically attuned to it, making you a considered a skilled and powerful magician of this world.

You can perform rituals themed around a certain essential facet of human existence. Such rituals resemble the occult traditions of Elysium's façade of a mundane world, and generally require reagents, some sort of time-consuming performance or sacrifice, symbolically consecrated areas, religious visualisations, a great deal of time or some combination of the above to work-but are the true rumblings of humanity's innate divinity. Rituals of death may include propitiations similar to voodoo practices for example, while rituals of space-time may require intense contemplation of the vast gulfs of space or the creation of sacred geometries as a focus. Your especially close connection to your purchased trait also grants you a specified divine ability you may freely use at will with no effort, which will be bolstered by any other fonts of divine power you have.

Madness: What modern science calls insanity is in fact the soul's protestation against an impossible existence. A failed attempt to tear down the walls of the Illusion and peer into true reality. Henceforth when you succumb to madness or other states of impaired consciousness, you retain an intuitive sense of direction and are capable of potentially travelling to places you should be physically unable to. Having a nightmare in your asylum cell only to wake up in your bed or the other side of true reality is something a mortal could easily perform, though getting to the peak of Everest or the halls of a specific Archon's citadel would take quite a risky immersion in madness. You can also draw on the intensity of the madness to induce abhuman mutations and transformations in yourself as you pursue your goals, resembling a beast out of nightmare more than a man swiftly, and both sense the fears of other others as well as incarnate them as a quasi-demonic praetorian guard along your journey. Though if you destination is a safe one, these traits swiftly fade upon arrival.

Death: The bitter truth of the Illusion is the Demiurge never took away mankind's immortality-and perhaps never could. Death is but a gate to other planes of existence that transforms without truly annihilating for mankind in the fullness of divinity, yet within Elysium it has been reduced to an amnesia-inducing trap. Your awareness of death has resulted in a metaphysically enforced stasis to the differentiation between life and death. Should you be in a world where you reincarnated you may swiftly recall the memories of your past life, and you can innately perceive the restless souls of the dead. Furthermore your awareness of death's fleeting grip enervates your blood, and all other bodily fluids you have. They become a panacea for all mortal ailments-and more importantly, you may use them in various procedures to reanimate other corpses, or manipulate them through sympathetic links. Through experimentation and experience, you may learn to manipulate the memories and even conditions of the reborn dead. In time, even ashes could walk and breathe in recreated bodies with their soul intact-and dead souls could be reborn in more favourable circumstances than life.

Dream: Dreams are an entire plane of existence to themselves, where even in maimed aspect humans can strive for experiences and accomplishments beyond their reach. Though it has long lost full control of this realm, your closeness to dream makes it easier to breach the gulf between sleeping and wakefulness. Not only are you a masterful lucid dreamer, but at any moment while awake you can immediately choose to fall asleep. Insights and knowledge from the collective consciousness of mortal life in wherever you are is especially easy for you to find, glinting like golden treasure in the sea. Crucially when you encounter dreams that roughly correspond to events, phenomena or entities in reality you can interact with them to influence a chain of events in the immediate future. Such manipulations betwixt dream and reality cannot break the laws of nature *with a mortal's power alone*, but can create corresponding phenomena. Killing a man in a dream is unlikely to directly kill him in real life for example, but it could give him a sudden sense of inexplicable fear and disorientation-right in the middle of crossing the street. As you grow in power, it may even be possible to tie large areas in the real world to dreams that can be distorted through lucid dreaming.

Space-Time: The progression of time in this world is a lie. But the true perception of eternity is lost to mankind is illusion, along with the unfurled dimensions beyond those perceptible in its limited state. Having regained some of that awareness your gift is simple yet powerful: A profound awareness of any object or person you know to look for anywhere in space or time. Certain magics may be able to conceal them and your positioning will be sharpened by knowledge of its name or an accurate image, but even if an object has yet to be invented you could know where to look for it and even if someone dwelled in Inferno you would gain knowledge of the swiftest fast to find them. Furthermore you have the innate power to recreate eternity and halt time. Your mastery of this technique is exceptional, and in time you could perform outrageous feats like accelerating the flow of time in direst Achlys where time does not technically exist. Or stopping time within the stopped time…having shrugged off the stopped time inflicted on you by an enemy mage through your temporal supremacy.

Passion: When humans were gods their bodies were strong, beautiful and changeable beyond mortal measure. Flexible, malleable instruments to chase the force that defined them more than any other-unlike the primitive machines that grow weaker with age or self-destruct from internal errors that Elysium forces on them. When you induce or experience great passion, you may amplify it out into a force that can afflict sentient beings with such ardour they may be transformed, bolstered or cursed in accordance with your attentions. Even your abiding passion for music could play a song so moving it would be feasible to breed animals with machines and sire unnatural hybrids whose traits breed true, or sing and make others submit in love to you. But carnality is by far the greatest of the human desires, capable of making demons weep and bringing gods to their knees. Do not underestimate this force, for such is the innate fertility within you that even now any children you have are truly Awakened from the Illusion if you simply enjoy the act of their creation enough. The complex ritual and nearly year-long ritual that normally enables such a feat compels the power of Achlys itself to hear the name of such a child, and it is no exaggeration to say even the maelstrom of ultimate annihilation at the bottom of everything is not entirely sovereign from passion.

Humanity Unchained (600 CP): Let no mere Illusion conceal your gaze. Let no principle bind your hands, nor any mere prison fetter your freedom. Henceforth, no seal or restraint can so much as touch you without evaporating like morning dew exposed to the rising sun. With a simple rush of the resolve to seize your freedom, locked prison doors open soundlessly and straightjackets loosen. Even seals as great as the principles of the Archons or the inertia of the Illusion can only stifle your powers for months without your active effort and investigation, and when you strive to learn the truth your fetters may erode in days. It may still take some time to actually leave the institution imprisoning you or navigate the realms beyond reality's veil, and you may yet face the consequences of your gaolers' displeasure if they discover you. But be assured that henceforth, your volition is preserved against all forces that would stifle it.

Exile

Tough Survivor (100 CP): Only the strongest, most enduring and most desperate have survived when greater powers from all corners look down upon you. Whatever your nature you have strength, endurance and reflexes surpassing those of mortals. You could dart across a room in the blink of an eye, lift and throw a man by the neck and take the blows of edged weapons yet press on through either built-in or biological armour in your body. Your metabolism is also strengthened to endure the empty Metropolis or labyrinths above the Abyss, letting you subsist healthily on a cup of water and a bowl of rice every week. Last but not least, you have some form of biological weapon on you-whether an elegant blade that retracts seamlessly from your forearm, or jagged nails and teeth. You may be a rat in the eyes of the truly mighty, but you'll fight like hell in a corner.

Coveted, Pretty Thing (100 CP): Among the survivors of ravaged worlds, the Azadaevae may have suffered long before humanity ever encountered them. You have a similar ethereal beauty as they-whether due to your pale skin, delicate features or long, thin hair you have the kind of strange beauty that drove so many from this world to own such beings and make them servants or courtesans. To see such wicked creatures coming your senses can perceive beyond the physical-always seeing a being's true form and past lives, and being able to intuitively sense danger from a distance. Last but not least whether you too exude the euphoric dust the Azadaevae do which lets them lull those who inhale it into a state of euphoria, you have some means of casting illusions to disguise your comings and goings when you do not wish to be unduly disturbed.

Made to Serve (200 CP): As demeaning as it is, many of the Children were made or trained to serve. When a being you view as your rightful master expresses affection to you, a great rush of joy and loving submission wracks your body harder than any human orgasm. Your worries, mental distresses and anxieties about the future flee you as you luxuriate under the firm hand of your proud owner, no matter how dismal or amnesiac a state you may find them in; even your physical health improves greatly when so pampered. Furthermore you are extremely skilled at playing, satisfying and mating to the point of developing a supernatural power related to your delectable function. Even without doing anything you'll find yourself a perpetual source of joy and entertainment for your eternal lord-your

wit, flesh, strength and desperation swiftly endearing you to those you serve. None would admit it, but living in a gilded cage would be better than the slow death by oblivion that the children endure.

And as a side note unlike the lonesome Gynachids, while your abilities may be designed to cater for divine beings with virtually limitless appetites your innate empathy lets you tone down your attentions to leave your master satisfied without risking physical or psychological harm.

Eloquent Wretch (200 CP): Fat and swollen, the Beryn would be of little consequence if it weren't for their mystical wisdom making them ideal advisors. Like them you have gained a form of innate precognition, being able to see past the horizon of time itself to foretell events yet to come. You also have a perfect memory, and are able to make intuitive leaps that put some computers to shame. More importantly you're a surprisingly skilled politician for one whose constituency likely lives hand to mouth trying to survive another day, struggling to survive. It would be foolishness for so many to turn on the biomechanical Keepers they are dependent on but with your silver tongue that rebellion might just come to pass soon.

Keeper of Flesh (400 CP): The the biomechanical Keepers are tall, grey beings of flesh, metal and plastic who being unable to create more of their own kind, love their midwifed children unconditionally. Whether or not you, you now have their power to help life find a way even in conditions as bleak as the Fallen Realms. You know how to construct and manage the grisly Birth Chambers: Vaults with containers of nutritional solution, cryotubes and electric fields where DNA can be interwoven with new genetic material, and protected from the cloying oblivion of Achlys that emanates from below-and you know the techniques that can be used to recreate nearly any denizen of the Fallen Realms. With further study, you might be able to find a more humane alternative to the traditional, grisly means of reproduction left to those the Children of the Underworld must resort to: Lobotomizing humans and hooking them up to the Chambers' biomechanical machines, to harvest their reproductive material.

As well as being biologically immortal if you were not already, your own body has a unique adaption to support the creation of children somehow. Perhaps like the Keepers, you possess a womb that can carry children safely to term who as foetuses were created in the Birth Chambers. Perhaps you simply produce some form of secretion that greatly improves the chances of fertility. Either way, whether they know it or not you're the best chance for a lot of desperate beings' survival on the edge of nothingness.

Chained In Your Skin (400 CP): Few mourned the tyrants of the Metropolis upon their fall, for it was their way to not just bring civilisations to their knees but cruelly reshape their bodies, minds and souls with complex machines to be better servants. You now have an elaborate series of cybernetic attachments similar to a Tekron, without sacrificing any of your sapience. Your components can manifest practically any gear a modern society could provide-grenades, a class cutter, a knock-out drug-on short notice, though frequent use of disposables risks depleting you until you've rested and replenished yourself.

The attachments may seem grotesque and cover more than half your body, but they protect you from smoke, poisons, gases and pain equally well while letting you connect to computers and machines like an extension of yourself. You also have the power to mystically merge with mechanism, either adding them to your body or fusing with them temporarily, enough that you could control the electricity in them directly. More creative forms of this control may let you modify and improve yourself beyond the nonsentient caretakers of the Metropolis.

As a sidenote should you be a being like an Azghoul, this technopathic affinity will let you prevent your own parasitic cybernetics from controlling you.

Monument of Sins (600 CP): There are few things more powerful or disturbing than a cairath, an order of creature which you now share the powers of. You are a bloated amalgamation of hundreds of living beings anywhere between mortal humans to Children of the Underworld in stature, their limbs and screaming faces amorphously shifting in accord to your will. Upon contact with living beings you may absorb them into your mass, and though they scream and plea for escape for many days from the moment you have subsumed their flesh you can mould it like thick, sticky mud.

You are strong enough to bore tunnels through solid earth and harm others by puking your bodily fluids. Worse, you radiate an aura of madness that can drive others into maddened worshippers of your greatness. After absorbing thousands of living beings you may ascend into a Gransangthir: A massive leech-like being of rancid fat, mould and rotting flesh. At this point you are capable of influencing entire populations with dreams and visions to direct them nearer to you where you may more directly feed, and create servants with terrifying biological weapons from those sacrificed to you.

A Plea To Nobody (600 CP): Nobody will help the Children of the Underworld without some recompense. They are alone and unloved in a pitiless cosmos even more vicious to them than humanity. In the end, when the Illusion breaks perhaps the only thing they can do is what you are adept at: Grovel, and beg for leniency. When you plead for forgiveness, when you bow your head in the dirt and confess you are dust higher beings of all kinds are moved to spare you. Even truly dire wrongs can be forgiven, or utterly sadistic masters deem you an irrelevance, not worth killing or in a state of fitting punishment already. For more humane foes, simply bending the kneel and conceding their supremacy may be enough to make them relent on their aggression towards you-with a great tendency to exile you with some dignity to give you a modicum of dignity and privilege if you beg for a new chance to prove your loyalties. If you were part of a race considered the rightful chattel of the gods you once served, a particularly pitiful bout of hysterical sobbing and genuflection could move them to magnanimously granting your freedom.

Gaoler

Fallen Splendour (100 CP): To be an angel is to need something to believe in, which spelt disaster for those left broken and confused when the Demiurge's burning presence disappeared from them. Yet you needn't fear such ravages. There is a celestial beauty about you, one that speaks of radiant divinity. Your form, if human, has a striking, fierce beauty worthy of being a god's attendant, and you have the bearing and dulcet tones of a saint. Even any inhuman features you have like wing-mounted eyes have a certain grace to them.

But more importantly, however many injuries you sustain from harm physical, mental and metaphysical your physical form will not fail on its own-only to sustained violence or environmental phenomena as long as it's mostly intact. Even angels with bone-deep wounds, bullet holes riddling their chest, a hole punched through their head or gaping wounds left on their chest by removed armour can prove ferocious fighters; it may still hurt excruciatingly and you are merely heavily resistant to death by infection, not truly immune, but unlike many angels you can withstand the void left by the Demiurge without alcohol or intense nostalgia.

This also comes with an archaic, golden halo made of many tines of light radiating from behind your head within a pale golden disc around your head. You may make this halo appear and disappear as you please.

I Serve To Live (100 CP): Tied more deeply to their physical bodies than humans, when lictors die they are eternally extinguished despite their essential immortality. It is for this reason many of them obey their masters out of craven fear, though for you this approach works out quite well. You know how to compliment your boss to get ahead on the corporate ladder, or the spiritual one. You know how to cover your ass for assignments of all sorts of scopes. More importantly you have an exceptional knack for buying off people, destroying careers, managing henchmen and all the other nitty-gritty tasks of running a global conspiracy. Your skills apply equally well to a mundane boardroom and a conspiracy of malignant gnostic beings. You might not be the most competent member of the Illuminati, but you sure as hell know how to sell yourself as the most dependable one.

The Binding of Mankind (200 CP): The lictors favour, subtle, underhanded techniques-and none are subtler than directly manipulating the Illusion itself. You have the innate power to enforce masquerades and illusions of all kinds with your mere will. While with this alone you cannot make just anything disappear from sight, invisibility spells become harder to pierce and may extend to other senses while existing mystic effects that diver attention become more all-encompassing and powerful. All this from a being of human stature; with more power a dragon could lay waste to a city hall and you could make the crowds believe it was just a fierce storm.

Smite the Wicked (200 CP): Though Heaven is in ruins, the zeal that once lit it's halls burns on in you. Choose a simple principle you are divinely empowered by-such as rulership, guardianship, piety or vengeance. At will a powerful, arcane weapon of archaic make like a sword springs into your open palm. It is unnaturally

fast, swift and sharp in your hands-such that you could easily use it to swipe away both mundane melee attacks from all directions and bullets alike, and carve through a room of people swiftly. But when you strike others opposed to your principle in some way with this weapon a mark springs up on them; this may represent one of the Archons if you serve one of them, and otherwise is simply a symbol associated with you somehow. Either way, the mark inflicts unnatural, inexplicable weakness to the victim and you may use it to sense them over any distance. Finally, when you enact or defend your principle an aura of holy terror emanates from you-making you glorious yet horrifying in the eyes of your foes, no matter how badly you were injured beforehand. Suffer not the infidel, the heretic and the sinner no matter how far you have fallen.

Beyond This Petty Illusion (400 CP): The institutions and religious trappings pervading human society are more than smoke and mirrors-they are the substance of the Archons themselves spun into abstract mechanisms of control and restraint. Having internalised this principle, when you accrue political and social standing in an establishment the authority you exert feeds back a measure of supernatural power that empowers your own efforts. Spells last longer and hit harder, supernaturally gifted strength strikes harder and rituals of all kinds are easier and quicker to pull off as long as you perform them somewhere where you regularly exert temporal authority of some kind. While the effects are fairly low key, even a mortal with a middle manager position might be able to curse his hated boss or freely fly about his office.

Herald Be Thy Name (400 CP): There must be something quite special about you, because unique among the Archons' and Death Angels' minions alike you've stood out as something more than another warm body to be thrown into the meatgrinder in an ongoing cold war over who gets to be top dog before humanity breaks lose. Without even doing more than your job you'll find that your hierarchial superiors, supernatural or mundane, have a great deal of respect for your services as an employee. You reap richer rewards than your colleagues, are given priority for assignments of your choice and can leverage your favouritism for indiscretions and support normally unthinkable to ask. It would take a very notable failure to get so much as a stern reprimand from your superiors-and best of all, if you do an even adequate job this trust makes you something of a blindspot in your superiors' eyes should you consider a betrayal. Not even an Archon would suspect a truly competent and publicly supportive servant of weaving a web of intrigue actually intended to harm them.

Incarnate Oubliette (600 CP): The Citadels of the Archons in Metropolis are the nodes of their power, a kind of broadcast for the system of principles they form the Illusion out of and what can be considered each Archon's true form all at once. You're no Archon but something about you has allowed you to apply a similar principle. When you build (or supervise the construction of closely) a large structure imbued with iconography and symbolic representations of yourself, it becomes a divine symbol of your power and influence-amplifying it like a radio signal to subtly but constantly bend reality in your image. Praise and submission to your person nourish you better than finest meat and trick, bolstering your supernatural powers beyond mortal measure. Within your influence is much more direct, such that you could bend space and time into all manner of non-euclidean

structures with your will alone-or weaving complex rituals at will, and creating powerful divine defences only partially comprehensible by mortal minds.

At the most basic level it functions as a kind of subliminal indoctrination, reweaving thoughts and tilting senses towards submission to you. But given time those behavioural compunctions become as immutable as any law of nature, and can even interfere with abilities or forces that contradict the principles they express. While such structures are far from the Illusion-defining Citadels in power they could still cover many miles in broadly stated telepathic commands, manipulate the weather and create simple structures serving your purposes overnight. Furthermore, within the building's chambers you share the Archons' dirty little secrets: The oubliettes of oblivion through which you can devour souls. Those deeply bound by their loyalty to you may have their souls banished to these rooms, where in diving into their own memories to escape the void they unwittingly feed you a steady trickle of the divine power that strengthens the Archons as their experiences rise to the forefront and are consumed by you. Should you be merciful though, at will you may designate another destination in your pseudo-Citadels for them to arrive at instead, or redirect them to another afterlife you have sway over-or simply cancel the binding altogether.

Points of Authority (600 CP): This is quite fortunate indeed! One of the Archons has found something so favourable in you, that they've thrown the full support of their principle behind your efforts-though likely for their own inscrutable goals. This principle will constantly assist you, though mostly in subtle and low key ways-yet on scales that would make economic crises or the flapping of a butterfly's wings before a storm look like small potatoes. Expect all manner of fortuitous twists, circumstantial assistance and the occasional divine miracle to assist all your efforts when you somehow operate in the scope of the principle's influence-though when you will it, the principle can abate if you wish to do something on your own effort. Supernatural effects somehow manipulating or incorporating these principles are also greatly strengthened, as if the Archon was lending you some of its power; effects that seal or restrict the powers of others are always supported by this. In future worlds the benefits of each principle bought here will follow you, though no longer will the guiding wills of the Archons promote their own agendas as they do in this world. Choose from Hierarchy, Submission, Community, Safety, Law, Allure, Victory, Honor and Avarice. Although Malkuth being a bit cheeky, she offers both Conformity and Awakening in one purchase-and can empower your abilities to liberate others as well.

Torturer:

Bad, Bad Man (100 CP): You were born in bloodshed, and baptised in the tears of the righteous damned. Like any inhabitant of Inferno you are well acquainted with Astaroth's most sacred sacraments: Torture, and pain. You know just about every means to torture a human being, and have the muscle memory and attitude to pull it off from aplomb. Few horrors from the mundane world can phase you, for your mind is inured to all the perversities and brutal pitilessness of Inferno. The threat of mundane violence is simply laughable to you. In Hell, you practically say good morning with a baseball bat to the face.

The Taste of Pain (100 CP): Ah, but what's the point of not being able to take what you dish out? Like the most depraved and perversely devout of Inferno's religious orders you have something beyond resistance to pain-an affinity for it, somewhere between carnal ecstasy and genuine religious rapture. Each lash excites more than it punishes, each broken bone is a melody you can appreciate and perhaps for this reason you are very, very hard to kill with blood loss or internal injury alone. Furthermore you need no longer fear death by blood loss, for it is good in Astaroth's eyes that blood flow from wounds as long as it may. This comes with a supernatural wisdom of how best to harm, to maim, to tear apart and excruciate any living thing you get your hands on.

Choir of the Damned (200 CP): Each flayed child, each cannibalism and impalement is more than a mere act of gratification in Inferno. It is nothing short of a true act of worship, from which it's residents derive succulent nourishment. When you commit similar, brutally violent atrocities you're particularly sensitive to the experiences and memories that the higher powers of Inferno value so much. Thoughts, sensations, desires and knowledge can literally be beaten out of your victims, your keen senses parsing them more adeptly than even most creatures of Inferno. More importantly, so long as suffering is inflicted by your own hands your mystical power and influence is steadily fed by a trickle of that power even without the ritual trappings of Inferno's clergy. While miniscule, in the heat of battle or in a slaughterhouse you could swiftly gather enough power to make your peers think twice about challenging you.

Toxic Intimacy (200 CP): One may always advance in Inferno's hierarchy, with displays of utter ruthlessness being particularly rewarded. It's such a shame few seem to understand the beauty of such an absolute meritocracy, which you might just change with the corruption hanging on each word you speak. Your lies, deceptions and even gestures taint those with their baser instincts when you wish, supernaturally tempting them to sin and making the thrill of pulling the trigger or skimming a little off the take all that bit more enriching. It would be unwise to simply praise the beauty of boiling your grandmother in oils to all but the most depraved of souls, but a long conversation with you could make brutal revenge a distinct possibility if carefully spoken around. So subtle is this corruption that even many mortal enlightened to the forces around them would sense no miasma of demonic taint around you-and sooner suspect something they ate or drank for the fell moods you can spread.

Bleeding Meat (400 CP): Inferno has a predilection to obscene augmentation, of which you're something of an artist. When you physical torture others, a dark magic born from your victims' agony and degradation permits you to add normally impossible mechanical augmentations to their bodies. While this comes with great experience in the nightmarish procedures used to create razides or keep men alive well past the point they should have expired, your ability to create suitable prosthetics is dwarfed by your ability to brute force those to work for victims mutilated under hand and knife. It is common for Hell to make towering juggernauts with armour welded to their skin and the mystic arts at their fingertips out of its victims, and with your depraved ingenuity there is little doubt that you could extend the process to work on other supernatural beings like lictors-or even other nepharites, if you have the ruthlessness to turn on your own kind.

Faustian Pacts, At Bargain Prices! (400 CP): Any powerful being like a nepharite or angel can seal pacts with mortals. Whether to grant them wealth, temporal power or even mystical abilities such acts are fraught with great risks for what few rewards are available-though it seems you personally benefit quite well from both ends. When you bargain with malign forces of all kinds, the reeking corruption in your soul compels them to offer far more favourable terms to you than they would normally permit-as if intoxicated by the dire nature of what you are. Instead of sacrificing a virgin, you might simply smack up a stranger for a while-and somehow, even if the pact should require such a sacrifice it works anyway with the lower price.

On the other hand when you offer such pacts to others, that same reek makes others more willing to offer up more for you. Actions normally considered too degrading or costly become compulsively plausible, and once the pact is sealed a mark of some kind automatically appears on the customer that compels servitude should the payment arrive too late for your liking. Through it, any punishment you could possibly levy in person could be exacted on them remotely-whether an all too literal pound of flesh, the severance of one of their meaningful relationships or even an affliction of the psyche.

The Nightmare That Never Ends (600 CP): Astaroth's consciousness is too expansive for the mortal mind to fathom, an endless abyss of darkness. But his spirit sometimes manifests in physical form, appearing as Incarnates: Manifestations of his various drives collocating throughout the world. You have taken a great step towards understanding what it means to be such an entity, for you too can create multiple forms of yourself-each of which with seemingly independent judgement, reasoning and drives but subconsciously compelled to promote and enact goals you would find pleasing. None can be more powerful and complex than you are overall, but it is possible to reduce traits-even abstract or intangible ones-to greatly amplify others.

By completely diminishing your capacity for reason, you could transform yourself into a hulking beast of a man. By stripping yourself of human form to become a revolver, you could manifest as a cursed weapon of great power who can assume direct control of wielders and compel them to seek it out. And by reducing yourself to a desiccated head, you could speak prophecies and compelling lies. It is even possible to take an abstract form such as a music video with a basic drive for

self-propagation-and the capacity to eventually trick others into arriving at a dimension you control somehow. And while creating such Incarnates of yourself is tiring, even a mortal man could manage four without collapsing from exhaustion. In time there may be as many aspects of you as there are forms of suffering.

Hellbound Homecoming (600 CP): There are things that can scar even the dark twin of God. There are revelations that could move even him to desperation. As Astaroth now feels a great urgency to wrest control of Elysium after whatever he discovered, you are endowed with a transcendental fate to wrest away control of the world on a metaphysical level-as long as you allow yourself to be guided by one of the Death Angels' principles, though even they are not wholly sovereign from your ambitions. Choose one principle to be bound by: Power (in the sense of ambition), Abuse, Exclusion, Fear, Torment, Compulsion (expressed as the darker side of artistic inspiration), Conflict, Vengeance, Desire and Discord. Your efforts are bolstered by circumstances, windfalls of fortune and twists of fate brought about by the pursuit of your chosen principle.

New ways to damn and imprison the human soul will reveal themselves to you in dreams, while artifacts of great danger become perfectly safe to wield in your hands so long as they meaningfully contribute to your victory. Great divine citadels have reliably convenient cracks you can sneak through, while the roles of great spirits can be supplanted if you can produce beings of similar power. This never weakens any divine or otherwise cosmic in scope beings who stand in your way in direct power, but even pious angels could be given a shade of doubt in their faith-and if an artifact existed that could defeat a certain deity, provenance would find you locating it swiftly. It is as if Astaroth himself guides your hand-though do remember, that even with the Demiurge gone and the Archons having lost three of their number Astaroth's victory is far from decided, and that there are good reasons why he wishes to secure dominion before mankind can fully awaken-as well as that for all his power, there are beings beyond all hope of even his control.

Wild Thing

Pulse of Vitality (100 CP): Gaia's first and foremost decree is to live. To breathe. Everything that strives must do so to its utmost. To that end you have an extraordinary regenerative factor, such that you could fulfil all your nutritional needs by devouring chunks of your own flesh or survive the void of space for entire minutes with no long term effect. Even broken bones can mend by themselves over the course of days without fear of dying from complications as long as you have good access to shelter, although often by contorting into shapes modern science would find inexplicable. And when you eat the flesh, bone and blood of others your regeneration spurs itself on even faster-even recuperating a small amount of your mystical energy reserves.

Malignant Musk (100 CP): Gaia's ways are the old ways, the ways of barbaric instinct and repressed animality-in which she makes her divinity known. A reek of pheromones pours from you, and you have such a connection to the primitive impulses that define Gaia's realm. Sentient beings of all kinds find it difficult to concentrate on all but their basest instincts when you induce the musk from you, even slowly shedding the principles of the Archons. Most mortals rapidly succumb to an experience that tests their sanity, while even supernatural beings may swoon as if mildly drunk. All your bodily fluids contain these pheromones in much more concentrated doses and take on strange shades or consistencies, are produced in almost inexhaustible, spectacular quantities and have the effect of enforcing your dominance on other lifeforms. Marking your territory on others may be appalling to modern sensibilities, but it's undeniably effective at breaking the wills of those wrestled into submission already.

Crack The Pavement (200 CP): The animal in you looks upon the works of man, and finds it abhorrent. You have a sixth sense for the faults in all artificial constructs, and when you lash out of them in anger they crack far more easily than they should by any right. The stomping of a man's feet could leave marks in the pavement that leave it shattered and unstable. The ripping of wires causes systematic collapses in other parts of a building, as if cursed by some windfall of misfortune. The more force you can bring to bear at once the more easily civilisation shreds apart in your fists. Even supernaturally examples of artifice are merely resistance to your efforts, not immune.

Jungle Sanctum (200 CP): You've gained knowledge of cruder, more primal rites than those used by mortal magicians to empower yourself with Gaia's cosmic aspects. In the depths of the wild, through intense meditation or altered states of consciousness you can summon forth some of Gaia's influence to perform astral projection. Even if you were normally sealed by some great power like the Archons, you could send your spirit roaming freely through the forests-even fly through the sky and venture into other worlds. Last but not least, the deep wilderness is always considered a magical sanctum for all mystic effects at your beckoning, supporting your spellcraft as well as any magician's sanctum. With great communion with the natural world, you may even use particular plants, rocks and other unique natural resources to replace the reagents in certain rituals after coming to an understanding of their mystic significance.

Call of the Wild (400 CP): What's worse than a great, stalking beast that science can't explain? Several. A connection has been made between you and Gaia, allowing you to summon the beasts from her domain to your side with an effort of will. A mortal man could manage a force akin to a pack of venomous hounds with quilled hides, a sudden outgrowth of carnivorous plants large enough to swallow a man in a gulf or a single great carnivore the size of an elephant-and as you grow in strength, your connection will permit you to call more and more such creatures, as well as even more powerful beings. Furthermore at will your touch spreads plants, moss or some other growth that rapidly takes root in all artificial technology you have damaged to decompose it further. Though you lack fine control over them, the wild magic that binds these creatures inflicts a powerful instinct which makes them see you as a dominant pack leader-and you may banish them at will. Grow great enough, and even the Enwildened Gods might heed your call.

Life Finds A Way (400 CP): The urge to reproduce is the beating heart of Gaia's realm, and to the horror of all who would deny your advances you're one of her most successful experiments when it comes to evolution. You see, you have some sort of means of reproduction so virulent, rapid and violent that it not only lets you create young of some sort in minutes at most and potentially seconds but also doubles as a devastating weapon should you wish. Unlike mortal creatures, when you wield it in love or battle the heady musk it sends you into only makes you more energised, not less, to the extent you could live off sex and in fact actively feel better, faster, stronger as well as harder-the grip of fecund ecstasy pushing you farther beyond even what hysterical strength would allow and repairing all damage to you as your salacious appetite intensifies.

Perhaps instead of standard male genitals, an obscene nest of anaconda-sized extendable pseudopodia strong enough to burrow swiftly through concrete and bend steel apart restrains partners, squeezes through even the smallest of orifices and fills them with a sticky mash that induces an uncontrollable heat as well as mutation into a form representing a stronger, more compliant mate in your eyes. Perhaps you are parthenogenic, and the children from your womb rapidly grow into forms similar to you in scale and form but shaped by Gaia's evolutionary templates that fight loyally for their hive queen-while those foolish enough to think you need a partner are torn apart by the powerful jaws in your womb. Perhaps you can excrete a swarm of symbiote worms that infest other lifeforms, compel them into self-destructive behaviour and turn them into seedbeds for amalgamations of other vermin in your image. Whatever your means of reproduction, even those beings of true reality like nepharites and lictors should be wary about a roll in the hay with you.

Systems of a Breakdown (600 CP): In a daring feat of suicidal fearlessness, you tried to make contact with Gaia's greater mind. She responded. This is the result. By touch, and song, and the expulsion of your fluids, your will can breathe life into any substance, phenomena or material around you-and give it all the evolutionary viciousness that Gaia employs. Each new, strange lifeform constantly adapts in real time-though if given a goal may direct it's growth to one end or another. Laptops can transform into hissing, electricity-breathing cat-like horrors. Streets can crawl about like worms, while amorphous creatures of dirt and stone could rip themselves free of the Earth. All such beings inevitably change towards more

organic, or at least crude and primitive forms despite having exceptional viability as organisms fit to survive the most extreme of conditions. Living beings may, at your will, simply becoming enhanced and subordinate to your wishes or burst apart as their individual components are animated-tumours ripping free of their flesh, intestines transfiguring into amphibious electric eels and so on; even plants and fungi could be animated enough to hunt animals for sustenance, or grow large and venomous enough to threaten them. It will take more time and effort of course, to animate buildings and highways or larger constructs or shape life in more precise ways but even now you could raise a thriving ecosystem from a wasteland for a mile, out of the things in it. Even wind could grow talons, or water learn to hunger. The ecosystems you create in this manner recognise you as their progenitor, and though they will chaotically compete against each other to improve themselves would move with all the unerring coordination and instinctive urgency of a shoal of fish to protect you or follow other simple commands.

Apex of Evolution (600 CP): There are places sacred to Gaia in her depths. It would be suicide to rest in one. It would be madness to eat anything there. You did that, and instead of being destroyed you were…blessed. Your body warps and evolves at all times, growing and adapting and improving and roiling to be a divinely touched predator-unless you direct it to honing certain courses of development. Every cell, neuron and blood vessel in your body fights every bone and organ to maximise resources your wild-touched soul seems to generate ab initio for your continuous transformation-your needs and desires driven the calamitous adaptation that Gaia represents, though with your most primal ones taking precedence-and with enough time or divine power, potentially all aspects of your body could make the mystic artifacts of this world look like cheap trinkets. No force is truly beyond you capacity to adapt to, or even harness, for your soul grows as swiftly as your body and augments it-so much soul that it could mutate to wield the magics of Passion better than any mortal, given enough intent or exposure to such magic.

Go for a swim for an hour, and become a sea serpent with maws and venomous spines capable of goring a whale from any direction. Cast yourself off a cliff, and become something akin to a feathery, taloned starfish in moments-capable of lightning-quick strikes with your arms and falcon-like dives. Hunt prey between multiple worlds, and your soul could divide like an amoeba to chase them via astral projection. Exposing yourself to radiation long enough may give you the power to emit it, withstanding torture from a nepharite could endow you with demonic horns and talons of your own, and even if an Incarnate of an Archon attempted to personally restrict you some runic emblem on your hide could let you thrash free of its principles-then devour and digest their abstract qualia. Such is your control over your adaptations that at any time you could resume a human form-though even then your body would continue to hone itself beyond mortal frailty, rapidly regenerating any vital organ.

Items

Items do not have discounts, except where specified. Prisoners gain a 600 CP stipend for them.

The DVD Disc of Hell (50 CP): Good god, what black magic made this? What you have here is an unmarked DVD disc and a TV set as well as a remote. When used to record any show, movie or other video on it the DVD can replay the whole thing but derailed by a sadistic scene of mass rape. Men, women, children, anthropomorphic animals, supervillains and weather reporters-nobody's safe from the menacing men and women in demonic costumes' predations (although for a series with sufficiently powerful characters, this can result in some entertaining battles or even the tables being turned; the demons are only as powerful as a few dozen nepharites and razides, and whatever magic lets them come forth seems to make them wholly tangible to the characters). When you watch it for more than a few minutes, you'll find yourself sucked into the movie as an observer around the edge of the room. Truly quite unspeakable but-there are two concessions.

First of all, while in the TV the remote is never far from you-even appearing in your hand out of thin air if destroyed elsewhere-and you can leave at any time by turning the movie off. Secondly, despite clearly being demonic creatures of the Inferno inclined to perversions that would make the Marquis de Sade blush the demons defer to you as a sort of director. They'll die rather than fight your battles or offer you actually sensible advice, but they'll reluctantly take direction from you on how they actually interact with the story despite their rapacious inclinations. Of course, if you'd rather just join in they'd eagerly welcome you as a fellow participant.

Oh, and whenever you use up a DVD a new one shows up with the same properties somewhere near the TV.

Map of Mundus (50 CP): To attempt to plot a sensible, reliable course through the realms beyond Illusion is often a lost cause for any being frail enough to require such directions. But in case you like reaching beyond your grasp, here's a piece of parchment somehow enchanted to mark out all landmarks, roads and destinations within a mile of you in old fashioned but very detailed ink-redrawing itself as you travel. It won't show all the dangers on your way or describe buildings beyond two to three words, but at least you'll know if the path-and some idea of where you are and where you're going in realms as chaotic as Elysium.

The Life You Never Lived (100/200 CP): You have a place in society, don't you? Not everyone does. For 100 CP you may have social security, job stability and a good three-story house in a decent neighbourhood. Home, job, address-that sort of thing, all of which will follow you in your adventures.

But for 200 CP you're living in something like a penthouse with a swimming pool and a private gym. Maybe it's how you eke out an existence in Elysium. Maybe it's a cover for your schemes in the world. Whatever it is, it's a foothold in the Illusion mostly free from the depredations from true reality. For now, at least.

Network of Contacts (100 CP each): When you can't trust anyone, it's wise to keep listen to everyone. And here you can purchase some connections in good standing with a fairly educated or influential but relatively private group-none with any real understanding of true reality, but all of which can report on trends in it or pull some mundane strings. You could be a moderator on a darknet dedicated to reporting supernatural occurrences. Or a dinner friend of some quite well to do high society types. And in future worlds you'll have a similar selection of acquaintances to keep you in the loop as well.

Hasselblad SWA-2 (100 CP): A small black box with a lens on the front, at first this seems like any old unique camera model from the 50s that never got continued. But you'll soon find that after developing photos taken with it, images are recorded with true reality recorded instead of the Illusion. Supernatural glamours or mental blocks disappear, and shapeshifting entities have their façade imposed like a faint afterimage on their true form. Even cosmic horrors whose form is incomprehensible to mortal minds can be partially depicted if one is sneaking through a city for whatever reason. Buyer be warned: The Illusion's prison guards are actively trying to locate and destroyed devices like these.

Lock and Load (200/300 CP): Shortly after your first encounter with a lictor or demonic beast you'll probably decide you need guns. Lots of guns. This warehouse full of firearms and ammo is far better than a teddy bear at making you feel safe in your own home. Everything from magnum handguns, to submachine guns, to assault rifles and combat shotguns can be found here for 200 CP, and a trustworthy dealer is always around to resupply anything damaged or used up very quickly and at a steal. For an extra 100 CP this comes with explosives, body armor, knockout gas/drugs, torches, silencers, flashbangs, first aid kits, stun guns, crowbars and all manner of other useful items for planning an assault of some kind.

Adler Tippa S (200 CP): The typewriter is black. The brand is German. It can collapse into the size of a briefcase with a carrying handle, but more importantly the typewriter bends space and time. Simply write the name of any addressee you know to have lived at any point of human history, and you can send messages back through time-where they are received as night time visions with an intuitive sense of being true communication to the recipient-along with knowledge of how a response can be returned. Any written replies are transcribed by the typewriter automatically as long as it's given a sheet of paper, moving itself to record what those in the past think about your "predictions" or questions.

Artifact of a Higher Power (200/400 CP each): Well, well. Someone's been making friends in low places. What you have here is some sort of ancient artifact, light as aluminium and indestructible by human weapons. Some sort of configuration procedure is built into it; it might be an archaic set of armor you must don, or a flagon that must be filled with wine, or a puzzle made of 999 hexagonal stone tiles that must be solved. Either way, when the artifact's conditions are met you may summon some sort of powerful entity to make a dark pact with-and some enchantment on it makes the being much more reasonable and placated than the overwhelming danger such bargains usually entail. Still, be wary that unless you slay your "benefactor", break the pact by some external means or can cheat death itself even the smallest favour entails a cost that must be paid in some manner.

For 200 CP the entity you're in contact with is akin to a lictor, nepharite or angel with exceptional proficiency in the mystic arts of their kind. Such beings can still grant a wide slew of requests with their powers; they are widely knowledgeable in the going-ons of true reality, can provide guidance in other dimensions, supply minions, knowledge or even direct interference against an enemy and open portals to other dimensions among other things.

For 400 CP on the other hand, you are put in contact with an entity on the level of an Archon or Death Angel's Incarnation. Such beings can provide far superior services, but often demand correspondingly higher services or sacrifices as a result. The prices exacted by such entities generally fall in two categories: Human sacrifice, and services that aim to further some greater goal or principle of theirs.

And yes, you can buy multiple ways to damn your soul and endanger everyone around you with.

A Distant Vortex (600 CP, discount Drop-In): A majestic whirlpool of chaotic images, emotions and impressions bares itself to you in your dreams, whorls of transient human spirit intermingling with chaotic images, emotions and impressions. At least, it does when you perform the simple rite before slumber that permits you egress to this notional realm. This is the Vortex: The nucleus where mankind's collective unconsciousness comingles the souls of all humanity, and a font of endless wisdom and insight. It is a place of great power, in which higher dimensions can be more easily perceived and restrictions such as the Demiurge's shackles can be better unlocked. Knowledge from previous existences rewind and flicker here, and in times past new life was kindled into forlorn beings yearning for attention-but to come too close to the Vortex is to risk being torn asunder, extinguished or transformed into an insane dream creature by humanity's burgeoning power. Still, from the ruin of a dream-world bound to your imagination you can safely observe the Vortex from there is much you could learn, and master over time. Both powerful supernatural beings and masters of the Lore of Dreams could gain much from the lost knowledge of dreams.

In this world you merely have a safe vantage point to learn amidst the bickering of the Dream Princes and the dangerous beings spawned by humanity in its divine state. But in future worlds a mere spark of the Vortex will follow you containing all that you have learned and dreamed without the danger of Dream Princes or insane beings to harm you. Instead, the Vortex-sherd will gather strength from the dreams of sentient lifeforms in other worlds-through which you can safely parse their knowledge, spirit and innermost expressions of their hopes and dreams.

A Taste of Metropolis (600 CP, discount Prisoner): Atop 7,777 hills rests humanity's primordial home: Dead, empty and quiet. From horizon to horizon, a shadowy sprawl of dark urban wonders winds out in an endless maze of architectural wonders-equal parts decadent villas and grand temples, as well as often built on grander scales than mortal men were made for. The sun never rises to clear it's blue-grey, dusky light and the black stone and metal of this realm carries with it a great weight that lies beyond time itself. It is the archetype of all urban development that humanity has tried to recreate over millennia within the illusion imperfectly, and much of it adheres to no physics seen in the Illusion: Shadows

move by themselves while feeling deep and cold to the touch, falling from tall buildings can see gravity and inertia lose their hold on a traveller midway through the fall to land safely and in some parts buildings seem built upside-down towards a sky below them. And whether you are an usurper, interloper or reclaimer it seems that a great section of Metropolis has been apportioned off into its own plane of true reality under your sole sovereignty. A doorway in your Warehouse opens up to a mere slice of Metropolis. A plane of true reality with uncertain exterior boundaries approaching those of several among Earth's largest cities, but one unquestionable yours and yours alone.

Every earthly luxury and many forgotten from human memory can be found somewhere within this segment of the Metropolis-though be warned, many entertainments made for gods may prove too extreme for the mortal mind to bear. Several species of skilled servants have been maintaining everything in top condition and fending off what dangers were not so powerful as to overlook this plane entirely and through some mix of fear and broken, conditioned loyalty heed your wait on your every word-the warriors among them on par with the likes of Azghouls while the entertainers are as beautiful as Azadaevae or the Ephoria before their beauty rotted. Certain specialists may resemble the biomechanical Curatorids who measured human slaves, the slumbering Magistrates and the mechanical Constructors.

The city itself has a profound, deep influence on visitors-though the security of your ownership ensures you will never be changed in ways you would dislike. In time you may learn to exploit its existence outside time and space to use this plane as a shortcut to other locations and eras in lower order realities such as those resembling the Illusion, but the true prize lies in the infrequent but easily spotted temples scattered throughout your city. Each contains an incarcerated god laid low by mankind and sealed away so thoroughly into the city, that they cannot be freed unless another were to liberate them from their sealed vaults or gift new life to the tombs in which their bodies ache with desire. To bargain with such beings is fraught with risk despite the ravages to their minds and bodies, but they would surely be grateful to any who saved them from such agony-or perhaps, deeply cowed by whoever laid them there. And whether or not this is a sinister hint at why they were bound to begin with, such beings tend to be of a form, nature and endowed with powers you would find desirable.

A Temple and a Labyrinth (600 CP, discount Exile): You wanted security? Prosperity for your people? Alas, the cosmos is not kind and the only thing the Children of the Underworld can reliably gather in quantities is nothing. Literally. Here and in future worlds will you gain ownership of a black temple of iron, rock and steel with the true purpose of being a seal against nothingness. No light can be lit nor any flame burn in the oblivion that wafts up even into this structure, and so distorted are the laws of physics that even gravity and acoustics can become unreliable. Pass the temple into the labyrinth below, and witness time and space itself begin to dissolve. Everything is slowly reduced to a grey, depleted mass possessing neither color nor shape, shifting in spiral movements as it slowly pours into the sinkhole at the bottom of the universe. Memories fade. Reality is quietly torn and shredded. Long before you discover what waits below, if you come without protection you risk losing more than your life.

Why would anyone want this desolation? Perhaps because as destruction in its purest form, all powers of death and the void surge in strength when performed within it, drawing on the devastation that Achlys promises. Furthermore, it is at the heart of this place that She Who Waits Below can be contacted in dreams. Her forms are as numerous as they are unsettling: A glowing eye in an amorphous chaos, tender leaves floating on dark water, a fetus with its umbilical cord tight around its neck, a bloated female body reclining in the dark or other unsettling aberrations. In all forms, she calls for those with emptiness to come to her and works towards the cessation of all existence-though she is in no particular hurry. You are, you intuit from your nightmarish visions of her, something akin to a saint or high priest to her. Bring sacrifices down to the labyrinth below and you will be rewarded with power from the void. Like the Ones Without Names, who can discharge annihilating nothingness within themselves discharged as a black flood. Even as dark pacts go this relationship is fraught with risk-but then again the mere reputation of your working relationship could cow many in this world.

The Shard of Heaven (600 CP, discount Gaoler): This particular door in your Warehouse leads to somewhere inexplicably beautiful, yet undeniably within true reality. A pleasant, vaguely Mediterranean archipelago-like land with broken marble buildings and crumbling pale statues, a close examination will find that it's verdant greenery does not grow and there seems to be an ominous air hanging about this place. The great mists that veil it's outermost boundaries lead straight back to where you walked into them after a short stroll in their shadowy dampness Was it a kind of diorama the Demiurge built to mock the human conceptions of Heaven? Or a genuine refuge he constructed for humans he took pity on?

Angels of all kinds seem to flock to this place in uncertain, bedraggled droves-enough to make a small army. Their numbers vary, but when they dip below a certain amount sooner or later new ones come stumbling or flapping in from the mists, freshly disorientated and traumatised from their lords' absence or infighting. Curiously, whatever choir they used to be all seem to be of a form appealing to your desires-everything you would want from a loyal guardian, dignified herald or worshipful supplicant. Upon seeing you, all flock to you with the manic desperation of the faithful whose prayers have been answered. The Demiurge's last order, they claim, was to obey the word of the first being to visit here and sit upon their throne. Desperate for a purpose in life, they will practically beg for you to be that being-offering all aid to fly you onto that giant marble throne and back again if need be, so you can qualify by technicality. So anointed, they will serve you with equal zeal in other realities despite what wounds or burdens they suffer.

Oh right, the throne. The crumbling marble throne at the centre of the archipelago stands several miles high, and is guarded by four comparatively small angels who are each nonetheless the size of skyscrapers each stoically positioned in four cardinal directions. To most, it emanates a sense of profound lost. But oddly, though it has no other special powers once you sit on it those within sight of the throne are filled with a soothing, saintly contentment. Truly it has no other great gifts and isn't even particularly comfortable to sit on, but it can't be denied you look damn good on it despite any possible size difference.

The House That Hell Built (600 CP, discount Torturer): Priests of a sort to the Death Angels' divinities, the nepharites are widely feared for their ability to create what is known as a purgatory: An extradimensional personal realm custom made to inflict suffering on a specific individual, and often a nightmarish experience for anyone else caught up in it. Whether or not you are a nepharite, somehow you have become the locus of a particularly elaborate purgatory which you may deploy at will which is tied to you personally-though those already immersed in suffering such as the mentally disturbed are easier to suck into it. Within you have immediate awareness of any intrusion into this realm, and all demonic powers or those otherwise allied to Inferno's principles of suffering are empowered by the sweet, sweet torment that resonates in this personal dimension. You are also greatly empowered in all mystic arts that create similar pocket realms, especially those that similarly have an element of torment and punishment woven into them.

Though all powerful nepharites can create purgatories at will, your particular purgatory is especially elaborate, encompassing truly grand scale and having just about any mundane luxury you could desire-as well as all the mundane torture instruments you could ever want. Even a small army of other nepharites has gathered here, who seem to regard you as their lord and master with the obedience of those who know disobedience means excruciating agony beyond mortal imagination. Each is bound to this purgatory as if to Inferno, and are willing to try and catch your soul to painstakingly, agonisingly save you (or perhaps others, if marked by rituals) from all but the most dire deaths by reforming you here.

Gaia's Swamp (600 CP, discount Wild Thing): This particular doorway leads you to a true archipelago, girded by stormy seas which lead straight back to the island after a few dozen miles and an extraordinary sky lit with all manner of dynamic celestial phenomena. The moon shines forever over the onyx temple it leads into, where flowers hang heavy with nectar nearby. Fit for an Enwildened God's needs, the peace near this building is unique-for elsewhere, all the bounty and fury of Gaia rages around you. Howling abominations battle each other for precious flesh. Certain plants threaten to strangle any lifeform that stays still for too long. Dreamlike visions can see you physically floating through the sky, as galaxies whirl, sunder and reform above you. And all around you a pervasive, primal aura makes you in tune with nature: You feel strong, potent and powerful in this land, wounds fading swiftly-while your libido and will to dominate are stoked ever higher, easily making you drunk on the testosterone pounding in your veins.

The supernatural fauna and flora you could harvest here have applications as varied as their dangers; even the sentient tumours or parasitic worms that infest some animals can be harvested for serums that bestow unnatural regeneration for example, and treated correctly the water of some pools can bestow life as easily as it takes it. Perhaps most valuably, when you hunt (or at least, enforce your dominance on the environment) and reproduce with extraordinary success you may draw the attention of Gaia as her greater consciousness lumbers around in the worlds beyond. Though atavistic and unpredictable, the boons that could be solicited from her are the forces of nature elevated into the realm of divine will.

Companions

Discounted companions are 50% off, including 100 CP ones.

Huddle in the Illusion (50): Reconsider this. Do you truly wish for your friends to suffer in this bleak prison of a world? If you do, with each purchase here you may import companions into a background of their own and 600 CP to spend on whatever they wish, though they do not receive the stipend that Exiles do. May…someone have mercy on their souls. Alternatively you may create new ones if you wish.

Reach Out (50 CP): Against all odds, it seems you're determined to make a friend amidst the bloodshed and mistrust that pervades this world. If you're so determined to do so, each purchase here grants you an opportunity to take someone you've met here with you as a companion. You need not choose who at the start here; much can happen in a short while and so long as they express agreement you may take them with you on your journeys.

The Lampadephoros Sisters (200 CP, discounted Drop-In): You encounter them at a crossroads, on a moonlit night so bright it's almost blinding even through the fog they stroll out of. Each tall yet dreamlike in movement, pale as moonlight, with hair as dark as night. All move and even blink in unison, knowingly assessing the world in ways no mortal can. All consider that you will do something very inappropriate to them in a future moment over a philosophical disagreement, and instead of fretting over the inevitable have opted to look after you so you can finish your argument in the future. Though they bear an all-knowing, detached air to most things you get the feeling they're really enjoying that argument they keep talking about with you. It might explain why none of them seem to have any sense of personal space with you, or react to you touching them. Mostly to gently shove them out of the way when they show up unexpectedly in your doorway.

Trimorphe is the new moon, the mediation of new intentions and the symbol of new beginnings. Though lean and fit, something about her proportions makes you wonder if she's a mother. Her hair is so short yet precisely kept, it almost seems glued on. She never removes her matte-black glasses, and a shiny, formfitting black pleather bodysuit. She creates guns out of nowhere, and each bullet does the work of a great ritual. Gravity and momentum cling to her only lightly, but bring havoc on her enemies. She is the most blunt of the sisters, but also the most violently protective-scrutinising you with an almost insectile head tilt at all times. If pressed outside her sisters' company, she confesses she knows you're right about the argument-but looks away and blushes, when you ask how.

Propolos is the gibbous moon, the expansion preceding growth and the uncertainty that delays a significant decision. Though clearly a grown woman, the way puppy fat accretes on her body and her strangely naïve manner gives her a maiden's bearing. Her hair is wound into two neat braids. She wears an undersized, old fashioned dress with a white collar and striped stockings. The blade never far from her hand can cut as she wills-be it enchantment, contracts or space and time. Those she moves against seem to unwittingly stumbled into prepared traps that weren't there when they last looked. She is the most dour and sardonic of the

sisters, with a morbid fascination for all instruments of death. She seems convinced the argument will have a morbid end, though reacts with uncharacteristically childish glee when you are alone with her.

Trioditis is the crescent moon, the banishment of foul spirits and the closing of doors. And though she has her sisters' eerie beauty, her bearing is that of a mad crone. Her hair hangs lank and unruly over her mad eyes. Her black leather corset and the translucent lacey dark dress it's attached to are both elaborate, and lacey. The crooked wand she somehow always has stowed among them, is a focus for arcane energies. With it she can section off whole areas of Elysium into other realities, or make buildings shiver with a gesture. She laughs wickedly and frequently, alternating between the hysteria of a mad witch and the disdain of a dignified noblewoman sometimes even in the same sentence. While all the sisters are committed to your destiny, she in particular often whispers in your ear that she is the only one you can truly trust.

The sisters are a single deity with three selves acting in unison. While relatively weak individually (as deities go anyway; each is easily capable of bending cars like straws and dancing through rains of bullets unharmed on their own), when working in concert they are among the greatest beings in this world. From time to time, they are particularly eager to offer you dark pacts, mostly in the form of potions they brew. As dark pacts go, these are a veritable bargain compared to the punishments and sacrifices attached to many such pacts: Some herbs that can be found at a garden depot or in the woods, a little incense burned, some time spent with one or more of them. All demure anything too strenuous. You've already paid them in full, in the future after all.

The Goddess in the Red Dress (200 CP, discounted Drop-In): The sight of a statuesque blonde in tiny red dress with mirthful green eyes, a chest you could hide your wallet in and thick but shapely thighs making a beeline for you at a club hardly seems like the worst experience at first. Especially when she greets you as an old friend and all but grinds her pillowy ass on you. It's when she starts huskily whispering the atrocities you inflicted on each other (and several worlds) in a past life, and everything goes red as your blood curdles, that something may seem amiss to you. You may soon see her casually feed on the souls of passerbys while others fail to notice, make the sky rain fire in a bad mood and even punt lictors beyond the stratosphere for a perceived insult. And while she follows you everywhere with girlish excitement, to everything short of an Archon she displays an impulsive, megalomaniacal contempt. Worse, she eagerly awaits expects you to be the key for her to once again reap all the treasures of the cosmos.

The very fabric of reality ripples when she gets in a dangerous mood. With a thought she can warp rivers into gigantic serpents under her control or tear down the sky to use as a shawl. Her short-sighted impulsiveness would have gotten her bound or killed long ago if she also wasn't born as the ultimate lifeform of her world after a great conflux of passion subsumed all living things in it into the glorious conflagration that gave her life-and after playing through all avenues of pleasure in the ruins of her extinguished predecessors, became a goddess notorious enough to be compared with divine humanity. In the heyday of mankind she plundered worlds-and when gods would not drown in her glory, she subdued them

with sheer might. You were always the smart one, after all. It's why after you publicly chained then claimed her on her own throne in front of all her subjects you figured out how out to *really* humiliate her into your broken-in attack dog. The jewels piercing her divine flesh in rather intimate places worn proudly, to this day.

Or so she claims. Though scatterbrained, she seems very interested in bringing out your worst self.

"Pippi" (50 CP, free/optional Prisoner): Six foot tall with red hair dyed raven black in a short undercut and the natural pallor of those who seldom see the sun, despite your frequent correspondence few would believe the specifics of your online contact. A world-class computer hacker and casual kickboxer, the nickname your friend told you to call her by is more familiarity than she's shown anyone for a while. She is consumed by the investigative work she does for the police, and sometimes private interests. A corkboard of connections, folders and recordings point her towards a grand, overarching conspiracy involving human slavery she still hasn't fully uncovered yet; though she doesn't know their identities, the Death Angels would recognise their own networks from her discoveries. Discovering a natural talent for space-time magic has only emboldened her. Hostile, brusque and antisocial in public, you are one of the few she shows the more vulnerable side of herself stemming from a broken home and a vicious thug of a father. You *might* even convince her not to wear the spiked collar, boots and biker leathers to formal occasions.

Eleonore Zaaz (50 CP, free/optional Prisoner): As a first class graduate and the youngest executive in her company, Eleonore is seemingly everything "Pippi" is not (including having genuine long, dark hair). Her well-honed social graces and genuine managerial skill can't hide her cynical approach to life, though she is vindictively happy with her jet set lifestyle and the money it affords her leaving her few actual friends but many contacts and acquaintances from various incidents. Her carefully maintained, arched eyebrows and sharp tongue keep those under her sharply in line, while her outrageously trendy fashion sense and olive skin might be more appealing if she wasn't infamously ruthless in climbing the corporate hierarchy. Also unlike "Pippi", Eleonore has no sob story and the legacy of an uncle revealing her great skill for dream magic has provoked no wonder in the cosmos, just a conniving means for her to get ahead of the competition and put one over them from an angle they can't see coming. You met her on a good day, at her favourite bar, and she'll still make no bones at calling your ideas rubbish or talking circles around you if she thinks you're incompetent. Though she will confess a growing sense of futility and pointlessness with her successes, and has been turning to Shintoism to find some measure of spiritual peace.

"Frank" (50 CP, free/optional Exile): Prepare to be (DUN!). Emancipated! (DUN~). Exsanguinated! (DUN!). I see you shiver with antici…pation, as this particularly flamboyant Biomechanical Keeper saunters up to you. Obsessed with creating the perfect lifeform, this fellow has a curiously well developed sense for performance, social mingling and…seduction that most of its kind aren't well known for. It's human guise defies all description and good taste, and it's true form is even more lewd if that's even possible. The being's love for its children, talent for genetic engineering and talent is truly exceptional among its kind though. Certainly it has

a taste for the macabre and a ruthless, conniving streak despite being no true fighter, but such behaviour is regrettably necessary to survive the cruel circumstances that the Children of the Underworld find themselves in.

“Judith Schiller” (50 CP, free/optional Exile): Disguised by the Illusion as a fortune telling, warm but sad middle-aged woman by day, in truth the being calling itself “Judith Schiller” is one of the few remaining Azadaevae with a burning optimism to help her people. Her formidable mystical powers and the Illusion allow her form’s details to change somewhat while generally being a well-preserved, stately woman-though in truth the long pale hair and skin of her native form remains as beautifully youthful as it has been for eons. She runs a little book publishing firm called *Ouroboros* as well as a website where the Children of the Underworld can share information and communicate with each other. Judith is an intermediary and informer, with the skills to run a delicate underground network for the other children. Whatever your background, you’ve somehow won her trust and she hopes she can count on you to prove her kind are a proud and noble race in their own right, instead of the slaves others frequently take them for.

Duke Tomas (50 CP, free/optional Gaoler): The old fashioned carriage you encountered shortly after your arrival into this world is driven by a cheery obese man in a green hat, red shirt and gold-trimmed coat. He claims to be a humble merchant, but a quick glance at his wears reveal mystic trinkets and arcane artifacts as well as the poultices, modern medicine, ammunition and other useful objects he happens to have lying around. He’s also a world-class chef, able to whip up delicious Eastern European dishes as long as you can bring him enough raw ingredients. In truth, Duke Tomas is a lictor of such power and authority that he is functionally immune to mundane assault and ordinance. Every spoken word out of his mouth seems almost comically slimy and deceptively ingratiating, which may make it all the more surprising that in truth, the Duke truly does consider you a good friend he had the good fortune to bump into and earnestly supports your adventures in this world by using his space-time magics to show up in convenient places-and his exceptional salesmanship and manipulation to learn all kinds of useful information he freely shares to you, even from beings with no right to trust him. Perhaps his service to Malkuth has let him grow beyond the snide superiority most of his kind exhibit?

And in future worlds, somehow he always happens to have new trinkets, goods and artifacts to sell you every now and then. Sadly, he cannot give credit. No really, there’s some sort of cosmic clause that binds him.

Choir of Profaned Despair (50/100/200 CP, free/optional or discounted Gaoler): When the Demiurge disappeared from the angels’ presence, some threw themselves on their own swords during Malkuth’s rebellion and the Archons’ infighting. With your investment here, one or more received a final vision of the Demiurge’s will: To watch over, and serve, a visitor from another world. You are that visitor. Unlike many of their free-willed brethren it was only the promise of that duty that let them endure the aeons, and it is to you they desperately pledge their swords to. They are loyal beyond even any of the tortures of Inferno, but be wary: So shattered are they by the war, that they will retaliate with unrelenting, indiscriminate force against anything that they foresee may threaten it.

For 50 CP, one of the following angels becomes your companion. For 100 CP, you may instead take 5 or less of them as companions, who share one companion slot. Finally for 200 CP all 10 angels are present as one dysfunctional but very relieved group.

Anaita is a champion of the **Chayot Ha Kodesh**: The most powerful of the angelic choirs, who stood closest to the heavenly fire, and the natural first among peers if, indeed, she has any with her. Being among the few who did not perish from sorrow, in battle it cleanses all who dare stand before her. Three golden wings match the colour of her radiant eyes and breastplate, and her ornate headdress is a darker shade. Though still regal and dignified in proclaiming the Demiurge's power and exclusive right to rule, the commanding bearing she uses to lead the other angels is tainted by a great sadness from all that she has lost. She has yet to admit it to herself, but in you she sees a king to serve more real than the Demiurge has been for too many years. While her sheer power and diligence have kept her body, accoutrements and soul seemingly pristine, the burden of leadership makes her particularly overprotective of you-and instils an urgency to grant you station and privileges deserving of your status as her charge, no matter the cost.

Laila is an **Ophanim**, and though she has a thousand countenances to draw humans into religious submission her natural form is a pale-blue-grey woman with three arms, four wings and red eyes-two on her face, and many more on said wings. Her whispers and divine performances are as supernaturally powerful as they ever were, though the ceremonial outfit she clings to is shorn apart from the waist down and she bears scars from conflicts with her fellows she has mentally blocked out. Around you she acts as a shameless yes-man, praising your every word as pearls of wisdom and nodding in agreement even to statements you make in opposition to one another. Behind the gregarious and passionate words of a preacher, hides a creature so broken and traumatised she has forgotten how not to pretend she isn't hurt. In you, she desperately clings to as the last thing she can believe in from this rotten world.

Dinah of the **Erelim** lacks fear, like the rest of her kind. She has grey wings, long black hair and carries a copper urn on a chain filled with blood taken from children who bore the taint of Awakening, like the rest of her kind. Like the rest of her kind, she carries on her holy duties of maintaining the sacred genealogy, confused and lost. Yet with your coming, she has done the unthinkable: Deviate from them. While still devoutly enthusiastic about the subject of family and genetic descent, as you talk you'll find that increasing she becomes lucid from the haze of meaningless but comforting routine-and increasingly grows alarmed at the confusing, complicated world she now finds she had more attachments to than initially thought. In all that fell under her duty and it's enactment, she is an expert. In all else, she is little more than a confused child.

Evangelina of the **Hashmallim** is a mad dog brought to heel by a new master. Once a guardian and a giver of closeness and warmth, her once-crystalline voice has degraded into a grating, howling wreckage of its former beauty. The former glory of her being is all but lost, matted hair adorned with tribalistic ornaments and her tattered skirt all that's left of her former uniform. Her once finely polished body,

while still powerful and statuesque, has become smeared with filth from lack of care. But though she is lost, she knows you down to your soul-well enough that when she fights in the grip of foaming madness, in a perversion of her former task to give humanity a false sense of security she priorities your defence above her own. In her lucid moments she sobs and keens for the embrace she once provided, desperately pleading that she is still fit for service and trying to recite the tales she once told smoothly. It is in your arms that the former deceiver can begin to piece her fractured mind together-even as she trembles in both shame at what she has become, and expectation of vengeance for her former duties if you are human.

Ariel of the **Seraphim** has maintained her sword, her holy vestments and her scales of office well. Her gaze is dark but steady, her waist-length white hair and six black wings still smooth despite her fall. It is through the narrow perceptions and comforting cage of rules her choir studied and preserved while dutifully maintaining the decrees of the Demiurge that has gifted her with a sense of purpose to see her through these trying times. Yet, she finds the Demiurge's final command to do as you will troubling. Over time, the stern enactment of duty in a godless world has put tiny stresses into her psyche, alienating her from the other members of her choir and leading her to voice objections that have seen her shouted down, ostracised and looked askance at. Though a fearsome warrior and a paragon of wisdom, emptiness and restraint in spirit, a deep schism over whether to put you or the Demiurge's law first in her heart is building. And the more she sees her peers' actions from the outside, the more obscenely tantalising the former seems.

Once, **Gabrielle** of the **Elohim** annihilated all that the Demiurge deemed unworthy of his sight. Her four arms each can conjure weapons modern and archaic into their grasp, all of which are potent mystical artifacts. Her wings forever drip with the blood of slain siblings. Magnificently muscled, she disdains all clothing as irrelevant in pursuit of further violence-and the bloodlust that seeped into her soul has transformed a holy duty into an endless addiction to carnage. Locked away in an iron cell within Netzach's citadel like many of her kind, unlike many of her siblings she all but demands duties involving death and blood to continue to enact her purpose. Indulge her urge to smite and purge, and she will sing your praises as she once sung the Demiurge's with remarkable lack of inner conflict for an angel-considering you a far superior master than the Death Angels many of her kind have prostrated themselves before, and disdaining those traitors as her favoured prey on the battlefield. Convince her to confront how deeply she has lost herself in war for war's sake, and you may help her discover that she loves war mostly because it is all she has left-apart from you.

Long before Hod fell, the BeneiHa'Elohim who served him were guards and executioners bound by ties of etiquette and blood oaths. But they were repudiated from the Demiurge's throne after being tricked into enmeshing their blood with humanity, giving them equipment and insight. In particular, whether you were human or not **Sophia** specifically remembers a liason with you that saw her dishonoured in the eyes of the Demiurge, and cast out as a scapegoat by many of her peers Embittered at how frail those bonds proved to be, she was nonetheless horrified by how quickly her kin abandoned their former calling or submitted themselves to Samael. Her dark hair is well-combed, her lips well-decorated, but

she stubbornly refuses to replace the lost top half of her ceremonial dress, and proudly shows the sacred markings on her arms and chest as a sign of her continued devotion. She fervently strives to guard you and slay your enemies, anxious not to prove as faithless as the rest of her kind-while morbidly trying to justify her service as a matter of principle, and not a continuation of the passion you once shared together.

Paula of the **Cherubim** weeps gold tears forever, and her hands too often fill with dripping gold as she meaninglessly makes the gestures that once directed the rise of wealth. Though as servants maintaining the machines of the Illusion and governors of all practical affairs her kind's distance from the Demiurge spared her from the worst of his absence, the devastating enslavement and killing of her kind in the ensuing Archon war has left her in a perpetual state of shock. The golden eyes on her wings stare in frightened anticipation of further threats from the world at all times, and aside from hacking at her short, dark hair it has not even occurred to her to recover new clothing for herself. A neurotic, nervous mess of an angel, Paula is obsessed with amassing power structures and regulating complex systems despite lacking the taste for personal power many of her kind gained. Rather, she wishes for you to rule a safe, stable environment where she can convince herself all will be well for a little while longer.

Nefta is one of the **Malakhim**: Formerly among the messengers, courtesans and heralds of the Demiurge's courts. She still wears the golden dress nearly torn off her by rapacious nepharites, clinging to all that's left of her former station even though it barely conceals her body anymore. Even scarred in battle and with most of the feathers plucked from one wing, she has an enchanting beauty that stirs desires in all who encountered them. Nefta is particularly hysterical and inconsolable about the Demiurge's disappearance, for in times past the Malakhim were named his favourite children, and though even with a broken wing she is among the most fleet of foot and swiftest, most agile fliers among angels her desperation is such that sometimes she tries to forget she was ever an angel and was always a woman with special powers. In you, her addled mind sometimes confuses her long-lost father with the human companionship she yearns for-and requests punishment for her self-directed impiety.

And finally, **Charmeine** is of the **Ishim**: The angels once tasked with enticing humanity away from signs of their divinity, and nearly wiped out with a new mission of laying siege to Chesed's Citadel. She is particularly gifted at manipulating the Illusion, dampening or heightening supernatural powers with it's flux-even in realities where it is not dominant. With lilac skin, empty white eyes, indigo hair and wings as well as the dark robes and veil of a priestess she is the most genuinely serene of the angels-to the unspoken envy and fury of the others for how little she lost comparatively. But while seemingly aloof from the scorn of angel and lictor alike, in truth out of all of them Charmeine is the loneliest for more conventional, conversational company not tainted by the maddened despair of angels. She will bombard you with queries about Elysium's condition or pleas to let her accompany you into it-for having become enemies of all other choirs, after the war it was only safe for the Ishim to reside in Malkuth's Citadel. In you, she sees someone with whom to truly belong with-and perhaps, finally use that belly dancer outfit her veil was originally meant to go with.

Choir of Infernal Obscenities (50/100/200 CP, free/optional or discounted Torturer): Soon after your arrival you solved the wrong puzzle box, and found yourself warped into an enormous Babylonian stone temple featuring elegant gardens, great halls and labyrinthine passages. Within dwells a Nepharite who, against all expectations, has taken something of a shine to you. Or perhaps, more than one. It seems are arrival into this reality has weakened the dimensional barriers between Elysium and Inferno, permitting them a foothold into a world they had long yearned for. It helps that Astaroth himself has sent them vague yet unmistakeable visions promising them either wondrous fortune in their ambitions or exquisite suffering tied to your own success. The glee of their profane ambitions being sponsored by their dark creator and the implicit threat of severe punishment should they reject that purpose is the closest thing that can be compared to loyalty among Inferno's denizens.

For 50 CP, one of the following nepharites becomes your companion. For 100 CP, you may instead take 5 or less of them as companions, who share one companion slot. Finally for 200 CP all 10 demons are present, and eager to ravage an unsuspecting world. And as a final note, while the more powerful among them may possess the ability to create purgatories of their own the temple you find them in will also follow them into future worlds as a shared one.

Astarte carries herself with detachedly regal indifference at all times, her ebon hair and alabaster flesh immaculate even when stained with the blood of a recent sacrifice. Her ragged, almost mist-like green dress of office ends at the waist, though her magnificent golden tiara, headdress and necklaces often distracts from her breasts being covered only by a long scarf. As part of **Thaumiel's Clergy**, she styles herself as Astaroth's daughter-and as absurd as such a claim may seem, she seems to have maintained high position in the cutthroat faith she represents while doing relatively little. In fact she seems almost jaded by the devotees skinning themselves in ecstasy, the slaves kissing her perfumed feet and while certainly ambitious when it comes to tightening her hold on power seems almost…*bored* by the visceral games other demons play. She has an almost reverent fascination with others that have confronted great evil and yet choose to be other than what the forces of Hell would have them be. And whatever the truth of her claims, a deep loneliness and sense of abandonment she finds rapidly melting away in your company-where you are finding yet more slaves to trample, or exploring the Illusion together.

With green flesh, a dress mainly made of straps, a jagged headdress and sharp gauntlets, it can be difficult to connect the silky-soft voice of **Marchosia** to a member of **Chagidiel's clergy.** Her bedside manner is immaculate-all the better to lure her victims into false security as she breaks down their very souls into something dark, macabre and horrifically beautiful. With almost fay-like caprice, she keeps a careful record of those who have slighted her-and visits macabre, personalised vengeance upon them at a later date. When not engaged in consorting with all the powers of Hell she is remarkably friendly under her refined, aloof manner. Her hobbies include birdkeeping and bullying her minions for being useless. There's an almost elfin cast to her features, and if pressed she vaguely refers to a past among one of humanity's servitor races marked by misfortune and

ostracization-with things really going downhill after she traded half her heart for greater power. But the past is another country and she can turn into a dragon, so it was totally worth it. Can *you* turn into a dragon?

Emily is often found in places of urban desolation and hardship, still wearing the blackened wedding dress she never had a chance to use before an untimely demise. Her greyish flesh is like that of a well-preserved corpse, while her black-brown hair seems to twist itself into new shapes every now and then. Though constantly returning to a scraggly mess. Once a naïve girl of the Victorian era, she has since become an ardent preacher for **Sathariel's clergy** in an attempt to fill the void left by a desolate, betrayed and loveless life with a higher calling. It hasn't, of course. Her great mastery of death magic has only made approaching even other demons more difficult, condemning her to a downward spiral of writing demonic testimonies in the blood of suicides and preaching Sathariel's will to all who will listen. But having met you, someone she can be around without risking harm from or preparing to lead into despair, she has become awfully clingy. She also has a rather nice singing voice, a talent for baking pies and a talent for making bodies disappear. Those last two skills are connected.

Laashe, former shock-jock and current **cleric of Gamichicoth**, has dabbled in everything from conspiracy theory peddling to leaking sensitive information. On the internet, nobody is truly secure and she studies shitposts, raids and cryptocurrency trends-seeking to divine the will of Gamichicoth in them with the same diligence her more traditional peers dabble in numerology and madness. Favouring spells invoking electricity or manipulating technology, her gift of the gab finds much more use unless her intrepid brownnosing gets spoilt. With each explosion on social media, each flinch on a livestream, she feels closer to the philosophical truths revealed to her when she first descended to Inferno-and she's eager to be the first interviewer for whatever big scoop revolves around your actions in this world. And while she keeps the mutilations to a minimum for good public relations (but never hides her wintry hair and light blue skin to keep all eyes on herself online), she does have a rather risqué bondage outfit that only her contortionism lets her move in.

The dignified **Latabitina** cuts a dignified, noble figure at first glance. Fit and dressed in conservative if archaic clothes, she seems at first glance like a secretary or receptionist-who even prefers more hygienic outfits to most of her kin. Then she enthusiastically babbling about the many horrors awaiting sinners in the afterlife. Need to know the exact temperature needed to best cook a human liver, and the procedure needed to keep it mostly alive while attached to a living victim? She's your woman. Her masochism far outweighs her sadism, to the point her peers consider her bizarrely merciful. Smashing her skull in and thrusting glowing skewers at her orifices is a great way to cheer her up when bored-and with a regeneration and durability formidable even among the nepharite kind, she can take much more than what she can dish out. In fact, she's rather ditzy and prone to getting lost in the ecstasy of pain-to the point of sometimes forgetting to keep chasing victims while being pummelled.

The blonde teenage girl asking you to pass her a scalpel looks rather perky in her undersized school uniform, until you realise she's putting the final stitches on the latest still-living human she has hewn, flayed and broken into her warped idea of art. **Ereshkigal** is a high ranking nepharite in the **clergy of Togarini**, obsessed with communicating the idea of the ultimate despair through her works. A surgical genius and master artificer among the nepharites, her form periodically shows the signs of her own mad genius after getting bored with her latest victim. While she has taken a liking to you, be advised she sincerely thinks suffering and despair are good for the soul-and is literally religiously studious about both. She also enjoys collecting and animating teddy bears, as dread heralds of her malevolent schemes.

With an almost shaved head still sprouting a few messy platinum locks, a soldier's helmet and an outfit less deliberately skimpy and more…low effort, **Fonzie** is a **cleric of Hareb-Serap** who believes much harder in action over words. Even her magic is specialised for putting guns, bombs and tanks together-or violently blasting them apart. In the name of chasing the anarchic high of violence, she'll storm the national guard with a rusty shovel-only to conceal bombs along the trail she blazes through the streets. Cheerful, iconoclastic and aggressively Australian, it's hard to say if she was damned while punk was still in vogue or simply picked up on that rebel without a cause-spirit. One thing's for sure: Unlike many others here, her loyalty is to the thrill of the fight not her Death Angel, and as long as you're down to blow things up she'll be happy to run at your problems screaming and guns blazing.

Raised first as a child soldier orphaned on the war-torn streets of Algeria, then inducted into the **clergy of Samael** as an ardent believer in holy vengeance, **Marin** hopes to finally find a cause worth fighting for alongside you. The last things many of her foes saw was her tanned yet incongruously auburn haired face twisted into ecstasy at the moment of death, yet in seeing grudge after grudge through to its end she has found them all to be unbearably hollow and meaningless. The skintight outfit she wears somehow flawlessly accommodates the array of arms she sprouts in battle-which can detach and ambulate on their own to fight opponents further away from her, or merge into umbral spears of hellish power. Keener to discuss philosophy and ideology than the well-honed killing tactics she has practiced over the course of a life mostly spent on the battlefield, she feels like less of a stranger around you than she has in a while.

Kiara is a shameless degenerate masquerading in the habit of a holy woman-in public at least, for without the need for subterfuge she'd gladly prance about naked save whatever instruments she's currently tormenting herself with. An exceptional people person, her magic bares the soul and brings sensation beyond mortal tolerance with the lightest breath or caress. Sadism and masochism have little distinction in her mind; to be the receptable of all the world's desires is also an opportunity to make multitudes die for her favour. Egocentric and heartlessly manipulative under her demure exterior, every word out of her mouth is pure *filth* hellbent on unleashing the repressed desires of the sentient beings around her she views as little more than insects. Even among **Gamaliel's clergy**, her gifts of dragging down and debasing the stalwart followers of other Archons and Death Angels is legendary. It's inconceivable she could have any reason to follow you

other than her own gratification. Yet there must be *some* reason why her pious act seems more sincere with you than most.

The representative of **Nahemoth's Clergy** has renounced her name during her rites, but answers to the title **Lady Six.** Well-groomed with vaguely oriental features, when she remembers to dress herself she favours elegant kimonos. Soft-spoken yet quietly fervent, she is a skilled schemer and artisan but not one for the public eye. Once, she fled the outside world for her patron Death Angel in the belief that it had gone hopelessly mad-yet the things she did to belong among a new family have left her stained by far worse insanities, and prone to fits of ritual and routine over places she holds sacred. She hates mirrors, enjoys both collecting and donning masks of all kind, and has an ambivalent attitude towards children. Elegantly quiet for one who can evoke the tempest's fury and the radioactive discordance of industrial waste at a whim, she seems uncharacteristically comfortable in your company where she normally prefers solitude.

Elliot Spencer (50 CP, free/optional Torturer): A hero of the British Expeditionary Forces whose mind was shattered by the Battle of Passchendaele, Captain Spencer buried his grief and survivor's guilt behind increasingly depraved acts-and eventually found an artifact that transformed him into the high priest of Gamaliel you see before you today. A pale, bald man with his head riddled with pins and a stately bearing despite his provocative leathers, Elliot is surprisingly affable and restrained being for a demon of inhuman pleasure; he sincerely believes only those who truly desire the dark prices his pacts extol deserve the karmic retribution he inflicts, and more than once has been willing to negotiate with the innocent for something of equal value to satay his wrath. Sardonic with a taste for grandiose blasphemy, few among his order challenge his strict adherence to protocol-for he wields all the sorcerous power expected of those high in the Death Angels' esteem.

Audrey III (50 CP, free/optional Wild Thing): Not long ago, a struggling florist took home *something he really shouldn't have* from the depths of Gaia. It all ended poorly, but you found it's seedling under the floorboards and the creature seems far more loyal to you than its parent ever was to its original owner. Even as a young sprout, it is to a venus flytrap what a lion is to a domestic kitten and has a voracious appetite for flesh. Animal, human-it doesn't care which. It has some rather interesting musical talents too, and a charming eagerness to help you out-often in ways that invariably seem to involve feeding it people you don't like. As it grows and grows, it will gain all the powers needed to thrive in Gaia's wilds: Mobile roots to let it hunt its own prey at night, the size and strength to snap up an unwary nepharite in a single bite or burrow through the ground, and lashing tendrils flexible yet tough enough to swing between buildings upon. At the rate its going, in a year or two it might be big enough to topple a building. And while it does seem genuinely keen on making life easier for you, you can't help but notice how smug it is against all other life made of meat.

Helen Vaughan (200 CP, discounted Wild Thing): She was once an apex predator, from a world of ink-black lakes and starry skies in Gaia's wilderness. But she was enchanted by the city lights on the border between Elysium and Gaia, and in another life shortly after assuming human shape may have forgotten who she was permanently. Instead she encountered you, grounding her enough to gain an

understanding of humanity. For the primeval horror that calls itself Helen Vaughan is in truth something akin to an Incarnate of Gaia with all the power that entails. Though her features are indistinctly Caucasian, the tan of her skin and the shade of her brown-blonde hair seems to shift with her mood-though at all times, she has the rippling-fit body of a woman who fights and tames bears on a mountaintop. And while more than happy to display it for you, her shadow always casts her amorphous, vaguely caprine primordial form as a semi-liquid shapeshifting mass of dark ooze.

Her behaviour is erratic at times, viewing both death and sex as welcome, inevitable transformations, but around you and those she wishes to charm she shows a boisterously charming side. In public she sometimes plays at being a visionary firebrand, in private she acts like the animal she is-quickly shedding her clothes, going on all fours and so on. Almost jokingly, she sometimes likes to claim she wishes to bring balance to the elements of the world-usually as a prelude to inflicting destruction and death. While smugly superior to all lesser lifeforms, a primitive and animalistic gratitude makes her count you as a pack member as well as a suitable mate-and while inclined to dominate, happily submits if you can force yourself on either of her forms. Either way, beware her powerful libido, and complete lack of inhibitions.

While she has imprinted on you as a mate rather than prey like the rest of the world her feisty, cavalier exterior is naught but camouflage for an alien and atavistic mind with unspeakable appetites. Without great might of your own you might find yourself forced against the wall in an amorphous torrent of flesh or simply restrained by whatever physical form she wears, her breasts ballooning with the thick, creamy milk concentrating Gaia's mutagenic divinity that leaks constantly from them and all her orifices virtually incontinent with the aphrodisiac slimes, pastes and half-alive primordial oozes they unload. No orifice is off limits, no facet of the natural world's myriad means of reproduction unknown or alien to her, and pain is no object when bellowing like a frenzied hippo she simply rams whatever is most nearby into herself. Orifices full of pus, teeth or even exotic sensory organs will erupt along her spine. Her veins will transform into symbiotes resembling all manner of parasitic worms waggling with the sheer joy of life for life's sake. Her very internal organs and blood flow will reorient themselves through her body to penetrate or clamp around whatever genitals you have. It is no exaggeration that while not a particularly dignified degenerate, in sheer enthusiasm and stamina Helen disturbs some of the most sensual beings of Inferno.

Drawbacks

Beyond the Veil (+0 CP): While overall the options, threats and resources presented here take inspiration primarily from the more modern Kult: Divinity Lost while filling in the gaps from older editions such as Beyond the Veil, if you find anything contradicting the older lore or wish to fill in the gaps with supplementary material you may amend that with this option. Feel free to pick and choose information published from the older editions depicted relative to anything presented in this jump.

A Bad History (100-300 CP): As a twist in your tail, you've had a history with someone that's left them with a grudge against you. It might have been a protégé of sorts who was abducted by a higher power-or who you hung out to try only to come back pissed. It might have been the summoner who brought you into this world through some inhuman ritual. However they are they're as capable as any professional magician in this world, they have the minions or knowledge to make your life very, very dangerous. This drawback can be taken twice more, for a total of 3 angry bastards who may or may not cooperate in making your life hell depending on their temperament. At the bare minimum, they know each other wants to make you suffer and are uninclined to get in each other's way.

I Want To Know (100 CP): The truth is out there. You're onto something, you can't rest until it's sorted! The clues, they're all lining up! You have all the obsession of a dedicated conspiracy theorist, with the gumption to actually follow through on what you believe to be a conspiracy or supernatural phenomena of breathtaking scope that needs to be investigated by you, personally. Expect your priorities and chores to be neglected so you can chase those big grey man running Wall Street-even influence your dreams.

Broken (100 CP): Dear oh dear. Was it the Illusion? The stress of learning about true reality? The demons inside of you? Whatever the case, some experience in your past has broken you so badly you've been unable to recuperate from it. You are constantly distressed and your actions are coloured by a deepseated anxiety and resentment for the wrong perpetuated against you. Be assured that whatever happened to you, you are currently healthy in body with only surface scars to show if any, at least.

Fear Itself (100 CP): The Illusion covers up much of the supernatural quite well, yet you both look inhuman enough to not pass for polite company and are completely unable to hide it from society. You might have clicking, whirring mechanical objects integrated under your skin. Or oversized insect parts. Or rotting, writhing skin. Either way your appearance provoke disgust, fear and panic in most humans, making it very difficult to win friends and influence people.

Bad Reputation (100 CP): Sometimes though, it's not all about looks. The public hates you for something horribly illegal you've been rumoured to have done, on the level of murder or paedophilia. Blend in well when you're out on the street, or expect to deal with lynch mobs, your property being vandalized and society in general responding with fear and outrage-despite the technical lack of actual evidence convicting you.

Predatory Instinct (100 CP): Gaia admires the id you harbour, and the animal inside of you has been unchained. You are driven by instinct to hunt and kill a particular demographic-like toddlers, or murderers, or singer, or so on. When your prey is within reach your instincts surge, urging you to savour their death rattle and the thrill of the chase. The strong willed can keep such instincts at bay, but it's often mentally draining for all but the strongest wills-and should you lose this struggle, you will throw yourself after them like a ravening beast.

Addict (100 CP): You're addicted to some sort of hard drug, or possibly several, and you can only remain functional for so long. You're into control of the urge for now but it will return every now and then. When your will is weak you'd be willing to become indebted to a dangerous person, put yourself in danger or ruin something important to you-whether for the promise of your next fix, or while blundering under the influence.

Uncontrolled Shapeshifting (200 CP): Gaia further stokes the animal within you, teaching it to wear your flesh. When you experience strong emotion, sufficient to overwhelm your fight or flight instincts, you uncontrollably transform into something inhuman. In this state you entirely lack your intellect, which can prove fatal in a complex situation. The transformation wears off after a short while at most, but you'll retain no memory of what you did during that time.

Traditional Bane (100/200 CP): Some trait of your very being rebels against an aspect of the world, in a way that happens to coincide with traditional folklore. Choose one of the following: Fire, electricity, iron (not steel), silver, water or wood. You feel uncomfortable in the presence of such an element, and the touch of it is supernaturally harmful to your flesh. Whichever choice you pick will grant 100 CP, but for 200 CP you can pick the one that most limits your activities: Sunlight.

Neurotic Passion (200 CP): Do try to take this one seriously, for your own good. Your sexuality is a destructive, controlling force in your life. You compulsively seek out superficial sexual encounters, and are willing to commit crimes or utterly degrade yourself, ruin any relationship, cast aside all social boundaries to satisfy your fantasies. Oh, but you were already doing that you say? Let me rephrase: Such is your uncontrollable yearning that *you can accidentally weaken the boundaries between dimensions* from your pathological inability to keep it in your pants. Your desire could accidentally drag the subject of your passion int dreams, possibly trapping there, or attract creatures of love wishing to feed off it or trick you into pacts. When your passion is tainted with jealousy or wrath, you lose all finesse and technique scrambling towards it like a rabid beast. These yearnings can and will drive you into decisions so terrible that should you be dragged before an Archon in chains, and should it demand to know why you ransacked their palaces looking for "a cute shrine maiden waifu", all you will be able to say in your defence is demand someone, anyone to blow you right now.

Bloodthirst (200 CP): Your throat's going dry. The need's rising up. This pact cost you dearly for the possibilities unlocked, and you need a solution fast. You must drink human blood to survive, the equivalent of one adult's or three children's blood supply within two weeks' time. Fail to do so, and you'll be critically injured withering away until you've had your tipple. Go a whole week without crimson sustenance and you'll end up in a coma-and the week after that is certain death.

Cannibalism (200 CP): Your stomach's rumbling. Everyone's looking so plump. So tender. You may be noticing a trend about these pacts for possibility taking it out on your appetite. Eat the equivalent of one whole adult or three children's worth of human flesh in two weeks' time, or you'll be critically injured from rapid decomposition. As with the blood dependency you'll suffer a coma after an

additional week without sustenance, and the week after that you're dead unless someone's kind enough to force feed you some human flesh.

Branded (200 CP): Was it the magic you practice? The waves you made, coming here? Whatever it was, for some reason the dead are drawn to you like moths to a flame. Whenever you use magic they come out of nowhere, possessing those nearby, challenging you or stalking you depending on their temperament. Some longsighted beings might try to lure you beyond the grave. Expect a great deal of undeathly unrest in your life, until you figure out a way to remove whatever it is that has made of you a lantern to the nastier sorts of ghosts.

Cursed (200 CP): The doll scrunches up, or the incantation finishes-and presto, you've been hit by a curse most foul. Expect you or those you care about to have accidents, things of yours to be taken from you without the greatest of scrutiny, terrifying visions or being compelled to perform certain simple actions with the risk of dire consequences should you fail. If it's possible to lift the curse, no living man knows of it.

Witch Hunt (200-600 CP): Now you've done it. An entire organisation has marked you for death at all costs, the kind that can afford their own private army then give it top notch training and equipment. It could be an eccentric billionaire. It could also be the actual CIA. One thing's for sure: It has supernatural backers of some sort, be they razides or azghouls, and if sniper rounds can't bring you down those beings are angling to corner you with their top notch mortal forces before striking you down from an ambush their supernatural powers. This drawback can be taken twice over, for a total of three significant militarised organizations hunting for your head.

Backseat Driver From On High (300 CP): Your devotion extends to something higher than yourself. How noble! You are bound to an Archon or Death Angel, and must abide by and proliferate it's principle within any reasonable opportunity. Violations (such as submitting to someone lower than yourself or rebelling against someone higher up for Kether, Archon of Hierarch. Or backing out of a conflict for Hareb-Serap, Death Angel of Conflict) provoke your object of devotion's wrath. While some efforts can mitigate this, at the minimum you'll receive a vision of the being admonishing you, but letting you off with a warning. Far more likely you will be asked to perform a living sacrifice, achieve something fairly substantial that strengthens their principle or be tested in a trial. Repeated or significant violations may result in the higher power marking you with hideous stigma such as rotting flesh or a misshapen body, and demanding a blood sacrifice of their own choosing. And do to the nature of your pact, as a last resort they can threaten to completely withdraw all your powers until you complete a mission they deem reasonable for your skill to accomplish.

Symbol Bondage (300 CP): A piece of jewellery, a tattoo on someone else's body, a building-you're bound to some sort of symbol, much to your detriment. Whenever it's harmed, you suffer sympathetic injuries. If someone discovers it, they can use the symbol to gain power over you-and as long as they hold it, you simply cannot harm them directly. To add insult to injury this symbol doesn't even come with the

resurrective immortality that many receive from acquiring such an item as a magical focus.

Damned (300 CP): Your doom was sealed the moment you stepped foot into this world, and the clock is ticking before you accept an ultimate and most dire fate. Perhaps you're dying from a disease science can't treat, or have put up your soul as collateral to some deity or demon who will come for what's theirs sooner or later. You know not the hour when your time runs out, but though you have some time remaining omens constantly remind you of what's to come. Dreams and visions of your fate haunt you, things around you tend to provide you with false hope of escaping, and those in your vicinity may be negatively affected by the consequences. Unless you can cheat your fate within a couple of months, be assured that death would be the kindest end you could meet.

The Darkness Within Me (300 CP): A mark of unpleasant provenance has attached itself to you. A full body tattoo, a demonic body part like a vestigial arm, parasitical machine parts or so on. While you remain largely in control, whenever you consciously harm someone you feed the darkness a little power. It might feed on your life force directly, to gain a little strength. It might try to take charge of your body, purging your memory of what happened. It might even transform your body into something inhuman to better suit its own influence. Only the strongest exertions of will can beat it back if it's nourished on a steady diet of violence, and such is your bond that it's nearly impossible to remove it without killing you.

Principled Enemy (300-900 CP): Now isn't the time for fear. That comes later. You see, you've well and truly offended an Archon or Death Angel to the extent that it's willing to drop everything and see you ruined. You've stopped the suffering of someone Golachab hated. You've given safety against Chesed's orders. With all the forces at its disposal the higher being will hound you through every level of reality-and when it's Incarnates find you, they will swell in power to deliver attacks that cannot be fully comprehended by the mortal mind. Make no mistakes, both principle-enacting set of entities didn't last this long by being reckless and you will face strategy and perception beyond mortal ken as well as overwhelming cosmic power. And you wish to truly know the meaning of punishment, you may take this drawback two more times over for a total of three Archons and/or Death Angels who have become your mortal enemies.

The Devil You Know (1000 CP): Astaroth is the last remaining supreme being known to exert active influence over the many worlds of the cosmos. From the industrialised mountain that is a monument to his raw will, Astaroth's euphoria shakes magnetic fields and sets maelstroms in motion throughout all his domain. But while normally he would be content to permit his servants to gradually whittle down the weakening Illusion to suit his own ends, Astaroth has finally found something of interest: You. In a pulse of dark and awful will, all his Incarnates will focus their dread attention on you. The greater being himself immediately brings the Death Angels' infighting to heel, then commands all his legions to bring you before him, give their lives to ruin yours, make of your every waking moment an inescapable agony. What dark impulse drives him you know not, only that a consciousness older than time and vaster than space has decided you must know suffering beyond any he has ever inflicted.

If there is any hope from this nightmare, it may come from how the strictures of the Illusion still somewhat resist Astaroth's influence; else he would have dragged all humanity into his grip long ago. Moreover there is at least one force that can deeply harm him: The abyss where the Demiurge's citadel once stood. But what grand and intoxicating innocence would compel you to brave something that badly scarred the dark brother of God?

God's In His Heaven (1200 CP): It's taken for granted by many that the Demiurge is well and truly gone. But what if his reckoning was much more immediate than expected? With this, he will return, that great and wondrous being who was able to topple all humanity from its greatness and trap it in absurdly frail bodies. With his coming, the Archons' rebellion ends by definition as his luminous presence gives them purpose anew. Having somehow rejuvenated himself or mustered enough power for one last grab at Creation, he bears down now on it seeking the next step to his grand design which so happens to include one new component: You, as a sacrifice. Whether the Demiurge was a god from a distant world, the true creator of all things in a creation that had long spun out of control from his wishes or simply a fellow human being of absurd power, there is no denying that he was powerful beyond comprehension. Worse, unlike Astaroth he very much has the home turf advantage anywhere in the Illusion from the Archons embodying his control over it. And yet, the tomb of the Demiurge located in Metropolis and the guardian appointed over it hints at there being a faint hope that God can bleed.

Scenarios

Taroticum

On the edge of London in the year of 1892, the warden of Sandburn prison is searching for a powerful artifact called the Tarotica. It is a deck of cards that, according to legend, can control both the Illusion and Elysium through its symbolic depictions of the higher powers that control it. And Anthony Seymour is no human,

but a lictor. A being of insatiable ambition willing to fill his prison with terror to create a temple where he can invoke and bind the Tarotica's guardian in a place that truly embodies imprisonment. The routines of the prison grow inhumane even for the era, a handful of guards help him construct a prison in the basement at which he sacrifices prisoners. And finally the guardian, a crone-lie Goddess of the Forgotten is summoned, clapped in magical shackles and brutally tortured to keep her compliant. The prison slides ever closer to Inferno with its wealth of suffering.

Seymour makes himself the deck's master by bleeding on the first card, Demiurgos, and binds prisoners and guards alike as slaves in the hellish prison. Some guards and prisoners consult with the goddess. Learning Seymour has made himself invulnerable through the binding, they steal the Demiurgos card then kill Seymour. The card fades, and turns blank as the binding breaks. Nepharites kill most there, but the goddess remains bound.

You start somewhere in modern London, called by mysterious dreams to Sandburn, after it has been renovated from a prison into a psychiatric hospital. Though the call would normally go out to four of the reincarnated prison guards who brought about Seymour's death, for some reason it seems to have jumped a mystic fuse and come to you instead. Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to create the Child of Magic's soul and complete the Tarotica so the Goddess can break free.

Beware, for after being hauled to Inferno for his delightfully devilish schemes Seymour has been tortured into a slave of Astaroth instead of the Demiurge-but he remains intent on reclaiming the Tarotica. The artifact itself has influenced the world and humanity to mirror itself, making the staff stricter and more hierarchal while making the patients sadistic and rebellious-and on a lesser scale, subtly influencing all of London. The Goddess, mostly insensate, extends her consciousness to secure her freedom. She wishes to create a new card: Anthropos, the Awakened Man, but requires other forces to complete it. She then influences a schizophrenic named Mary Langsbury at the hospital into laying out the cards to draw Chris Walden to impregnate her. As a former poor prostitute during the depression, pivotal figure within the British pornographic industry and current wealthy immortal transvestite magician of passion, Chris is…flighty and eccentric, but genuinely wishes to see the Child born-if only for his own safety in light of Seymour's machinations. The result is a Child of Magic: A human who will be born Awakened, so long as it's soul is properly formed and the baby's body born.

At Sandburn, Mary asks you for help to create the soul of her magical child, claiming the madmen on the Isle of Dogs can help you. Help her get out of the hospital and she will entrust the Tarotica to you for safekeeping. Beware, Seymour will be arriving soon and has possessed a doctor for Mary and the cards. Evading him would save you both much hassle-though even if he were to rip the fetus from her womb and drag it down to Inferno, Seymour would quickly find only the Child's true parents can birth it properly-and that any creature of Inferno it's implanted into will die. It's vital you still have the fetus on you; should you have misplaced it a quick trip to the land of the dead will reveal it's still alive and unharmed by all that's happened to it. Did you think Inferno could keep hold of such a mighty being?

On the Isle of Dogs, some investigation among the Docklands' local madman will reveal someone called Waya can show you where you must go. Once liberated from the mental institution the police have put her in, she in turn can tell you the Forgotten Man of London can take you to Achlys for the soul's creation. The Forgotten Man is a reflection of the Demiurgos card, old and sickly. Perhaps he is simply a mortal tainted irrevocably by symbolic power. Perhaps he is, in some sense, truly an aspect of the lost creator. Although your lack of connection to Sandburn does limit Waya's guidance, as a magician of madness she will assist you as best she can. Lacking as substantial a connection to Sandburn as you might have had, it would be wise to take mystic precautions to reinforce your sense of self, memory and existential integrity.

Your journey will take you to Kennington, then the parts of it inhabited by the forgotten, then an empty poor that in truth is a manifestation of the Labyrinth of the Underworld. He in turn can guide you to the gates of Achlys, past the blind guardian who must be presented with the fetus to affirm your intent to create something new, and into the void itself. All will dissolve around you, only the fetus and your most cherished memories remaining intact, but as Achlys is both the origin and end of everything the Child of Magic can conjure its own soul out of it by calling to itself. If all goes well, even if She Who Waits Below calls out to you in the maelstrom of oblivion, you will not move to destroy yourselves. Indeed, She Who Waits Below will personally hand you the Child once it has obtained it's soul. Then you may all return to Elysium, following your memories back to London with the ensouled Child.

Seymour is not one to give up so easily. He will pull every favour he has left, try to snare the Child's soul in dreams or moments of weakness-or simply by brute force. Should he be able to ensnare the Child's soul in dreams, he may be able to influence it. Should Mary yet live she may yet carry the fetus to term, but there is one more alternative: Chris Walden, who has the power to change his own sex and give birth to the Child. Of course, this does not take into account any truly prodigious powers of mystical fertility you or your associates may have on your own.

The Child's proper birth is your victory condition. Upon painting the 68th card of the Tarotica, Seymour loses all control of them and is summarily torn to shreds by the patients of Sandburn-possibly the Goddess as well. Ironically, at this point his best hope is to throw himself on your mercy-not that you likely have any for him at this point. And in a twist of fate, it appears that for your efforts the Tarotica has imprinted itself on you as the outside factor that could realise it's true potential.

Your reward is the Tarotica: A set of 68 cards carved out of a goddess' pain, and completed by the hand of a Child of Magic. The Tarotica has always been indestructible, and once connected to an owner such as yourself it cannot be lost; if misplaced from where you meant to leave it, the cards will be found lying somewhere near you. Even discarded somewhere obscure, it's effects have left a profound impact on London: Oxford Street once disappeared for 3 hours, priests have tended to the dying even after they themselves have passed on, madmen gather instinctively on the border to Metropolis, dreams merge between dreamers so much they can influence reality and the mystic power of passion surges in West

End. All the magics practiced by human magicians could be amplified a hundredfold in strength through them. And these are just the crudest uses for the deck; by forming them into symbolic arrangements you can enact subtle yet powerful influence over the world. Rituals invoking it can imprison others in the roles it depicts, and as the Forgotten Man shows the traits of its imagery can be forcibly imposed on others. It was able to nullify the power of its creator even when incomplete, and when the Child of Magic reclaims it from Seymour she will be able to prevent him from fleeing into other realms of existence; who knows what uses you will find for it in the future?

Not that you need fear the Goddess of the Forgotten's wrath. She may try to reclaim the cards, but even now the Child of Magic is powerful enough to prevent her from harming you or retaking them. Normally a being as powerful and inscrutable as the Child would simply go her way, but fate may have other ideas here. If you somehow formed a bond with a mostly unborn or newly born thing along the way, then **the Child of Magic may come with you as a companion if you forged a strong bond.** An inscrutable child with unusual gifts, she hasn't yet had time to shape her personality beyond an instinctive gratitude to you and a vague parental attachment to Chris. Nevertheless, as a fully Awakened human she rapidly grows to the physical age of 3 years old. Her full capabilities **may be discussed later**, but suffice to say that despite having all the curiosity and innocence of a child, there's a good reason why the tortured Goddess didn't stick around to challenge her godlike power.

Rise of the Black Madonna

Leningrad, 1941. Cut off by the German Wehrmacht for over nine hundred days, the suffering endured by the population from ceaseless bombing raids and artillery barrages has brought down the boundaries between Inferno and Elysium through sheer dint of human suffering. A rift that permits the Death Angel Chagidiel to incarnate. Thrice over in fact, pouring his spirit into three different individuals who work to spread insanity, break down the human will and change the entire city into a portal to Inferno. Teetering on the edge of Hell, the Russian battlefront is

dangerously close to providing enough suffering to truly breach the gulf between worlds.

The three Incarnates focus on children, the last humans who allowed their hopes and dreams to die. Opening an orphanage in the central part of the city they exposed their victims of diabolic tortures, forcing them to torment each other. Engage in acts of cannibalism. They raised the dead back to life and turned the children into monsters. They drove these warped, broken things into the besieged city to steal and kill. They spread Chagidiel's insanity, breaking through the barrier of death for desperate people by will alone.

There is an obstacle to his goal. The Black Madonna-the Archon Binah-has wielded a certain amount of control over Russia for 2,000 years. She undermined Chagidiel's position until he was forced to retreat, and bides her time preparing circumstances fit for her own incarnation.

In 1991 the crumbling Soviet Union offers Chagidiel another opportunity to transform St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) into his own personal hell. This coincides with Binah's own plans coming to fruition: Transcending time, in 1941 she inspires a certain priest by the name of Ivan Chezenko to be her eyes and find the tortured children, and simultaneously inspires a painter called Dimi Nesterov to paint an icon of her. Yet even after taking a host herself Chagidiel's Incarnates manage to invade her. One enters a dream of Inferno, where the Leningrad children's agony feeds him power. Another heads to Russia to prepare a military group. The last, and most powerful warps time to 1991 to create a mystic link between 1941, present day and Inferno. By transporting the war-children from the past into the present, he will use sheer suffering to tear down the Illusion-and open a way for his Citadel to enter Elysium.

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to thwart Chagidiel's plans. The handful of children reincarnated from the terrible events of the past have been given blissfully oblivious lives, now Binah has determined you are a more suitable instrument for her schemes. You must free the children from both Inferno and Dream, for their anguish grants the Incarnates unspeakable power despite the Archons' control over Elysium. Hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake-as is the possibility of Hell literally coming to Earth. You start somewhere in St. Petersburg, in the year 1991.

It would be prudent to investigate the death of one Magda Orlova, the former Incarnate host of Binah. But be wary of the ritual you may find that supposedly turns the cursed disease back on those responsible for it; it frees the Death Angels from the stasis they have awaited their plan in, and will apply Chagidiel's Mark on all participants. They will develop creeping, persistent migraines and feel perpetually soiled no matter how much they clean themselves. These sensations will diminish after a few days, only to be replaced by a pulsating, rotting tumour at the base of their skull. It provides you with glimpses of Inferno; brief flashes of the heavy machinery that stokes its fires and a small boost to spiritual power-but this is far outweighed by the negative attention it will gather. It would be more fortuitous if you discovered this trap early, and devised some other means of continuing your investigations.

Chezenko, the old priest now converted into Binah's lictor, will be performing his own investigations. He might attack you under the mistaken impression of the Mark indicating you as Incarnates of Binah, but will quickly back down after realising his error-he has a vested interest in defeating the Incarnates. As you follow the investigations to a certain clinic in Frankfurt, one Pyotr Gallentinov may make contact with you as well. Should you lack similar abilities, his mastery of the Art of Dreaming can return you to the beginning of Chagidiel's plans. By pulling you into his dreams, he can let you travel backwards through time into where Russia verges on Chagidiel's section of Inferno-and provide training in the Art of Dreaming, if you wish. The sordid past of the Frankfurt Clinic, the camp outside Moscow and finally a wicked man's dream-house in Leningrad will all provide information on what you're in for-though only the latter has the dream-selves of the children imprisoned, under the vigil of one Incarnate.

Defeat this being. If you care to, travelling to the real Leningrad may let you meet Dimi, who is working intently on an image of the Madonna. It may come as some surprise that the image resembles either you, or a travelling companion with remarkable accuracy.

The next Incarnate resides in the north of Moscow in the same era, having taken over a patriotic Russian coalition called Slava-itself little better than any organised criminal group. He resides at a missile base, distorted by the being's presence and guarded by unnatural legionnaires. This being, too, must be defeated before his distortions can have more tangible effects than declaring martial law on Leningrad. Be warned, unless specific and powerful countermeasures are taken, each time you slay an Incarnate it's power is transferred to the survivors.

The final Incarnate dwells in a black cathedral in Leningrad, and is swollen on the power of human suffering. As the city merges into an amalgamation of Leningrad and Inferno, two things become clear. One, the Archon Binah has possessed you or a travelling companion, whoever served as Dimi's muse unknowingly[1]. Emerging from her host, Chagidiel and Binah engage in battle on a scale that defies human comprehension-Binah trying to tear down his Citadel in Infernal, Chagidiel defending himself as the motive force of suffering does his work for him and partially merges his Citadel with his last Incarnate's mortal home[2]. Be wary: Chagidiel's Incarnate rightfully regards humans as insects to him, draw unfathomable power from his true self in Inferno's closeness and at his *weakest* if somehow cut off from that power would be among the most physically and mystically powerful beings short of a full divinity.

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[1] Unless you/they somehow kicked her out? In which case, Binah is probably very, very angry at you/them for foiling her plan. Despite prioritising something desperate and slapdash to stop Chagidiel.

[2] To mortal eyes, this resembles a gigantic black iron statue of a woman and a disfigured man rapidly growing to be hundreds of meters tall and then engaging in a brawl. Every door and window is obliterated by soundless explosions, all objects made of glass and crystal explode into splinters and the air itself trembles as they grapple in the skies.

You now need only free the captive children in the cathedral's basement to banish the Death Angel-restoring Leningrad to its original form, ending the ritual and saving the world from Inferno. The hellish trauma has unlocked part of the children's divine potential, and even with only a hundredth of their full power unlocked the 700 of them together can crush either Incarnate like swatting a fly.

Given the option, Chagidiel and Binah quickly flee for their lives into safer levels of reality. Without their presence, after a few hours or so you should find yourself back in the present St. Petersburg.

Although if you could, it would be very nice for Mother Russia and also humanity as a whole to kill Binah and Chagidiel while they're there. While the children ignore Binah, for what was done to them they immediately start destroying the Death Angel's partially summoned Citadel[3]. Unless he can break all connections with Elysium, Chagidiel is in genuine danger of true and total destruction

Your reward is a dream world crafted to your specifications by the grateful Pyotr, along with the training to rule and control it if you lacked sufficient power over dreams already. A man destined to become such a powerful magicians of dreams and space-time in the future that he can reach back into the past, he offers to work with you to craft a world that is your ideal as a reprieve from the unrelenting horror and misery you have seen. Pyotr himself was a victim of Chagidiel's vile machinations, and is all too happy to help out those who aided him. An entire world will be sculpted between the two of you representing your ideals and dearest hopes, and populated with servants, beasts and all manner of lifeforms who while lesser than nepharites or lictors will serve you loyally. In future worlds this dream realm will follow you, and remember any changes done to it.

Additionally, if you were kind to the children in dreams and flesh when you liberated them, should you wish **the 700 children may accompany you as followers into future worlds.** None know what criteria Chagidiel picked for his abductions, and whatever life the children once had has been long since beaten out of them. As the first being to show them anything close to compassion in who knows how long, while their semi-divine minds may drive them to operate in mysterious ways they will always remember you as the lynchpin of their freedom. Who knows how powerful they'll be when they fully liberate themselves from the Illusion? Even at this precocious age, they are powerful enough to follow you back into the present.

There is no reward for supporting Binah or Chagidiel. Either would find the idea of needing to reward subordinates for furthering their most critical goals laughable if not offensive, and both are utterly dismissive of all concerns unrelated to their personal profit.

Archons and Death Angels aren't so different as they might pretend.

[3] Which looks like hundreds of children tearing pieces out of his Incarnate's gigantic form.

And there you have it. Do you best to survive, don't make any bargains you can't fulfil and watch your back. These are troubling times ahead, and it might be cautious to be prudent here…

Go Home

Stay

Move On

…unless, of course, there's more to you than meets the eye.

WAKE UP (1000 CP)

The scales fall from your eyes, as you remember *what* you truly are: A divine being, briefly distracted by the Illusion but ultimately awakening from its grip not long before your entry here. Your power and perception of true reality lets you transcend this feeble Illusion (and generally travel between dimensions), operate without fear from reprisal by the Archons without a damn good reason to get in your way and laugh off all mundane harm. As for what manner of divinity you are, well-that's more of an open question.

Drop-Ins discover they have always been a Forgotten God. While your form may be humanoid and even beautiful or horrific as your nature prefers, in truth you are either the personification of a cosmic principle or simply a powerful being from another world capable of perceiving and manipulating True Reality with great power. And often you have enough inhuman traits to be unrecognisable from a human, whether through blue skin or an undefinable aura of madness or dread. Beings such as yourselves seldom have any common origin, and sometimes promote causes or enforce balances in the Illusion more esoteric than the simple struggle for power of the Archons. There is one exception among many of them: A love of humanity that has survived it's imprisonment, even in the most mundane things humans take for granted. You may encounter lovers, philosophers, tyrants and archnemeses from across thousands of years peering at you with uncomprehending eyes in the streets. Perhaps this is a fine time for revenge. Or perhaps despite the humans' cruel deeds, you still yearn to touch the embers of their celestial flame and realize the Demiurge's promises weren't worth what you lost in companionship.

The other commonality among gods is their divine power is often focused through a certain theme, in which it boasts reality-breaking power. The God of the Highways for example knows the secret paths throughout Metropolis and serves as an able kind. It's voice can be heard over changing radio channels, and its handprint can appear on a smartphone. It can move along the highways fast enough to appear in new cities moments later, and manifest at crossroads everywhere. It holds keys and artifacts it has snared from across true reality, and travel between worlds with ease. Not all such powers are so focus into its theme; the Highway God has been known to summon phantoms and sip from the souls of those dead in traffic accidents. However your strongest powers, those that can move heaven and earth to your mood, are those of your theme.

Prisoners simply Awaken, remembering their full glory as a mature specimen of humanity in its divine splendour. They boast powers and abilities far beyond reason, and like the Forgotten Gods can see and interact with all realms of reality beyond the Illusion at once. Death is little more than a transformation they do not lose memories from and a mystic attack dog, and if completely destroyed the Awakened can recreated themselves through rebirth or by simply creating a new body from nothing. They can change all facets of their physical form as they please, reweaving DNA and excreting new, exciting hormones at will, regressing or expanding flesh, cartilage and muscle as their whims decree-and were particularly adept at it among deities, renowned for the beauty they inspired as much as the terror. Time and space have no grip of them, and nearly any detrimental effect can be shrugged off like an old snakeskin at will. Finally, their power over matter and dimensions is great indeed. They casually harness the forces wielded through magic rites at will, and with the same effort a mortal puts into a ritual can even shape true reality to their pleasing. Above all, they are creatures of passion. Though humans conquered entire civilizations and explored all forms of lust, though they enslaved all they desired and annihilated all that bored them, though even the marches of Gaia were plundered for worlds to enslave or resources to claim, so great was their ruthless carnal hedonism that even among the conquered it won mankind friends and lovers among those who could not help but admired how beautifully they annihilated worlds.

These examples in particular are merely children's tricks, wielded by the youngest of the Awoken. No mundane weapon can harm you without magical aid. You heal even the worst mundane wounds in minutes, heal nearly any wound you cannot regenerate quickly enough to your liking from and your mind is inured to nearly all telepathy. Time is yours to twist, stetch and compress and extreme rates-or even stop completely at will; do not forget that even before Awakening, skilled human magicians could transcend time. Space is no less easy to distort and remake, whether to teleport arbitrary distances, create gravity wells or seal off locations and enemies in folds of space-time. You can share your thoughts and emotions to those around you freely, and boast a fine telekinesis that can blunt the attacks of other gods/or protect yourself through personal barriers. Despite their greater individual power, the Archons and Death Angels rightfully fear what mankind could accomplish in numbers. If humans could be said to have a weakness, it may be that in their comprehensive mastery of their own experiences and facets they may lack the focus of greater cosmological principles other divinities wield.

Exiles have none to turn to, but the void of Achlys. So the void turns to them instead. You have been touched by the power of the nothingness before creation, and infused with its cosmic oblivion into something akin to a Forgotten God of entropy. Though far from the vast scope She Who Waits Below operates on, your power hails from a similar source and both she and the Blind Guardian who guards her temple will recognise you as kin. Your powers are narrower in scope than many deities, but all the mightier for being concentrated. When you turn your hand to destruction, death and darkness even the Archons hesitate before getting in your way.

Gaolers find that they are Incarnates of an Archon somehow blessed with independence, independent from the Archon that they originated from. Your physical form is a thing of power, like the wind of a hurricane bundled into mortal form. Through sheer power you could tear apart flesh like paper mache, move so fast as to teleport over short distances and hurl men great distances. Their control of their form is also sufficient to permit shapeshifting into supernatural ones, like a mobile iron statue. In one field of magic as understood by the humans your powers are those of a master, and such is your regeneration that you could regrow maimed limbs immediately in battle. But your true power, the one that as easily wielded as that of the Awakened, is shown through whichever principle you were once wholly bound to.

The Incarnate of Kether for example would be able to assemble or supernaturally enforce a hierarchy on the most disparate of lifeforms-or disassemble it, if it wished. They could make themselves untouchable in the eyes of society's laws, lay lingering punishments and restrictions on behaviour that persist between realms of existence and prevent a loyal servant from dying in the line of duty (though they may soon wish to be dead, and such powers can be disrupted). Moreover, by drawing on their principles for power and enacting in alignment with them, they can strengthen themselves even further-just as the Archons themselves draw power from the importance of their principles to mortal life. Enough that even an Incarnate could do serious damage to a true Archon's Citadel.

Likewise Torturers are rogue Incarnates of a Death Angel, wholly separated from their greater self. They wield all the power of an Incarnate, save bound to the principles of their parent Death Angel and with a greater focus on destruction and suffering that the restriction, confinement and control that Archon Incarnates lend themselves better to. The Herald of Violence, for example, is rumoured to be a rogue Incarnate of Hareb-Serap who has laid waste to entire villages for ritual sacrifice in his name.

Wild Things have two options, with most meaningful differences being aesthetic. The first is to be an Enwildened God: An enlightened person or deific being from another world, who was greatly diminished by the Demiurge's trickery. Seeking refuge in Gaia's wilderness, you were infused with her chaotic essence savage passion. Your powers may resemble any of the divinities above, but your powers and appearance have been unmistakeably marked by Gaia's touch. The principles you personify, if any, would be those seen through the lens of an animal's instinctive urge for survival-not the torment of Inferno or the rigidity of the Archons. Above all else, your powers are focused on freedom, growth, fertility and destructive consumption.

The second is to be the closest thing Gaia might have to an Incarnate. Whether one of your parents was mortal, divine or something stranger, they were brutally ravished by something in powerful in Gaia's depths. You were born in the form of an attractive human with an ominous aura-but your true form is an amorphous being slightly larger than a rhinoceros with scattered animalistic traits amid your inchoate form-and no less divine power.

While some deific beings may be more well-known than others and have specialities others lack, all are considered moderately powerful for their kind-for now. You may define your divinity through the lens of certain extensive investments you have made here, gaining advantages your peers likely lack as described below:

Quell The Divine: A barren, still world is unworthy of true divinity. Where your light falls, your effort is as bolstered against resistance or impediment of all kinds as the powers of others are subdued. Your charisma and speechcraft become those of a legendary orator, potentially overwriting memory with your overwhelming argument and leaving it's fiery passion imprinted on locations or through manuscripts that may inspire religions in your honour. Blows you strike bypass supernatural protections and bite deep into the most unnatural of physiologies, crumble stone like sand and even infections or wounds are restored by the power and glory that secures your kingdom. To say nothing of how your mystical and divine powers of all kinds are raised high and made glorious-reinforced as if by rebar in concrete by the divine radiance of your soul.

In Our Own Image: It is only natural for a god of your stature to gather worshippers. But as the Demiurge was filled with strength and glory by mankind's reverence, you too deserve worthier tribute than mere praise. All that worship you restore your reserves of mystical power, bolster your strength and endurance, soothe your mind and glorify you in the eyes of others. A minute trickle to be

certain, that can be stymied and lessened should others lose faith, but nevertheless a neverending one so long as the idea of your divinity remains present among sentient beings. Your petitioners' spiritual strength will also determine how much faith you receive; there is a reason why the Archons banished the Children of the Underworld into the realms below, while humanity was compelled to praise the Demiurge through his religious infrastructure.

Beyond These Feet of Clay: A facet of your experience was the key to unlocking your buried potential. Why not continue nurturing it's power? All your divine power over your purchased facet of the human experience is elevated, with your existing capacity in it becoming grand, intoxicating or simply mighty even among other specimens of human divinity. Even better, through intense experience of your facet you can develop rituals of symbolic apotheosis enabling to elevate the powers of your facet to such heights that can emulate other forms of divinity with corresponding traits-not gaining their powers, but developing similar ones through the facet empowered by this trait at your existing strength. Such rites involve mystically identifying yourself with a certain mystic role, and if successful may gain you the deity's fate, dharma and essential circumstances and relationships-although other deities will likely raise an eyebrow at you trying to pose as an outright replacement to them. Temporarily seizing such grandeur will be easier than gaining it permanently.

Humanity Unchained: What good is freedom with nobody to share it with? Henceforth you may liberate others from seals, illusions or constraints of other kinds simply by sitting and talking through their issues. This is no mundane feat of escapology, but a combination of psychology and ritualism that empowers others with a fraction of your own internalised liberty to find their own escape or reclaim their inner potential. Even a prisoner shackled by ball and chain, behind iron bars, on an island in the middle of a stormy sea could be guided safely to freedom if they trusted you enough. Those particularly inspired by your efforts may in turn gain the power to free others in the same manner.

Monument of Sins: What a horrid, putrid thing you are. The Archons cast you from their sight for even your service was disquieting to them. How would they shudder if you could rebel? The madness you emanate as a Gransangthir can now corrupt geography, phenomena and abstract qualia with a fraction of the skill you can merge with flesh. You can turn water into a brackish, disquieting extension of yourself, make stone as raw flesh and even invest thoughts and imagination with the symbolic heaving of your bulk-at first simply clumsy extensions of your will, but as your influence over them slowly grows you may incite what you taint to physically move to your bulk and be assimilated. Then, you may warp and merge the mass made part of you into ever more disquieting configurations-or nurture the idea of yourself to intensify your assimilative madness in the world above. You gain no special proficiency with moving around what you have incorporated into yourself…unless it was especially mobile. Even gods could become part of your whole-though know that just as the masses of humanity provide no special power, only those with full access to their powers can grant you special abilities.

A Plea To Nobody: You were truly born to grovel before your betters. But you have also learned that many value a compliant pawn, while underestimating their

motivations. You may lend your divine power to other deities, bolstering them far beyond what they could normally achieve. While many lictors dream of usurping their Archon masters, for most it remains a pipe dream-without your assistance. Moreover, those who consciously and willingly accept aid from you in this manner become supernaturally incapable of suspecting a betrayal from you and have a frankly supernatural tendency to expose their weaknesses, reveal the shatterpoints in their schemes around you and position themselves to be more easily rendered helpless around you-as if having forgotten they ever considered you a threat. It's like they're *daring* a being as pathetic as you are to take a shot-and while a failed betrayal will be swiftly punished, you'll also find that convincing them it was a misunderstanding is far easier than it should be.

Incarnate Oubliette: Look upon your works, ye mighty, and despair. While previously you could only build pseudo-Citadels, glorified amplifiers meant to crudely emulate the Archons' divine power, you're now much closer to their cosmic stature. With a complex ritual, you may bind yourself to one of your pseudo-Citadels, abstracting your physical form into its foundations to truly merge with it. While you lose your physical traits in this state, your supernatural and mental abilities are amplified such that nearly all of them can be emulated; moving your building-body between realities would be easy, and as it gathers strength for you it may become more elaborate, complex and full of useful facilities to you in accord with your values. Your spirit and construction will continue to merge and unlock new powers related to the literal bastion of your divine power. In time, you may learn to transcend the need for a physical construct altogether and simply recreate your Citadel-body around you-though it would take far greater effort and influence to wield such power over the Illusion as the Archons themselves enjoy.

Points of Authority: It seems your interdimensional nature had a more profound impact on the Archon than even it expected, likely to its panic. Your control over the principle of your Archon and capacity to amplify it is heightened much more-such that you could disrupt it trying to wrest control from it away from the Archon to leave it critically vulnerable to an enemy Death Angel-or empower it to stand against many of its equals in stature at once. Possibility itself bends in the face of your principle's overwhelming primacy, and with enough skill and effort or the right resources you could do literally impossible things for the sake of promoting it. And when you are impeded in the execution of your principle, the Archon's minions appear from nowhere in droves to support you. Though at first these are mere lictors or angels, in time you may be able to invoke the Incarnates of your Archon to lend you support; trust none of these beings fully, but know all accord you a certain formal authority for the service of spreading their principle to other worlds. Last but not least, any other summoning magic you can perform can become a beacon to your principle, spreading it from your minions like little beacons.

The Nightmare That Never Ends: The shadows cast by your power pool and merge, becoming something approaching the image of Astaroth's fathomless consciousness. By enacting their most defining principles and traits, your Incarnates can self-improve by increasing their influence and honing their prowess in the world. A great beast could develop a jagged hide of supernatural venom or a

breath of hellfire, while a statesman could gain the wraith-like trait of possession and a living music video even learn to project tangible entities under its control into the real world. All such beings are now beacons of your power and soul as well, and a fraction of their gathered strength is shares to you, as their overself. Your consciousness is improved to be able to sense and know what they know at all times while allowing them to retain as much independence as you wish, and wherever they go your power is magnified as if by multiple rituals of great scope. To gather them in one place could potentially allow you to manifest your raw will into a vortex of power capable of bending the Illusion and true reality alike with crushing raw will. In time, you might transcend physical form altogether to become a great spirit capable of remaking the world where your presence is strong in your image-as Inferno is to Astaroth-and doing with raw will what you could with your body.

Hellbound Homecoming: You are suffering distilled. The scalpel of Inferno drawn exquisitely to open a thin red line along the spine of the universe. When you inflict suffering in accordance with your chosen principle it lingers, persists, escalates into a cascading trend of ruination, tragic circumstances and destructive behaviour to worsen the wider world. To torture a man then let him go back to his life might blight his relationships with deepseated trauma making him lash out, continuously worsen his mental wellbeing-then attempt to kill his own family in a fit of festering madness at the back of his mind. To smash flat a stock exchange could precipitate a depression on a global scale. The harm you inflict is supernaturally incurable and unmendable, with only the greatest of restorative supernatural forces having even a hope of making right what you set wrong. And where the suffering is particularly concentrated, you may summon forth the demons of your patron's principle to do you bidding, forgoing the usual resources or effort. Such beings will prove placated enough on the horror you have unleashed to be fairly eager to comply with you-though when you wring enough horrors to beckon the Death Angel's Incarnates, it would still be wise to be cautious around them.

Systems of a Breakdown: In nature, everything is always part of something bigger than itself-and what could be greater than the forces of the universe? Wherever you spread life, curious microcosms of both earthly and celestial natural phenomena springs up in the wildest, most dynamic portions of the ecosystems you create. Miniature whirlwinds erupt under trees. Searing hot galaxies orbit gracefully in deep pools. Space and time may wobble in lessened emulation of an event horizon. And though obstacles to outsiders, these forces are never impediments to you, your allies or Gaia-touched life. In fact, for you and your creations these phenomena not only actively move to avoid you or provide advantageous positions, but actively cultivate growth and rejuvenation to supernatural levels in their wake. Where miniature comets fall or nebulae blaze, fauna, fungi and flora alike may spontaneously attain sanity while retaining all their loyalty, develop supernatural abilities, spontaneously merge into greater forms or attain other seemingly impossible adaptations. Even the microorganisms grow so rapidly, that when outsiders or foes stand within the ecosystem they rapidly corrupt and augment them into Gaia's image-subsuming mere mortals to your control in minutes, and even affecting lictors or nepharites enough for them to likely quicky seek a means to leave. The strength, vitality and *intense* primal instincts you feel in the ecosystem are no illusion; an old man could leap and hunt

like a jaguar, while simply shrugging off multiple high calibre bullet wounds or disembowelment during it by tapping into the pulse of life. Greater feats of ecological divinity await your discovery as you attune your divinity to the pulse of Gaia's design. Also to the extent it matters, upon such lands you and all other lifeforms will be continuously suffused with a divinely intense carnal stamina and impetus to mate and establish dominance so powerful, that your sexual fluids can work miracles of life while your sexual prowess itself can manifest localised blasphemies to satiate your desires.

Apex of Evolution: For all your power, you were previously limited to a singular body to warp under evolution's ceaseless might. But now your soul surpasses your flesh, and is more akin to some florescent, fiery radiation than the limited vistas of a biological shell. Your core essence is now made from the energies and forces that Gaia uses to build and destroy the natural world like a mad toymaker, no less divine than the stately bodies of the Awakened or Incarnates. You don flesh and evolve it into superior forms even more easily than before, and can pervasively control all you touch with the unity of a colonial organism; instead of one body for example, you could spread out your biomass into a plague of microbes that distributes your evolutionary powers to all living beings it touches-and bring them under your control, or shear them apart for resources. Or you could mould your flesh to become a colonial organism of divine strength: A coral reef of sorts with a thousand lashing pseudopods, shells of bone poisoned with divine radiation and spinal column sherds that can eject into symbiotic bodies that fight on your behalf. In your energy form you could hurtle between planets as imperviously as a comet, or unleash devastating energy attacks resembling gamma ray bursts in miniature. From nowhere you could sprout dozens of claws, jaws and other forms you have donned and discarded near-instantly-or trigger a bloom of life capable of thriving even on an Archon's Citadel before the being tries to deal with it. The storm and fury of the material world and it's elemental forces will be yours to play with and embody in ways even the Awakened cannot match up to in raw, uncontrollable might. All you tear asunder and all you sire from your own essence only bolsters the divine power within you, the very cycle of life, death and evolution bolstering you in ways neither the Archons' nor Death Angels' relatively restrictive sources of spiritual nourishment cannot match.

Finally, your liberated state also offers a possibility unavailable to those of…lesser stature. This goal is wholly optional, and will set you on a collision course with *at least* the Death Angels and Archons.

One More God Rejected

When the Demiurge's Citadel sunk into a fathomless abyss, some Archons believed they are fit to replace the Demiurge. All Death Angels are scrambling to secure Astaroth's own claim on cosmic hegemony. *Fools, the lot of them.*

Elysium deserves a firmer, more reliable hand at the tiller.

Yours.

Your goal, like that of so many others, is to conquer Elysium. Slay any power that will not submit to you. Crush the power structures of your enemies until resistance is certain death. Shatter the citadels of the Archons, or make them flee forever on oaths sworn on all they hold dear. Liberate mankind or not as you please, but ensure they are not against your reign; it is acceptable to rule an empty world once all humanity has abandoned it for Metropolis again, but not a rebellious one. It should be noted here that **neither Gaia nor She Who Waits Below have any particular interest in Elysium, and mercifully are not among those you must overcome.**

Ah, but then the less worthy already have such aspirations. Now you must enact a great harrowing of Inferno too. The Death Angels must bow and scrape, or be broken and scuppered. Their teaming hordes scattered to the four winds, liberated from their eternal suffering or simply tortured even further into compliance. Astaroth must fall before you, in defeat or submission. And then measures must be taken so that Inferno will never be a threat to your domain again-whether the entire plane of existence is extinguished for good, sealed off to rot or dealt with some other way.

Finally when all is done, you must seal the doors on the Demiurge's tomb-or utterly shatter it. One way or another.

You will know your goal is reached when a great clank resounds in the depths of the Machine City, and from whence the Demiurge's Citadel once stood a new stronghold emerges into what passes for the light of day in Metropolis.

Your reward for conquering Elysium is the Machine Citadel: A more compact and independent replacement for the Machine City that maintains the Illusion.
Smaller than the complex, mechanical construction covering a large part of Metropolis, this mechanised fortress is still a staggering wealth of seemingly contradictory technological systems. Colossal steam turbines are wired to primitive pylons, transmitting power over several kilometres. Clockworks with copper wires and brass chains intermingling with both modern and ancient technologies, while control centres are illuminated by flickering screens and ghostly holograms. This place, which you may access easily through a door in your Warehouse, has machines able to defy many of the laws of physics. Clone tanks weave DNA into both beautiful and monstrous creatures. Prisms show the deepest desires of visitors as elaborate illusions. Charts detail the dismemberment of entire worlds, and ritual chambers with electrodes and surgical equipment open portals to other dimensions while mirrored screens permit visitors to see throughout time. And so on. A race of servants expertly maintains it, whether the techrons seen to service the Machine City ably or a strange new choir of angels.

And once you have learned this construct's complex controls, in future worlds you too will be able to create more iterations of Elysium: Entire realities in which the supernatural is heavily suppressed, ingeniously disguised and subject to large scale modification by your hand. While it's exact purpose may be lost to the ages, with time and study you might harness the Machine Citadel for the basis of similar scale cosmological workings-whether to alter the parameters of the Illusion, build a

bridge between worlds or otherwise reshape reality on a scale staggering even to gods. Perhaps with some ingenuity, it could even be improved.

Notes

If Taroticum and Rise of the Black Madonna are both taken, assume the former takes place several months after the latter.

The magic humans can use in this world are a methodology by which they can temporarily unlock powers that used to come naturally to them prior to their imprisonment inside the illusion. There is no one true way, as the performance of rituals is merely an assistive tool meant to channel their inner power. Even non-

humans who utilize magic channel their power from within themselves, with rituals demanding a sacrifice to Archons or Death Angels serving as a focus through the sacrificial act.

Madness magic typically demands personal sacrifice and illogical rituals involving the magician's mind releasing its grip on the Illusion i.e. conventional sanity. Such magic can open portals to other realms including Metropolis, the underground or Limbo, and summon or banish beings from those dimensions bound to the caster's will. It can alter others and yourself in body and mind, or summon others into your own hallucinations.

Space-time magic manipulates durations, velocities, distances and angels using advanced machines, architectural features, patterns and mathematical computations. Most such spells require lengthy preparation and calculation. It can scry faraway places, the past, potential futures-and travel to any of them. Summoning beings associated with time and space is also possible, as is perceiving the potential futures of entities or objects.

Dream magic naturally directs and creates dreams. Talented ones can open physical portals between Limbo and Elysium, summon and banish creatures of dream and as mentioned above enter the dreams of others to manipulate them.

Death magic always demands sacrifices, either from the magician or living beings. Through it the practitioner can open portals into the realms of death, summon and banish demons or spirits, and bind the dead in physical bodies.

Passion magic often requires a multitude of participants. It can create portals of passage anywhere where human passion is felt strongly, and manipulate emotions on a grand scale as well as the Illusion itself with the help of a crowd. Passion magic can also alter unborn fetuses, or cause souls to be reborn in new bodies.

Many beings from the supernatural realms such as nepharites and lictors have magical abilities resembling the most powerful and exceptional of mortal magic users, though usually at least somewhat focused into their purpose. Apart from the usual slew of rituals or situational abilities, such beings often have rituals that can imbue or enslave others with their patron's principle as well as several spells mastered to the point of being innate, reflexive exercises of will. Beings from the Gaoler or Torturer backgrounds almost certainly have such power, though beings from the Exile or Wild Thing background are frequently not powerful or intelligent enough reflexively to develop a similar level of skill. You are assumed to be an average specimen of your kind with the expected balance of physical, influential and mystical power-although certain perks may alter this balance in your favour to be an exceptional specimen of your kind.

No, you don't automatically get out of certain drawbacks by swearing to already dead Archons. The pacts bind you beyond space and time, and even fallen Archons can exert great influence.