Ubel Blatt v 0.9

A Jump Setting for Jumpchain, by CanYouMeme

Welcome to yet another fantasy setting, this time with Dark German Horror styling! Like Berserk, but with more sex and slightly less grimdark!

Once, there was a nation like any other. A nation of people and magic, with thoughts and dreams and a culture all their own.

Then biomancy was invented. Strength and vitality that rendered many tools obsolete, health and intelligence beyond what those naturally born could ever hope to gain – with biomancy, the body itself became a canvas of finest art and a road-map to ambitions and hopes for the future. With biomancy, even death itself became an obstacle to be overcome instead of an inevitable fate.

Unfortunately, biomancy couldn't change the flaws of mortal souls and minds. Whether deliberately or accidentally, the masters of this field of magic forgot one of the greatest and most ironclad rules of exploration and experimentation; just because you can do something doesn't automatically mean you should.

With the breaking of this rule came the breaking of many others, and what started as a gift became a horror like no other. Thousands were mutilated and experimented upon for the benefits of one. Equality and civility was replaced with condemning others to a status of meat-bag, fit only to be used as fodder for the strong. Grand ideas and a wonder to explore was overtaken by debauchery and a child-like obsession to experiment with how far you could go, just to see the result.

Thus was born Wischtech, a name that would grow like a cancer to consume all that came before it. Where once there was a land of peace and plenty, there was only a dark expanse of mountains and forests that was a lethal danger, even to its own natives. Where once there was a nation of people not so different from any other, there was only a horde of misshapen monsters and the cruel lunatics who created them. Where once there was a magic that cured illnesses and granted power to the weak, there was only a corruption that twisted and broke all who dabbled in it.

If there were any who resisted this Fall, they either died, fled without word, or remained silent and hidden in hopes of going unnoticed.

With all their lands and peoples broken and lost, Wischtech would drive south looking for more prey, running headlong into the borders of the Szaalenden Empire. This would spark years of brutal non-stop warfare, marked by the development of powerful magical weapons and new ways to consume the living and dead alike. From Spring through Winter, monsters raged across the land and were hunted down by companies and armies of grim men and women, only

to be slaughtered in return. Famine and disease were regular visitors, and every single family had one of their number die in defense of the Empire, or knew another family who did. To make a bad situation worse, it was impossible for the Szaalendens to counterattack into Wischtech territory, as a toxic barrier of eldritch fog prevented all incursions into Wischtech lands.

In desperation, Emperor Largor III consulted with his greatest diviners and soothsayers for a way to break the deadlock and rid the Empire of Wischtech once and for all. After much conversation with supernatural beings and gazing at the skeins of time and fate, a plan was concocted to create and arm an elite strike force. The purest, strongest magical ores and woods were found and brought to the capital where they were forged into 14 Lances of immense holy might. At the same time, a call was sent out across the land for all the best and brightest of Szaalenden to come and demonstrate their skills before the Emperor. For this team, all titles of nobility and station were abandoned, and all crimes were temporarily pardoned with said pardon becoming permanent if selected.

14 Lances to break the darkness. 14 Heroes to banish Wischtech.

Armed and prepared, the 14 Heroes waged war across the length and breadth of the Empire. Three of them – Ediem, Lanbard, and Elgunaha – would be killed in the process, but for the first time, Wischtech was not merely halted but driven back. In the last year of the war, a mighty thrust of every soldier the Szaalenden Empire could spare made its way to the border, and distracted the armies of Wischtech long enough for the remaining 11 Heroes to breach the Fog Wall and enter Wischtech lands.

With the Heroes fighting on the Wischtech side, reinforcements fell to a mere fraction of their former numbers. Emboldened by the turn of the tide, the Szaalenden Empire committed everything it had to a last, overwhelming assault. It was a success, wiping Wischtech off of Empire lands and bringing a fragile peace.

All the land held its breath, waiting for word of their Heroes' success or failure.

Many months later, Seven would return and declare Victory. But it was a sour one, as the Seven told a tale of betrayal. Four Heroes had been broken by the horrors of Wischtech lands, and betrayed the Seven. Ascheriit, the Blatt Meister; Kfer, the Adamant Knight of Jebnaress; Gusstav, the Queen of War; and Krentel, the Archmage. The Four Lances of Betrayal were cut down in the dark, and their Lances were lost.

As bittersweet as it was, the Seven Heroes – Schtemwolech, Barestar, Glenn, Lebelont, Gullengurv, Nirgenfel, and Ischudien – were welcomed back with cries of joy. They were granted the highest of noble titles and dominion over the most damaged areas of the Empire, as well as all the support that could be spared to make these lands whole again. Slowly, the Empire was rebuilt and its people began to heal.

None ever thought to question the story. If any ever thought to keep a careful eye on the

Seven Heroes, none were overly committed to it.

The Jump begins 20 years after the return of the Lances, one month before a certain chance meeting in the far corners of civilization…

Origins:

Background (choose 1 for free):

Drop-In: No history, no connections, no memories. Just you and whatever you bring with you.

Fighter: Maybe you're a soldier in the Empire's armies. Maybe you're a mercenary fighting for coin. Perhaps you're a bandit, raiding and pillaging for your daily bread. Regardless, you know your way around steel, and are familiar with the ebb & flow of war.

Mage: Whether it be the elemental prowess and disciplined spellcraft of Empire mages, the gruesome flesh-crafting and eldritch enchantments of Wischtech, or something more exotic and foreign to these lands, your knowledge and skill with arcane manipulations is worthy of note.

Starting Location (roll a dice, randomly generate a number, or pay 50 CP to choose):

1. Ekstems, a small village on the far eastern Szaalenden frontier. Nothing particularly exciting about it – it's a farming settlement like a thousand others. The people are nervous with rumors of the encroaching Black Wing Sword Army.
2. Rielde-Velem, a border town on the eastern Szaalenden frontier. Its biggest feature is a well-built fortress that guards a major choke-point. The town is legendary as the site where Elgunaha, one of the 14 Lances, sacrificed his life in a magical ritual to conjure a massive rock wall across the entire breadth of the Empire called the Thousand Stone Spears.
3. Ahadodschado, a town in the Mollan province. One of the major farming towns of the area, and a stopping point for Schtemwolech's forces on patrol. Nothing special in its own right, but a great many refugees and migrants pass through here.
4. Schtemwolech's Castle, a fortress in the Mollan province and its functional capital commanded by the hero of the same name. Well regarded as the site of a major victory for the Empire, and one of the first uses of large scale magitech artillery by them in the war.
5. Jullas-Abllas, a free city located in the county of Lembda. Located at a junction of the largest river in the Empire and several tributaries thereof, a combination of toeing the line,

generous donations, economic might, war merits, and occasional politicking allow it to maintain its status as a mostly-independent polity.

6. Old Ruins, in the Jebr province. Though the warring clans seem to go everywhere else in their search for a fight, they studiously avoid this once-thriving town. For the most part, they refuse to even speak of it.

7. The Great Valley Fortress, Jebr Province. A large rift in the earth stretching for dozens of miles, this particular location is the site of a fortification built by Lebelont to guard the only major path deeper into the Empire.

8. Kroezsche Sword Academy, in Krohzen Province. The most famous military academy in the Empire, but though it trains officers of every stripe, its primary claim to fame is as the home of the Ludenschoft school of swordsmanship – the most prolific producers of Blatt Meisters in the Empire for hundreds of years.

9. Szaalion, the Imperial Capital. Grown over the course of centuries and tempered by war, it nevertheless remains the largest and richest city in the Empire and the home of the royal family. It is here that the Council of Ten Royal Houses is hosted to write Empire-wide laws and solve equally large disputes under the watchful eye of the Emperor.

10. The Lunar Castle, a facility located west of Szaalion. One of the few places of prominent magical power left untouched by the war, and home to the Seer of the Stars who uses that power to keep a diviner's eye on important events and trends. Very heavily guarded by elite troops and mages – good luck to you if you're found here without the highest levels of authorization.

11. The Dragon's Corridor, a massive winding canyon hundreds of miles long. It wraps around and defines the borders of the three northern provinces. Renowned for being regularly filled with winds that put storms to shame, hosting many dragons both large and small, and being one of the primary sources of the odd floating stone that is often used as a primary material in the Empire's airships.

12. Nameless Forest, beyond the northern border of the Empire. Whether bad luck or pissing off your benefactor brought you here, you're in for a bad time. With the collapse of the Wischtech chain of command, such as it was, this dark land has transformed into a constant battleground where remnants and cast-offs constantly kill for dominance.

Perks:

All Perks are discounted to their origins. 100CP discounted Perks are free.

General (Undiscounted):

STOP RIGHT THERE! THIS IS A COCKBLOCK! (free/-100): *The titular manga that inspired this jump is excessively lewd – it ranges from "Fanservice!" to "Wow, that's really stupid." to "KILL IT WITH FUCKING FIRE!"*

Thus, as a courtesy from your friendly neighborhood Jump-chan, you gain two powers. The first is a toggle that reduces the lewdness of whatever setting you find yourself in as it applies to you. The rest of the world remains effectively unchanged, but such eroticism will be more hesitant to intrude upon your life. Clothing will become less skimpy, casually horny people will redirect their attentions elsewhere, and so forth.

The second perk is a sort of mental dimmer switch on your libido. You are instinctively capable of applying a multiplier to your arousal at any given time; 100% leaves it effectively

unchanged, 0% turns it off entirely, and anything in between applies a "cap" on how aroused you can be at any given time.

This perk is free for both the duration of this Jump and the rest of your Chain.

For 100 points, this perk can be enhanced. Without this upgrade, these are mere quality-of-life changes; they provide no defense whatsoever against folks trying to use Lust as a weapon against you. With this upgrade, the toggle becomes a minor and very subtle reality-warping effect that serves as a sort of redirective barrier against eroticism. The dimmer switch becomes an active defense for both soul and mind; where before you could not exert any notable force, now an attacker will have to fight in order to get anywhere. This upgrade provides no strength on its own, but synergizes well with other mental/magical/spiritual/willpower/whatever defenses.

A Strong Sword Arm (free/100 CP): The war may technically be over, but the lands of the Empire still bear many scars. Banditry and brigandage still plague the towns and byways, pockets of Wischtech remnants can be found in unlikely places, every village has at least a few combat veterans, and the nation has recovered enough for the corrupt and callous to resume their backstabbing games.

As a freebie, you are given 2 years worth of military experience as a soldier in the Empire's armies. This includes enough practice to handle all the common military weapons with a tolerable level of skill, the experience to properly wear and manage your armor and uniform, the training to march and work and fight in formation, how to not die in the wilderness, and enough basic knowledge of military customs and rules to not embarrass yourself when the nobles put on a surprise inspection. You won't be anything worth special notice, but you'll be good enough to be called one of the "blooded" instead of a "FNG".

For an additional 100 cp, this purchase is added to you as a permanent, non-degrading addition. Not your bodymod – you, the Jumper. It won't fade from lack of use and won't be taken from you unless they break out the silly soul-breaking shit.

An Honest Trade (free/50/100 CP): Soldiers may be the most visible demonstration of a nation's might, but only a fool would assume they constitute a majority of the nation's strength. That lofty status falls to the laborers, tradesmen, and artisans of the people; a reliable worker is accorded far more respect in the day-to-day life than those who carry the nobles' banners to war.

Pick a mundane trade of the type you'd expect to find in pre-Rennaisance Europe, such as blacksmith, cook, carpenter, stone mason, etc etc (no gunsmithing or bomb-making or magical stuff or such). You get 10 years of experience in practicing that trade, as if you had spent 8 hours every day of those years working hard. You may purchase an additional 10 years for 50 CP each, either stacking it on your previous purchase or acquiring skill in a new profession.

If you pay 100 CP for each purchase, then each such "doubled" purchase is added to you the Jumper in the same fashion as A Strong Sword Arm, above.

Blue Blood (200/400 CP): Szaalenden is a distinctly feudal land, and though the nobles as a rule are generally decent folk, there's no denying the benefits of being born at a higher station. Without this perk, your background is strictly plebeian. You might be born to a reasonably

wealthy family – maybe even to a rich merchant or famous artisan – but you have no noble titles and no special privileges.

Purchasing one of the two sub-choices in this option gives you a blood-relation to nobility of your choice within the parameters of the options. In addition to the usual social perks of nobility, this grants you a minor increase to all purchases made in this document. You'll have a bit more experience in your chosen profession, more skill with blade and spell, your gear will be of noticeably higher quality, and so on and so forth. If you are a Drop-In origin, then you're a bastard. You'll still get the boost, but you'll have to jump through the usual hoops if you want to actually claim the title; the circumstances of your bastardry will make this a hard, but not excruciatingly difficult process. In future jumps, this purchase scales / changes to fit whatever setting you're in. In a future setting without titled nobility, you'll be part of a family that has an equivalent amount of economic or military influence

For 200 CP, you may elect to be born into a family of lesser nobles. A knightly household, a baron's clan, the child of a tribal chieftain of high renown – whichever you choose, you're high up enough to make the peasants take notice.

For 400 CP, you're part of the high nobility – dukes and the overlords of multiple tribes are the stereotypical sort here.

Fae-Blooded (400 CP): Among the many legends and myths of the Szaalenden people, some of the most prominent are the legends of elves; beings descended from the Fae creatures of the world, with a connection to magic that no human can match. The stories claim they are bound to the moon and draw strength from its presence, and all may know them by their inhuman grace and long ears. But though there are many half-bloods with markings that imply they are descended from them, no one has seen a full-blooded elf in living memory. They have been relegated to stories, a people that once were but are no longer.

In you, the legend has once more been made real. Your bond with the energies of the world around you has given you a greater power than you might otherwise have, resulting in a notable though not overwhelming passive increase to your body's might, both physical and eldritch. This boost grows greater with the phases of the moon and greater still when exposed to its light. Your greatest heights come with the nights where a clear full moon smiles upon you, unhindered by cloud & roof. This bond shines through in a way that other spirits of the natural world can see it, making them more inclined to have a favorable disposition in your presence. Post jump, these benefits carry over to other natural spirits and supernatural facets – you are still bound to the nearest moon or equivalent force/entity for your active power increases.

This perk functions as a capstone booster; the effects are listed in the Notes section.

If you're one of those souls who don't want to be turned into a "pansy tree-hugging wanker", you can choose a different "species" with a different set of physical markings and an equivalent bond to a different natural element. Perhaps you're a dwarf, with a strong and stocky earth-toned body bound to the high mountains and the flow of the world's blood in the deeps. Or maybe a selkie, rolling in tune and time with the waves and tides in your dappled skin. Whichever you choose, your power and its general mechanics are on the same level as the elves of old.

Drop-In:

Vagabond (100 CP): In a world with such misery and strife, there is immense power in the ability and will to simply walk away from it all. As hard as the road and journey may be, it is often harder and less rewarding to stay. It's a lesson you've learned well and practiced often. With this purchase comes years of experience in how to travel efficiently and part on good terms with others.

You know all the little techniques and methods for minimizing travel time and the fatigue from said travel. You know how to pack and prepare quickly and efficiently, as well as manage your loads as you go and ration your supplies. You've developed a basic but solid foundation in survival skills, and you've long practiced that curious loping march that eats up the miles with a minimum of effort.

What's The Buzz? (100 CP): It's a common truism that nothing is faster than the rumor mill. Even those experienced in such things are often caught off guard by just how far information can spread. It doesn't help that said information is often embellished or altered for one or more of a hundred and some different reasons, which can make it near impossible to know what actually happened if you weren't there.

Fortunately, your experiences have given you an uncanny skill at parsing gossip and news. You may not be able to divine the actual truth from tavern-speak and hostel-gossip, but it's generally not that difficult to tell the difference between those who exaggerate, those who straight up lie, and those who believe they are telling the truth. Perhaps more importantly, the more a given story falls within the expanse of your knowledge and experience, the more reliably you can correctly judge it as true, partially true, or false without any further input.

Steady On Now (200 CP): When you're all by your lonesome out on the road, injury and mishap are far more deadly than they otherwise would be. Minor cuts can lead to infection, cracked bones slow your travel, and even minor changes in weather can muddy roads and drop dead trees. It's a good thing you've learned how to prepare for all of these and more.

Your skill at reading changes in weather and climate borders on the supernatural, and you're skilled in basic hedge-knowledge to treat, or at least reduce, common injuries and maladies; not enough to substitute for a proper physician, but cuts and broken bones and minor poisonings and such will not be the certain crippling or death for you that they are so many others. But any seasoned traveler knows that prevention is better than treatment, and so you've developed a keen ability to plan your journeys well in advance to avoid likely hazards. It also helps that you have an excellent eye for terrain, enough that you can usually spot every natural stumbling block in the road before it catches you unawares.

One-Man Magical Show (200 CP): When you travel as much as a true vagabond does, your entertainments are reduced to what can be carried with you. It's difficult for town & city dwellers to understand just how limiting that is when there's nothing but you, your mind, and whatever you can carry for company. But you're more than capable of converting what you know to more portable forms.

Games requiring bulky boards and pieces can be reduced to a small thing carried in the hand, hobbies can be reduced to a single knife or chisel and a block of wood or stone, tools can be utilized in odd ways to reduce bulk or even skip unnecessary tools altogether, and you have a keen memory that lowers the need for books and scrolls containing the songs and stories you

know. But entertainment is made better by friends to share it with, and you've built up a method for flair and fancy to enhance your games and performances. A well-timed joke to make your game partner laugh, a measured cadence and volume to bring a song to life, an easy grace as you whittle toys out of deadwood; whatever it is you're doing, you have a true entertainer's skill at making the humdrum mundane into something a little more...more.

The Mendicant's Way (400 CP): Very few ever willingly choose to walk the path of deliberate poverty. Fewer still choose it as the purpose of their life, for it is an undeniable fact that wealth can pave many roads and easy many ills. And yet, The Mendicant's Way remains full of people from every walk of life, because there is a strength in harnessed simplicity that no possessions can ever match.

You have spent your time on this road, and well know the value of poverty. You can easily avoid the age old trap of Judgement based on Possession, and its twinned trap of being overly reliant on your possessions – be they spiritual or material. You have an expert's experience in efficiently making best use of what you have in the moment. And you have developed that unique humility that lets you respectfully treat with others on equal grounds, no matter the social or wealth differences between you; though if the other party is exceptionally full of themselves, mere humility on your part won't affect their stance.

Dross & Gold (400 CP): It can be difficult for "civilized" folk to remember that money has no intrinsic value; it is nothing but a substitute for goods and services. An Imperial gold crown only has as much worth as the people using it trust it to have, and the instant a single participant in a transaction refuses to accept it is the instant it becomes worth less than the metal it's made out of. Entire nations have been brought low by their inability, or outright refusal, to understand this truth. Lives destroyed and cities pillaged because many failed to understand that currency is nothing more than a measurement of trust, and trust makes the world go round.

Fortunately, you are not one of them. You have a keen eye and mind for barter and trading, both in the haggling of a village market and the formal agreements and logstics of merchant guilds. You are quite proficient at finding and creating alternatives in an agreement; substituting favors instead of coin, goods instead of favors, coin instead of goods, and a whole world's worth of alternatives. But perhaps most importantly, you have an almost prescient ability to deal-craft that fulfills the ideal of enlightened greed – a deal where everyone profits and leaves the bargaining table better off than when the haggling began.

The Song Of Life (600 CP)*:* Szaalenden is an old country with old traditions, and there are as many different forms of amusement as there are towns and villages to see. But of all the street performers and entertainers, the Bard is the most well-known and respected, and no art is as well-known as the Three Bardic Gifts. The Gift of Creativity – that which governs a Bard's skill at creating new songs, stories, and other arts. The Gift of Talent – that which is responsible for the Bard's ability to bring art to life. And the titular Bardic Gift – said Bard's ability to match his performance to the people and world around him, to enhance his surroundings and have the performance enhanced in return.

Rejoice, for all three of these Gifts are now yours in spades. Your capacity for song, dance, and storytelling is such that even the great masters will sit up and take notice. Your

voice has a range that easily encompasses everything from the deep bass to the high soprano, your dancing carries a life and grace that brightens your surroundings, and you tell stories with such drama that your listeners can see it unfold in their mind's eye as if they were there. Your capacity for both carefully planned and on-the spot creation of new tales and songs is incredible, and it is a simple and easy task to draw your audience into a performance as equal players of their parts. And finally, you will never lose or lessen your joy in entertainment, and have the power to awaken that joy in others.

Thrice-Wrought Smile (600 CP): It can be difficult to go where you want when everyone knows who you are, and even more so when they want something out of you. Whether it be nobles trying to control an independent power, fangirls/boys looking for sex &/or romance, or something even more ridiculous, there's little in life as irritating as people who just won't leave you the hell alone, who just keep talking and talking and talking in an attempt to find a rhetorical knife they can slip between your metaphorical ribs.

Fortunately, you are well prepared to defend against these. You well know the art of telling people "NO" in a way that is flattering to the would-be object of your attentions. Logic, rhetoric, and dogma are communicative tools you wield with ease and aplomb. Doublespeak and legalese are skills you mastered long ago, as are the methods of extracting useful information from the ramblings of others. And as is fitting for a master of the word, attempts to use these and other such tactics against you will only succeed with great effort, cunning, and general difficulty.

Fighter:

Veteran (100 CP): Calling you merely "blooded" was apparently a mistake, because it's obvious to anyone who looks that you've been through more battles than even most veterans can claim.

All of the benefits listed in "A Strong Sword Arm" are multiplied several times over. You've served for at least 10 years of brutal high intensity warfare, have the skill and experience to fight off a dozen regular troops at once without much trouble, possess an exceptionally strong and durable body tempered by hardship, and are highly resistant to the mental brutalities of war. You've also developed a keen, though not infallible, sense for when you're outmatched and it would be better to run than stay and fight.

Cadence (100 CP): Every army needs a solid corps of sergeants to keep FNGs and louies alike in line. Making sure they train and drill properly, assigning punishment details when they screw up, and just the right mixture of hard-edged advice and brown-nosing to keep dumb nobles from getting their (and more importantly everybody else's) heads ripped off; it's a hard lot in life, and few truly excel at it. If those brass asses had more of you, it wouldn't be nearly so difficult.

You know exactly how to handle your privates, making sure they don't fuck around too much and cause unnecessary trouble. You're a drill master par excellence, and even the most wheezy broken up sad sack of meat can be made into a tolerable military man in your hands, though they may drive you to drinking in the process of getting them from consistent failure to

worthy of the uniform. And you are an old hand at keeping the higher-ups' attentions on the shit everyone actually needs to survive instead of whatever stupid whim they've conjured up this time.
If you want it, this purchase can make you a ranked sergeant in the Empire's armies. You can choose which lord you've sworn your service to, or even which bandit group you're a part of – fanwank!

Combined Arms (200 CP): As much as some might wish otherwise, no army can fight and win with just one kind of soldier. Skirmishers and heavy linemen, cavalry and mages, sappers and barber-surgeons and more; all need to play their part to keep the thundering boots of the Empire in motion. And when all of these branches start bickering, it can be one hell of an assignment to get their heads out of their asses and back into the fight.

It's a good thing that you have experience in all these fields, and know how they all need to fit together for best effect. You're not a master, or even an expert, in any one area, but you've ridden horses and dragons alike, fought in tandem with mage squads, dug and carried with the sappers, and filled out forms (in triplicate!) with the quartermasters. If it's a job that needs done in the ranks, it's a job you're tolerably capable of and can teach the basics of to others. What's more, you have the command chops to keep all these elements working together with a minimum of fuss.

For Want of a Nail (200 CP): It's really damn expensive to keep an army moving and effective. Food and clothing, arms and armor, tents and bedrolls and spare parts and a thousand other bits and bobs – all these and more are necessities for waging war. No one, not the grunts and certainly not the brass, can afford to be ignorant of logistics.

It's one thing to simply fill out forms and mail them off; it's entirely another to actually work the system and get what you need, and this is something you've done a thousand times and more before. Whether it be quick-and-dirty field negotiations with villagers and other military units, the covert management of "auxiliary merchants", or even the (gasp!) legitimate dealings of the military bureaucracy, you're very good at getting all the pieces you and your unit need to operate at their best.

Red Gold and Bright Steel (400 CP): One of the core tenets of warfare is to use your enemy's weaknesses to your advantage. If they are aggressive, stoke their temper and lure them into traps. For the timid, corner them into immobility and build your forces for an overwhelming strike. When under attack, defend with a fury that bleeds them dry for every step. On the assault, exploit their flaws with speed and brutality to shatter their resistance into uselessness; and if you can't find a flaw, make one.

By your hand, this ideal is given shape and form. Over years, maybe decades, you've honed your skill with attack and defense into a brutal whole. Breaching the defenses of your weaponswork is like sticking your bare hand into a viper filled nest wrapped in razorwire. Attempting to resist your assault is akin to standing against an avalanche, a raging thunderstorm, the pounding waves of the ocean itself. And when you command troops in battle, your proficiency in tactics is sufficient that ten-to-one odds becomes a merely expensive trade instead of a ruinous one. But perhaps most importantly, you understand the interplay of attack and defense, such that focusing all you have towards one is only a mere detriment to the

other instead of the crippling hindrance it should be. With more training and experience, you might even learn how to combine both until they are one and the same in your hands.

Seeking The The Perfect Cut (400 CP): War is a filthy thing. Corpses relieving themselves as they relax and rot in the sun. Shattered lives and broken hearts trying to pick up the pieces and move on. Fields ruined and villages burned. There's nothing quite so unanimously messy as the aftermath of a battle, so it makes sense that so many avoid it at all costs. And yet, the hard truth is that it only takes one. One jackass to rile up trouble and begin skirmishes on the borders. One monster to come down from its hiding place and prey on the weak, whether it be the halls of power or the dark places on the edge. It only takes one to start a war, and those who choose to live in peace abandon their ability to choose when and where war comes to them. It's an incredibly hard balancing act, this maneuvering between bonds of fellowship and blood in the streets.

Fortunately, your balance is really damn good. You've got a good eye for when brutality and mercy are best suited for whatever problem you're trying to solve. By the same token, you have a keen understanding for when diplomacy has failed and war becomes unavoidable. And when the war horn sounds, your experience has given you an uncanny skill for fighting while avoiding collateral damage and civilian casualties, both personally and in command of others.

Blatt Meister (600 CP): Now this here is something special. It's a title almost as old as the Empire, and the only noble title that cannot be bought, inherited, traded, or otherwise acquired by any means other than proving your skill in a way no one can deny. To be recognized as a Blatt Meister is to be renowned far and wide as the single greatest warrior in the land, and gives you the right to establish your own academy where you may train or deny whoever you please. It is a name both desired and envied by men and women alike; to the greedy it is a path to great wealth, and to the ambitious it is a near-infallible road to fame and power – assuming you don't die before you get there.

First, choose one weapon of your choice – it must be some form of personal medieval weapon *(so none of your catapults or firearms or tank cannons cheese),* though you can also choose unarmed fighting. You are so in-tune with this weapon that you can use it to perform the Master Strike, what is known in the Ludenschoft school as the "Black Blade"; that state of being and action where every facet of your existence operates in perfect harmony with all the rest, creating a perfect attack at the height of your power without deviation or hesitance. This ability as per this purchase starts out mentally and physically exhausting and somewhat unreliable, but it is not supernatural and can be trained further. Should you desire a different weapon or style, you may choose to be from a different school with a different aesthetic.

Aside from that, your skill in the arts of weaponswork and personal tactics are elevated to the stuff of legends; killing whole companies of soldiers single-handed is within your capabilities, though it may take hours of careful maneuvering. So too is your skill at training FNGs enhanced to the point where training cadres hundreds strong are something you can easily create and manage. What's more, your mastery of teaching others is such that you can consistently produce higher quality graduates in half the time it would take other experienced teachers. And as a final reward, you get a cool alias that spreads far and wide with barely any effort on your part, carrying a reputation as a Soldier's Soldier who's seen and done it all.

In future Jumps, you enter the Jump with that same alias and a similar badass

reputation that fits with your background choices. If you're a Drop-In, you've got a Mysterious Stranger kind of vibe that will accomplish the same thing in short order. Note that if you pick something stupid for an alias, it will still spread far and wide; buyer's remorse is in full effect, even if the mockery for your silly name doesn't hinder the respect it carries.

Command Without Doubt (600 CP): Well, ya done fucked up now, Jumper. You let yourself get promoted! A real shame that is – like finding out the company's priest sold his soul to Wischtech, only worse. Now you have to spend your days pushing pens in a stupidly pompous suit while equally pompous pricks alternate between trying to suck up to your brass, suck up your subordinates and resources, and sucking up to your superiors with clever excuses for why they're supposedly better at your job than you. Good thing ol' Jump-chan is here to help!

You've got great gut instincts for figuring out when someone's trying to screw you, whether it be an ambush in the field or fucking politics in the office – it won't give you much on its own, but it's real damn useful for looking in the right direction. You're good at filling out paperwork at incredible speeds without sacrificing quality, as well as being a preposterously fast and comprehensive reader. You have a brilliant mind for both small-scale tactics and large-scale strategy, as well as a solid body of knowledge on the pros and cons of various military plans and methods. As a final bonus to round out your genius commander package, yours is a command of logistics that will inspire entire schools of thought devoted to the best use of resources.

In-jump, this allows you to take the rank of a general in the armed forces of Szaalenden. In future jumps, you may take a similar military rank in an armed military force consistent with your background. Keep in mind that choosing to do this ties you to the military in question, and you'll be expected to fulfill the duties of your rank.

Mage:

Academy Training (100 CP): Magic is often considered the most powerful force in the universe. An easy view to come by, as there's nothing else that lets you shape reality to your own will quite like magic can. But that infinite power comes at the price of infinite malleability, and for every great mage of legend there are thousands and more that fall apart because they let the magic take control and run wild like a deranged horse.

Good thing you've got a solid grounding in the basic principles. You know a good selection of cantrips and low level castings that can fit most situations. You are an excellent student who knows how to investigate, research and learn on your own time and coin. But your greatest gift is that you're sufficiently self-aware to know when some great eldritch working is too dangerous for you to attempt.

Combat Casting (100 CP): Magic is a practice entirely without room for error, which is why mages are such a rare breed. Combat mages are even more so, for the risks of stumbling and falling, getting hit with a stray arrow or sword, and getting jostled around at the wrong moment are legion. It takes a special mix of courage and patience to successfully use magic in the middle of a battle.

Fortunately, you're one of those rare few. Through a combination of good timing and a strong will, you're quite resistant against attempts to disrupt your spellcasting, whether it be

someone trying to counterspell your fireball or a Wischtech raid trying to break your ritual circle. And this courage and patience will stand you in good stead in other endeavors as well, creating a steady mind that handles stress well.

Counter-Magic (200 CP): Much like sword-work, combat magic can have a plethora of attacks and defenses. But when the only true limitations of how you attack and defend are how much energy you can afford to spend and the far reaches of what you can imagine...well, there are more than a few powerful mages who were defeated for no other reason than that they were out-thought. There's no one-size-fits-all weapon for magical warfare.

Fortunately, you have developed one of the most impressive skills a mage can know, a skill that comes as close to that universal standard as any famous arcane working can. Much like how a masterful warrior might split an arrow in two and parry an enemy's attack, you can harmlessly (or harmfully, if you wish) unravel magics and deflect them away from you. Your ability to use this skill is entirely dependent on your other magical skills, knowledge, and powers; but with time and practice you could build a legend for yourself as an Anti-Mage.

Magic Weaver (200 CP): Spellcasting can be a very energy- and resource-intensive practice, but even worse than that is the time required. Managing all of those clashing energies is not a simple task, and it is often necessary to slow down and ensure each component of a spell is in its proper place before you release it to do its work. Time that is frequently not available, time in which every moment and every heartbeat must be carefully weighed and measured.

Fortunately, there are a pair of techniques known to battle mages, techniques which you have been trained to use and have a particular affinity for. Chain spells are a series of castings attached to each other, such that casting one immediately casts the others in a pre-arranged sequence. Braided spells are those same castings, but worked into each other like a seamstress weaving threads of a tapestry, producing a massive simultaneous blast of every spell in the "braid". Chain spells are highly useful for both constructing and destroying layered defenses at a moment's notice, while braided spells produce an amplifying effect that makes the whole worth more than the sum of its parts. These methods are not often seen due to the sheer time, expended energy, and risk of EXPLOSIONS it takes to create them, but perhaps you'll be the one to drive these skills to new heights. Similarly, your expertise in these methods grants you a good eye for which spells will best combine for the effect you're looking for.

Spell Theory (400 CP): When dealing with an omnipresent force that is almost entirely subjective, it's practically inevitable that mages become seekers of knowledge, constantly expanding their imaginations with more and better ways to do funky things. And yet, that doesn't change the fact that people work with what they know, most being content to follow in the footsteps laid out by the best among them. This results in a wildly varying assortment of philosophies and structures dictating what magic is and how it works, which quickly devolves into social cliques and schools of thought that don't play well with others.

This makes spell theory – a study of how magical systems work and why – a very fertile field for inquiry, and it's one you've devoted a great amount of time to. You can apply the various stages of investigation and experimentation to magic as easily as any other topic, and you're very resistant to logic traps and being manipulated by assumptions and preconceptions. You have an almost preternatural skill at taking difficult concepts and putting them into words

that are easy to hear and read, as well as actually being thorough in conveying what you're trying to say. To top things off, you've acquired a great deal of experience in collecting and organizing information in a system that is intuitive and easy to use. And of course, learning and organizing all these little tidbits has given you a deep knowledge of this world's Art, such that there are few books, teachings, or other records of magic in the land of Szaalenden you have not perused, analyzed, and worked into your magical skills.

Beginnings Are False (400 CP): There are many magics and methods that are considered evil, untouchable, anathema. Things that are so dangerous they cannot be handled safely, so corrupted that merely touching them leaves one tainted and scarred. As painful as it might be, there is a lot of truth to this, as many kinds of magic are known to leave horrible wounds on person and land alike, or to require a simply evil mind and heart to use. But this raises a question; why should you let monsters dictate the workings of magic? Why should the malicious and the dishonest and the pointlessly wasteful have final say in what does and does not work? You won't stand for it.

And to that end, you're a master of safely studying, reverse-engineering, purifying, and cleanly disposing of dangerous magics. If a magic ritual requires a blood sacrifice, enough study will give you an equally effective version that merely requires gems and gold, or some other valuable but harmless substitute. If a spell has left a cancerous concentration of dark energies on the land, you can figure out a way to remove and/or eliminate those energies and leave healing in their wake. If learning a new piece of lore would require damage to your sanity, then you can either find a different and less dangerous source or set up a plan to repair yourself after it's done.

High Summoner (600 CP): An almost lost art, Summoning at its core was one of the hallmarks of ancient Elven magic; the art of manifesting forces both inhuman and incomprehensible, speaking to them in ways both could understand, reaching a mutually acceptable agreement, and using the power of both to achieve the goals of both. Many are the stories of singular mages just straight-up reshaping the world to their whims, working through the hands of a retinue mortal eyes had never before seen. Much like other ancient magics, it is but a shadow of what it once was. Oh sure, many wizards and witches carry talismans with which they summon salamanders and pixies and whatnot, but little things that can be matched by intelligent human mercenaries are hardly a great symbol of a mage's power.

Fortunately, though you may not be on par with those hoary legends of yore, you've come closer than damn near anyone else. Yours is an odd sort of diplomacy – not one that improves your ability to make parties work together, but instead one that quickly and efficiently strips away communication barriers and personal pretenses to ensure that even the most unlikely meetings and deals between the most disparate of parties can be made with clear understanding from all involved. To further this end, you've mastered whole grimoires worth of spells and techniques about using magic to communicate with others, as well as bindings and barriers to ensure deals are adhered to both in letter and in spirit. So too are the magics of summoning and dismissal part of your repertoire, such that you are never far from aid if you've properly prepared; unlike your enemies, who will find your talents at banishing and blocking summons to be their nemesis. And when it comes time to actually Summon entities to uphold their end of the bargain, such is your ability to harmonize with them that you and your

summon-ees work together as if you'd been teammates all your lives.

Let's Not And Say We Did (600 CP): Magic, at its core, is the Ultimate Actualizer – whatever you do, with Magic you will do more of, whether you like it or not. In most cases, this is a useful trait; indeed, many's the archmage and institution that pursued magic explicitly to achieve More. Nations and people have been raised up to glory and cast down to ignominy by magic's might. Still, an Ultimate Actualizer is a double-edged sword; no small amount of evil and misery has been caused by folks going all-in and not comprehending or ignoring exactly where "more" would take them. No malice or cruelty or apathy required. Just a simple failure to recognize the point where you're going too far, it's time to stop now.

Most obviously, the precision and perception needed to avoid this particular pitfall notably enhances your skill with magic; if you were ever to be compared against Elgunaha or Krentel, it would be difficult to discern who was the better mage. But perhaps more importantly, you've developed an impressive mastery of mystical data analysis and what is commonly called common sense. Weak points and flaws are easily exploited with combat magic. Mystical defenses crafted by your hand are more often than not without inherent points of failure. Loopholes and flaws in rituals and bindings are easily identified and removed. When creating new magics, such is your efficiency that it doesn't really cost anything extra on your part to make them robust, reliable, and comparatively simple to use. And perhaps the greatest boon of all – without interference from outside forces, it is supremely unlikely that you will ever lose control of your arcane workings via personal failure, or that you will cause unintended damage or secondary consequences when you utilize your arcane might.

Items:

All items are discounted to their origins. 100CP discounted Items are free. Any Items purchased in this document can be integrated into any other Item of similar form, such as the armor from Quality Gear with Mage's Uniform.

General (Undiscounted):

Basic Equipment (free): As a courtesy, you'll receive a Bog-Standard Adventurer's Kit™; basic gambeson and chainmail hauberk (with the symbol of the lord or mercenary company you serve embroidered on it, if applicable), a helmet, a sword and one other medieval weapon of choice, a few changes of clothes with a good set of boots, and a backpack with 30 lbs worth of basic survival tools in it – flint & steel, bedroll, whetstone, a week's worth of trail rations, small one-person tent, a pan and utensils, etc etc. These have no special features save for being of good quality construction and Fiat-backed as usual for Jumpchain purchases. Broken or lost items are repaired/replaced in a week's time.

Airship (200/400/600 CP, discounted for Blue Bloods): Though the Szaalenden Empire still uses animal mounts of varying types as a part of daily travel, the airship is a key part of economic logistics. Fast, tough, and capable of carrying more in a single run than any animal, vessels both large and small are becoming increasingly common sights in the skies.

Using old sailing ships as a measuring stick, this option fetches you an airship of roughly the same size as a keelboat/fifth-rate frigate/first-rate man-o-war, respectively. In all cases, these airships are of top-notch craftsmanship and sturdily built, designed to be thoroughly and equally capable of both warfare and peaceable operations. If purchased with the Magical Artillery option, they can be freely outfitted with magitech cannons as you please within their limits.

No matter which you purchase, each comes with enough Hiring Hall purchases (at the basic level) to have them fully crewed and operated. These crewmen and women cannot leave the ship. 25 CP spent for upgrades in the Hiring Hall allows you to upgrade the entire crew as if each had received a 1 CP upgrade.

Fairy Forge (600 CP): The magic of the elves was not limited to their bodies; they were masters of the natural magics of the world, and nowhere was this more evident than their easy use of Fairy Stone. An unusual form of iron soaked for centuries in ambient natural mana, Fairy Stone is known for three properties: it is far superior to good steel in every way (and commensurately difficult to work), it is an amazingly efficient and resilient conductor of magical energies, and a master blacksmith who knew the proper rites and magical techniques could alloy it with any other materials (s)he had on hand, creating a work of art that seamlessly merged and enhanced all that was put into it. Fairy Stone swords could be made into a single solid piece out of all its myriad parts, a Fairy Stone anvil and hammer could condense magic into solid forms...many legends have been forged of Fairy Stone, some of them as great as the Heroes who wielded them.

And now you too may create legends of you own. You have been gifted a small workshop, just large enough for half a dozen large human men to work together comfortably and filled with five great boons. First, a small half-meter-high crate of raw, highest-quality Fairy Stone that refills every other month, though it does not stack. Second, a set of Fairy Stone tools that can change shape to provide the highest-quality basics of what you need for whatever manufacturing task you're trying to accomplish. Third, the workshop itself is heavily warded and defended, allowing you to remove and ignore undesired magical &/or technological influences from your acts of creation. Fourth, it serves extremely well as a means of combining myriad items into a whole greater than the sum of its parts, or separating them out again into their constituent components with a minimum of waste. And finally, the entire thing can be folded and shrunk down into a package the size of a small suitcase, suitable for carrying long distances with variable form: it can be unfolded just as easily, but the folding/unfolding process takes an hour and will damage its surroundings if you do it carelessly.

Drop-In:

Comfy Boots (100 CP): Until they've actually done long walks themselves, most people don't really understand just how vital a good set of boots is. Fortunately for you, these are really good boots. They automatically shape themselves to best accommodate your feet and support your legs, and can physically change shape, color, texture, and style inside and out to match your outfit as you desire. They have the durability and impermeability of triple-layered hardened leather that has been waxed and treated. They automatically repair damage done to them at a slow rate, and are so breathable that the one lucky enough to wear them is basically

immune to things like trench foot.

Everfull Ration Bag (100 CP): Almost anything can be made into field rations, but it's certainly not guaranteed to be tasteful or healthy. That's why you have this large German-styled leather sporran of ever-full food and water, enough to feed four human adults, or one human adult and his horse, each day. The pack itself has adjustable leather belt loops and a nice set of short ropes, allowing it to be easily carried by hand or attached to a belt or saddlebag; it also does not open without your consent, though clever magic can overcome this. The exact food you pull out is random every time, but it will be easy to eat while walking or riding, it will taste decent, and it will be quite nutritious. And as a final boon, allergies don't apply to this magical food.

Walking Stick (200 CP): When crossing uncertain ground, one of the most useful tools is a good walking stick with which to manage the ground ahead of you. You can easily prevent a broken leg or worse by catching holes and crevices before your feet reach them, and a solid stick is great for fending off errant branches and bothersome wildlife in equal measure.

Much like the Comfy Boots above, you can physically change the style and color of your stick whenever you wish, from classy cane suitable to a fine night out on the town to a tall weathered staff made for the road; in both forms, it perfectly shapes itself to your hand to avoid slippage. Though it's no heavier than a good oaken shaft, it is as strong as masterworked steel, and hits like it too. But its most unique feature is a minor alteration enchantment that helps it bear your weight; when you lose your balance and are in danger of falling, it will temporarily solidify the ground under your feet to ensure it will bear your full weight without shifting or sinking.

Elven Cloak (200 CP): Though the elves may be dead and gone, many of their works remain and are highly valued. One of the few that is "common" enough to be widely known are their fabled cloaks, a byword for reliability and resilience. Taking the form of a drab-colored ankle-length hooded cape, it has fasteners in the front and holes in the sides covered by capelets, allowing you to close it tight against the elements. It is tough enough to rival a good thick gambeson, and is proof against the natural extremes of bad weather in this world; it keeps you comfortably warm in blizzards and pleasantly cool in high summer. But its greatest boon is that it extends an aura of healing to its wearer, slowly repairing injuries such that deep cuts scab over and stop bleeding within the hour and are fully healed within a week or so. The cloak itself is repaired at a similar rate, so long as scraps of it remain intact.

Magnum Opus (400 CP): While there's something to be said for mastering only a few styles of performance, it's often the case that said style is unsuited for your current venue. It's rather difficult to play a violin while traveling on the road, and it's never a good thing to have too many of one instrument in a band. Fortunately for you, this handy little piece of jewelry is there for all your musical needs. Taking the form of a bracelet, wrist cuff, ring, brooch, or whatever other form of portable jewelry you desire, the most obvious power this possesses is the ability to transform into any musical instrument you desire (*within reason*). No matter which form it takes, it is always of top-notch mastercraft, and can change color and style as you wish. This piece is exceptionally resistant to atmospheric conditions, easily carrying its notes

through the noise of crowds, thick mists, and other such vague obstructions.

Its primary power is much more than this, for it is supernaturally capable of harmonizing its surroundings. Whether it be lead or background, melody or counter-melody, playing this instrument will smooth out rough patches, aid other performers in the orchestra to perform at their best, help prevent missed notes and hang patches, and generally ensure every part of the performance is brought to its highest possible level before it goes just that smidge further. And while this effect is in primarily dependent on your ability to make the most of it, a portion of this effect will help you as well. I'm sure a Master Bard like yourself can think of many odd things that would be enhanced by a little music.

Golden Ledger (400 CP): Any businessman knows that good records are required to turn a consistent profit. Knowing what is being sold where to whom when is a necessity to keep your stock in good order and making sure you're not walking into an oversaturated market. That's what this handy little thing is made for; a simple well-made book about four times the size of a man's hand, without decoration and a solid lock to hold its edges closed. Both book and lock are waterproof, very fire resistant, and sufficiently durable that a strong soldier could hit them with a greatsword and cause only minor damage; the book will slowly repair itself over time. As for the actual records, the book has an infinite number of pages, will automatically write in information you want to record as you record it without pen or dictation, and has an automatic sorting and categorizing function that takes your entries and reworks them according to whatever format you instruct it to use; the pages will automatically turn to whatever entry you're looking for as well.

Perhaps most impressively, any contract you are a party to can be sealed with a bloody thumbprint (or equivalent) by the involved parties. If the contract is fair and equal to all sides, as measured by an **immensely** knowledgeable and completely impartial observer, two effects are activated. First, pages may be freely torn out from the book and each page or set of pages (as necessary) will have a perfect copy of the contract written on them. Second, sealing and confirming the contract activates a notable reality-warping effect that conspires to ensure the contract is fulfilled with a minimum of fuss in a timely fashion. Thieves and collectors who would take the coin the contract calls for suddenly find more important things to steal. Shipments of goods are blessed with good weather and an almost suspicious lack of bandits. Favors owed will arrange a good set of circumstances to be repayed without screwing over the one who owes it, though the book won't conjure said circumstances *ex nihilo*. And so on and so forth. While the effect can be discovered and opposed, maybe even broken, it will not be easy. No one who's not actively looking for the effect will think anything unusual is happening, and breaking the effect triggers an alarm that alerts all participants in the contract. Similarly, attempts by contractees to escape, transfer, alter the writing/recordings of, or otherwise invalidate their obligations will end...poorly.

Fighter:

Liquid Courage (100 CP): Such is one of many names for alcohol, the single most prevalent poison / medicine in the land. Many are the stories of its boons and banes; lifelong marriages born out of drunken confessions, and other marriages broken by later overindulgence, wounds cleansed by firewater and organs killed by the same, fortunes made on its sale and lost to its whispers in gambling halls and brothels, battles won and lost at the direction of its flowing

hands...no other beverage has quite as much power over mortals and immortals alike as this one.

And now in your hands is a smidge, a fraction of that power in the form of a metal canteen of dulled grey fitted with a loop and rope for tying to a belt. Its most immediately observable properties are a toughness that can take a great hammer without denting, and an enchantment that slowly repairs what damage it does suffer. Somehow, it is never uncomfortable to carry no matter how you are carrying it, seemingly weightless and never getting in the way of your motions. But the powers that earned this item its name are twofold. First, it regularly fills with decent strong alcohol – nothing fancy, but enough to get four humans pleasantly drunk each day. The type of alcohol can be changed by pouring a shot's worth into it, capping it, and shaking hard – note this won't copy the effects of said alcohol, only its style and taste to a limited degree. The second power is the "Courage" bit; drinking of the contents of this canteen brings increasing clarity to those who do so. Stress fades away from the mind, the scales of fear are lifted from the eyes, burdens and self-recriminations are put into proper perspective...Alochol as Medicine for the Mind is the gift of this Item, and though it may not be the mightiest of them, it is a reliable one.

One who would over-indulge should be careful – this is still alcohol, and it will destroy those who depend on it too heavily.

Quality Gear (100 CP): One of the unspoken truths about combat is that it inflicts far more damage than an uninitiated civvie can understand. Even a short fight can cut leather straps, chip a blade's edge, crack wooden shafts, and dent plate. It's imperative that a warrior put as much effort into his equipment as he does himself, and that's what this is for.

Purchasing Quality Gear upgrades everything you acquired from the Basic Equipment option, turning them into masterworks. In particular, the armor is replaced with a custom-fitted set of full plate, perfectly balanced and modified to be easily put on and removed without help as well as simply built with a minimum of moving parts. And since you're paying top CP for it, your new suit of armor has special latches that allow you to...*relieve*...yourself without completely undressing.

Collection of Maps and Ledgers (200 CP): A good map is a boon that is often heavily controlled. Shortcuts through forests and mountains are jealously guarded secrets of merchant families, military officers don't want their enemies to have accurate information of the battlefield, nobles who engage in shady activities have an interest in "nudging" borders – accurate information of the land and its contents is often kept under lock and key, and are more expensive than spices in coin.

This is a set of three maps and three ledgers, each of which records something different and all of which are contained in a combined water/fire-resistant leather scroll/book container. Each map covers a 40x20 kilometer area, and all of them cover the same area. The first map is a combination of topographical and physical, the second is a combination of political and road, whereas the third is a cardaster and thematic mixture. Each of the ledgers corresponds to one of the maps, trading visual ease for in-depth data. All of these are efficiently arranged with a minimum of visual clutter, and both ledgers and maps are encrypted such that only you, or those you let in on it, can understand them. But perhaps the most useful function is their ability to "autoscout" – with a short magical ritual of a word and hand gesture, all of the ledgers

and maps can be linked to people who can then add data to them without actually writing it down. A linked scout can cover his assigned patrol, and everything he notices will be recorded in the same exacting hand as he finds them. A scribe can visit an archive, and all he discovers will be added to the political-road map as he reads it. Questioning farmers about the local harvest will add what they know about plants and weather to the thematic map, and so on and so forth.

On its own, these are limited – though they have enough space and pages to record all the information pertinent to a given area within their specialties, recording more or recording a different area requires them to be wiped with a word or gesture, and start over. But for an additional undiscounted 100 CP, a short magical ritual will spawn four additional, non-magical copies of the maps and ledgers as currently written in a format of your choosing once per week.

War Mount (200 CP): The Szaalenden Empire is quite large, as such empires usually are. Many methods of transportation cover its length and breadth, and the country has recovered enough that semi-industrial methods such as magitek airships are becoming increasingly common. Still, there's plenty of room for live mounts in both the army and among the merchants, and for a small fee you can have a truly magnificent beast for your own. This is a warhorse of finest breeding and is as intelligent and highly trained as a natural horse can possibly be. It is a veteran of a hundred battles with the worst Wischtech could throw against you, unfailingly loyal and viciously capable in a fight. It is a paragon of equine might, able to carry an armed and armored rider and thick full plate barding without slowing down or losing agility. Unlike the vast majority of horses, it heals injuries very well – somewhat better than an average human – and is particularly capable of caring for itself within its limitations. If it dies, circumstances will conspire to bring you an equally capable horse in a month's time.

For an additional undiscounted 100 CP, you may instead take a dragon as your mount. Unlike the dragons of other stories and lands, these are non-sentient creatures of similar intelligence to dogs and twice as large as a warhorse, though their form is approximately the same shape as the four-legged winged ones you might know. It otherwise has all the same benefits as the horse listed above, scaled to its size and capabilities which include the iconic breath of fire.

Magic Artillery (400 CP): Before the coming of Wischtech, Szaalendenian artillery was about what you'd expect from a generic fantasy setting; catapults, ballista, and so forth. But with the War and the rapid advances in magitech that followed, these were quickly replaced with a variety of pieces. Lightning cannons with their distinctive bladed projectors, compression cannons firing blasts of stone-shattering superheated air – by the end of the War there were almost as many different kinds of artillery as there were castles to mount them and ships to carry them.

This purchase grants you four small unit-scale cannons of your choice, the blueprints to make them, and comprehensive manuals to train troops in their use and upkeep. The exact type of cannon is up to you, so long as it is magitech of some variant. Each cannon will have one primary specialty and one secondary specialty. But the primary boon of this purchase is that it meshes well with any troops at your command; any artillery pieces purchased with this option can be added as an integral Fiat-backed part of any Followers or Properties at your disposal at no extra CP cost. This does come with a limitation – the more cannons you add,

the longer it will take for those Followers to replenish and Properties to repair, for even the simplest Szaalendenian cannnon is neither simple nor cheap. Of course, you can choose to go without the artillery and have your Followers/Properties spawn normally, but said artillery will not replenish (*read: will not advance the respawn timer*) while their attached Followers are engaged in operations.

Fairy's Regalia (400 CP): In the never ending search for better methods of killing their enemies, Szaalenden mages have come up with all sorts of personal upgrades to the tried and true classics. Magic blades that spit fire, armor more durable than simple steel can manage, arrows that carry miniature thunderstorms in their heads – if you've got the coin, you can purchase more magical knick-knacks of knightly killing than you can shake a stick at. But all that being said, legends aren't usually made about walking arsenals. They are born from swords that cut through legions of foes and come out of it hungry for more. Spears that guard their wielders from horrendously vile magics nothing else can withstand. Suits of armor that carry their wielders through raging battlefields unscathed, born aloft on the wings of far away love.

Each purchase of this option gives you one such weapon or armor, tailored to your specifications within reason. Note that the more functions you attempt to add to each individual purchase, the overall weaker each of those effects will be. Regardless of whatever else you characterize, each item is supernaturally tough and crafted to the absolute highest standards of quality a mortal human's hand can manage. They will be perfectly shaped to fit your personal use down to fractions of a millimeter, and will adjust accordingly if your form should change.

Mage:

Mage's Uniform (100 CP): Through a combination of the depredations of warfare and simple cultural inertia, mages in Szaalenden are an uncommon sight. Even after 20 years of rebuilding efforts, there simply hasn't been the people or the teaching time available to make magecraft the improvement to daily life it could be, and the bloody memories of fighting magecraft-born monsters just make it worse. So when an enterprising mage goes looking for work, it's pretty much expected to find lean pickings and suspicious townsfolk.

That's why this handy set of clothing is provided for all mages who graduate from a Szaalenden academy. Its exact form, color, and style are variable, able to be quickly changed with a small application of utility magic. Whatever form it takes, it is high quality and very rugged while being tastefully decorated to occupy that fashionable sweet spot of "high class, not afraid to work hard". And if you legitimately belong to a formal institution, shaping this clothing set into that institution's uniform will lend you a little bit of extra gravitas and professional demeanor.

Grimoire (100 CP): Though the acquisition of knowledge is a process that no mage would ever say they regret, it is unfortunately a tedious one. Every aspiring acolyte of the magical arts is intimately familiar with the difficulties of research. The cramps and pains in hand and eye from long hours of writing things down, the impotent anger of a valuable book or scroll rendered incomplete by damage, the sheer frustration of trying to parse some random fellow's utterly shit hand-writing...to learn new things can be a battle every bit as strenuous as wielding

a weapon against marauders.

Though it can't solve every problem, this large tome can solve many of them. Much like the Golden Ledger above, it is durable, water and fire resistant, and slowly repairs itself. It also possesses infinite pages and takes verbal dictation automatically. With a mental exercise and a steady trickle of magical energy (a process learned automatically with a purchase of the Academy Training perk), it can also record information with nothing more than a thought, allowing you to copy what you read with notes and annotations as you do so.

Arcane Reagents (200 CP): Much like their mundane counterparts, magical crafts are made much easier by having the right tools and ingredients for the job. Also like their mundane counterparts, it is a regular exercise in frustration, and frequently very expensive, to get the pieces you need for all but the most basic of tasks. And while your coin purse can be spared by sourcing the materials yourself, time spent hunting down just the right age of Starwood Walnut or hunting and butchering a Horned Rabbit is time not spent potion-brewing or charm-crafting.

Enter this small chest, 90x30x30 centimeters on the inside. Made of fine wood and leather with a magic lock holding it closed, this box fills each week with uncommon but not unheard of ingredients to your specifications. Whether it be pure copper and silver for fine detailing and embellishment, small chips of glass and gems to create symbols and patterns, herbs and animal bits for potion brewing, or some other odd item, whatever ingredients you need for the magicraft you intend will be delivered right to this container. Note that truly rare and/or powerful reagents, like Fairy Ore, will never be available via this option, and attempting to use the contents for something other than crafting will cause them to disappear immediately, wasted and unrecoverable.

Talisman Collection (200 CP): The difficulties of using magic in combat (and other high-stress scenarios) have already been discussed elsewhere. What hasn't been mentioned is the workarounds for these problems. They take many forms, but so far one of the most reliable is the talisman – a hand-sized strip of thick, heavy paper with arcane markings made from precious materials inscribed into the fabric. Done properly, this creates a single-use item that even a complete non-mage with the correct training can use to bring a little extra bang to the battlefield.

This purchase is a small book containing two valuable boons. The first is a basic primer on how to build talismans, such that anyone with a modicum of arcane instruction can use it to make their own. The second is a binder in the second half of the book, containing a dozen talismans that can be easily ripped out and used at a moment's notice. These talismans conform to your specifications, replenish once per week, and which kind you receive can be changed once per refill. A small magical enchantment ensures you grab the talisman you want every time, and a two-part lock ensures you can keep either section closed so the one you're not looking for doesn't open.

Spirit Familiar (400 CP): Though the Summoners of olden days were best known for vast networks of beings at their beck and call, one of the conditions for being considered a true master was the Spirit Familiar. No two were ever the same, for such a being was just as much personal masterwork as it was a separate entity drawn from Beyond. Spirit-bound and closer

in soul and mind to a Summoner than any sibling of blood could be, their forms, powers, and temperaments were just as varied as the summoners who conjured them.

Now you too have a Spirit Familiar to call your own. Such a being takes the form of a mundane creature with eldritch markings to make it clear that it is no simple animal, sized anywhere from a raven to a large warhorse. Its exact form is entirely dependent on a combination of three "elements" you chose to use when making it, your own personality and spiritual temperament, and the ritual you used to craft it – since you're using CP to buy this, you can use a one word guide to somewhat direct the end result, such as "quadruped" or "reptile". The benefits of a Spirit Familiar are many; on its own, it is a strong and skilled combatant fully capable of fighting a squadron of veteran soldiers with ease, and it can be summoned and de-summoned from the depths of your soul. It provides a substantial boost to all magical acts you commit while it is capable of assisting you, and has a particular skill at using its three core "elements" to cast appropriately-themed spells with its own time and power. Finally, its personality meshes well with your own; similar enough to be pleasant company but different enough that both of you are excellent foils for the other. With only a slight adjustment period, such a Familiar can easily become your best friend, and you a friend to it.

Note that this familiar is every bit as mentally capable as you are, and will continue to be so no matter what lofty heights you reach – attempting to treat it as a lesser or servant of some variety is going to go poorly.

Mage's Staff (400 CP): Nothing is quite so iconic to the image of a Mage as his staff. Whatever form it takes, however it relates to the particular Mage's methods, the everyday and ordinary being made unusual and extraordinary is a powerful symbol, never mind that a staff is a useful tool in and of itself. Not all mages make use of them, for many magic methodologies use other tools, and cultural or practical concerns can make a staff impractical.

Still, it is a time-honored tradition, and so this purchase grants you a staff of your own. Much like the Spirit Familiar, the staff is empowered by three "elements" of your choosing, and is a mighty weapon in its own right. But where the Familiar is an empowerment and an aid, this staff is a defender with few equals. Protective and supportive magics channeled through it are greatly enhanced, and it is uniquely suited to grounding and redirecting harmful magics away from you. And since it is quite annoying to be without your most useful spells in a pinch, this item contains a dozen spells of your choice appropriate to the three "elements" of its construction, charged to be cast a few dozen times each before they must be refilled. These spells take the form of inscriptions along the staff's body, and may be changed as you wish if you have the knowledge and skill to do so.

Companions:

Import Tax (50+ CP): Every 50 CP spent here allows you to import one companion with an Origin and a 600 CP stipend.

Export Tax (50+ CP): Every 50 CP spent here guarantees you one meeting with a canon character of your choice in good conditions, and the opportunity to take them along as Companions or Followers. This choice can't be changed once you make it, and your attempts at persuasion will fail if you try to use mind control to make it happen. Attempts to munchkin around this will go...poorly.

Hiring Hall (1+ CP, 100 free purchases with each level of Blue Blood): A general is nothing without his troops, and a king is nothing without his subjects. But the struggle to find reliable help is a constant obstacle, and many's the battle lost and business failed for lack of good hands. So 1 CP spent in the Hiring Hall will buy you the services of 4 veteran Followers in any single profession you please, equivalent to one purchase each of A Strong Sword Arm and An Honest Trade for each hireling. They won't be anything special, but they will be competent, reliable, of tolerable character, and exceptionally loyal to you. If killed, a month of recruitment efforts on your part will see them replaced without trouble.

If you're willing to pay more for good help, you can stack these purchases to improve the quality of your hirelings. Each 1 additional CP on a single hireling allows you to purchase one 100 CP option, Perk or Item, for those 4 hirelings only. 2/4 CP will allow you to purchase a War Mount Item (horse / dragon, respectively) which can only be used in conjunction with the 4 hirelings they are attached to.

Drawbacks:

Broken (+100 or more CP): After so many years of war and strife, there's no shortage of cripples of every variety. And if you're really desperate for points, you can join them.

For every 100 CP gained, choose one arm, one leg, an organ system like your digestive tract or respiratory system, or one of your five senses – sight, sound, hearing, touch, taste. That sense is greatly reduced, though you can possibly compensate it. Maybe you have a lame leg, are missing an eye or hand, have bad asthma, or a blow to your head screwed your ears and gave you constant tinnitus.

You can choose to double down for 200 CP and not only remove that limb/sense completely, but also prevent any and all means of recovering what you've given up. No magic or technology will replace your blind eyes, you'll never truly get used to being completely unable to taste anything, you're constantly in danger of losing your breath if you work too hard no matter your medication, etc etc. You might be able to get used to walking around on that peg leg, but only if you do it the hard way.

The Curious Case of Jumper Button (+100/200/300 CP): It's not something that often comes up in stories, but children and the elderly are often treated differently to their detriment.

For 100 CP, you can choose to either look very young (on the order of barely adolescent), or very old (in the sense of made feeble and senile by age), and people will be fiat-backed to treat you accordingly. If you wish, you can purchase both extremes and the two will be mashed together into a particularly disturbing visage.

An additional 100 CP will subconsciously alter your mannerisms to suit your appearance – not enough to alter your choices, but enough to ensure no one will be saying things like "This child is oddly mature for his/her age". *Please do purchase both extremes and the mannerism enhancement – it'll be funny as hell, I promise.*

This is Filth! FILTH! (+100/200 CP): *You remember that option I gave you near the beginning to keep the inconvenient and annoying lewds away? Yeah, this is the inverse of that, and over-writes it.*

For 100 CP you'll get a little bad-luck alteration to ensure you're caught in

compromising positions. Nothing that's an actual problem or hindrance, but expect for people to see a lot of your bare flesh on a semi-regular basis and react accordingly.

For 200 CP this will on occasion escalate to bouts of creepy lewds where circumstances conspire to give undesirable types a shot at you.

Draw That Funky Artwork 'Till You Die (+100/200 CP): Some say that beauty is in the eye of the beholder – well, that certainly isn't true if you take this drawback.

For 100 CP it's an inconvenience and nothing will ever look quite right. Everybody's body proportions will trigger a mild uncanny valley response, the leaves on the trees will be oddly shaped, animals will be colored slightly "off" and so forth.

For 200 CP this will mildly reduce your ability to get things done; those strange body proportions will shift organs just enough that pinpoint shots will miss if aimed at a standard human location, you might mislable which herb is which until you re-learn the visual differences, and riding a horse will be...uncomfortable...until you adjust.

Box of Black and Gold (+100/200/300/400/500/600 CP): When most people think of the horrors of war, they think of the cripples and the traumatized who have had too much taken from them by that suffering. Less acknowledged are the sorts who learned a bit too much from those bloody fields, or who sought them out in the first place because it sated a dark hole in their hearts.

100 CP will leave you with a randomized grab-bag of irritating problems equivalent to PTSD; excessively jumpy, a little paranoid, quick to anger and violence, and all sorts of similar symptoms.

200 CP kicks that up into issues that would have your family straining to live alongside you – maybe you're a violent alcoholic, so depressed you struggle to get out of bed, or so paranoid you can't go anywhere without a good sword and a breastplate.

300 CP changes tack and skips the whole symptoms thing, making you a truly vicious fellow. Perhaps you're constitutionally incapable of not acting like a Machiavellian manipulator, or a no-kidding sadist who revels in people's pain, or a narcissist who reacts very badly to being questioned or challenged.

400 CP dumps you in capital-E Evil territory, so screwed in heart and head that you can't live without destroying others in some fashion and twisting everything you touch into a perversion of itself. So desperate to indulge yourself that you couldn't hide your proclivities even if you wanted to. Which you don't, because this is a drawback.

An additional 200 CP will alter this, ensuring you keep your mind and morals intact...while your body continues to revel in its own private little hell.

Can't You See I'm Burnin, Burnin? (+200/+400 CP): While mages and magic can't be said to be a truly common thing, it is not so unheard of that the average man and woman have no way to deal with it. Between assorted tactics to prevent spells from achieving their full effect and simple personal experience to resist its use, a mage casting in anger is less of a terrifying force and more of a particularly tricky enemy to the people of Szaalenden.

But if you're willing to give up those advantages, 200 CP will see you becoming particularly vulnerable to magic users. There's no one alteration of change of circumstances for this – it's simply that spells and such seem to hit you somewhat more often and a bit harder

than they normally would.

Upgrading this by another 200 CP takes this moderate problem and compounds it with a personal deformity. Your own internal magic becomes unusually responsive to magic used against you. Where having an Umbral Spike nailed into your shadow's leg would otherwise slow you down, now it paralyzes that leg completely. An Ice Bolt will pierce your armor and penetrate the body where it would otherwise bounce off and maybe crack a bone or two.

If you're a magic user of some variety both levels of this drawback are changed to a different effect; it becomes more difficult to use magic without hurting yourself. 200 CP incurs a small amount of personal damage whenever you use a lot of magic, while 400 CP makes anything beyond cantrips an increasingly perilous affair.

If you're an utter lunatic of a mage, you can buy both levels of this drawback twice in order to take both options.

A Bad Book Cover (+200/400 CP): Though the Wischtech forces may have been defeated, many pockets of their monstrosities still survive in Szaalenden lands. As wildly varied as they are, the marks of Wischtech magic are distinct and hard to replicate, which is quite a problem for these remnants regardless of their particular forms.

200 CP forces you into the body of a vaguely humanoid abomination – two roughly symmetrical arms, two roughly even legs, and a tolerably proportioned head is the only guarantee of form and function you have. No one who actually sees you will ever mistake you for anything other than the monster you are, but exceedingly clever and stealthy activities might see you getting away with hiding under a cloak at a distance or something similar.

400 CP sees you transformed into a monstrosity that could never be mistaken for human, no matter how well you conceal yourself. Perhaps you're a Dekenzuant, an ugly giant built for war so thick and tall that a human doesn't even come up to your knees and whose lower leg is thicker around than said human is tall. Perhaps you're a Thrash Beast, a mass of tentacles and snapping jaws wandering around on a snake-like trunk. Whatever you are, any Szaalendenian who sees you will know you for what you are, and entire armies of veterans and airships will be rallied to see you dead.

~~**Alcoholics**~~ **Mooners Anonymous (+300/600 CP):** Nobody really knows how or why the Elves disappeared. Some suggest war, others say it was plague or a natural disaster of some sort. Some scholars suggest they simply chose to go elsewhere, why some of the most educated magi think they were undone by their own natures, their souls strained and eventually snapped as the turning of the world altered their magic somehow. If there are any records of it, they are kept under lock and key away from curious eyes and the owners of said records aren't talking. It is a mystery that will likely never be solved.

Well, maybe in your case it might be. Normally the moon would only be relevant for the purposes of the Fae-Blooded purchase; now everything about you is tied to the moon and not in a good way. When it is full, you are slightly stronger than you are at other times; when it is new, you are barely half the might you should, and you wax and wane between these extremes with the turning of the phases. This applies to all supernatural powers you have, as well as your own physical capabilities.

If you double-down this drawback, ***EVERYTHING*** about you is hindered thusly. Mind, heart, will, soul, and more – all facets of your existence are tied to that glowing orb in the sky,

for it is now a lifeline you cannot be parted from.

Much like the Fae-Blooded perk, you can choose to be tied to a different source of natural influence. Also like said perk, this drawback will be equally and consistently dangerous to you regardless of what you choose. This drawback can be mitigated (or even cheesed) like any other drawback if you have the intestinal fortitude to pull it off, but specifically attempting to cheese it by arguing a different natural force would be easier to handle will turn out...poorly.

I'm ~~Spartacus~~ Ascheritt! (+300/600 CP): At this point, the faces and names (and even their most common mannerisms) of all the Heroes of Szaalenden have been enshrined in artwork of every kind. Statues small and large, icons and triptychs, songs and plays and books – wherever you go, you barely have to look to find someone willing to tell you all about the Heroes who saved the people, someone who wants to serve them, someone who wants to be them, somebody who wants to ***serve*** them…

Well, suck it up buttercup, because taking this option for +300 CP makes you look like one of those Heroes. And I'm not talking about a passing resemblance – I mean brothers, or perhaps a son or daughter, maybe even a twin in body and voice. And since this is a drawback, events will conspire to ensure people find out about this semi-regularly. Groupies, politicians, peasants in need of saving – all these and more will (at least at first) think you are one of those legendary figures, or closely related to them, and will treat you accordingly.

But if you really want a challenge, 600 CP will make you resemble one of the Lances of Betrayal instead. Congratulations – you now look like one of the most hated entities in all the Empire, matched only by an obvious Wischtech monster and exceeded by none. And with none of the physical "enhancements" of being a Wischtech monster to save you...

If you purchase this with the "A Bad Book Cover" drawback, you get no benefits from either purchase whatsoever and will be afflicted with physical deformities to make sure you exemplify the exact worst mixture of traits to invoke maximum hate and loathing in all who see you.

Scenarios:

Coming Home to Roost

Perhaps what's been offered here offends you in some fashion. Perhaps you're an ambitious sort who seeks greater rewards. Perhaps you rage at what you think is obvious idiocy on the part of assorted characters here, and think you can do better. Regardless of your motivations, here's a challenge if you think you're hard enough. You can choose to do this as either a *Standard Jump*, or as a *Gauntlet-lite* where failure means you move on to the next Jump instead of the usual consequences – this will affect your rewards later.

Choose your origin and other such purchases as normal, but ignore the starting time. Instead, we're rolling back the clock a couple decades to the middle of the war. Everything is going to look quite a bit different, so we'll go ahead and enforce a memory loss – you will remember nothing about the setting save for a minimal set to ensure you can speak the language like a native and understand your purchases. We'll also strip those pesky variations

of godhood, ultimate power, armories, legions of Companions and Followers, and other such nonsense from you; you get nothing but your purchases here, whatever you've earned or learned without buying it from your Benefactor, and your Body Mod. If you've got any ridiculous nonsense in your Body Mod, like infinite never-failing willpower or perfect defense against whatever or Superman-level strength or other such Inhuman capabilities, that will also be removed – you're limited to roughly the power level of this Jump. You have one year to prove yourself, get your bearings, and figure out how you want to do things. Don't worry – you'll get a small amount of plot armor to get you to the next bit and ensure this sudden lack doesn't trip you up.

After that year is up, a call will go out. Anyone and everyone who thinks they have what it takes to be a Hero is to present themselves at the Royal Capital and take the tests there – the 14 best performers will be chosen to carry the Holy Lances. These tests will be many, varied, and brutal. You may not need to pass all of them, and you won't die from them, but you'll be competing with thousands of other folk from all sorts of backgrounds and skill sets. And that doesn't even count the high bar of the tests themselves. If you fail here, then this scenario is over and you'll spend your remaining nine years (or however long) in this war torn land. You will be replacing one of those who would otherwise be Heroes if you succeed – which one depends on how the tests play out.

Once you've been selected to carry one of the Holy Lances, things kick into high gear. Together with the other Heroes and the armies of Szaalenden, you must wage a vicious high-paced war to push back the forces of Wischtech. This is your next challenge – you don't need to shoot past the original bar, but you do need to push back Wischtech and reach the Toxic Barrier in such a way that Szaalenden is at least marginally better off than it was in canon. So long as you put forth your best effort to succeed, the small plot armor will remain in effect. If you fail to keep the Empire above the bar set for you, then it's still possible to continue the scenario, but you lose the plot armor. Dying, turning traitor, or otherwise failing entirely is a scenario failure. For the sake of not screwing you completely, some minor reality warping will be used to ensure it's easy for you to keep track of your progress in the form of messages and such.

Assuming you've reached this point without failing, plot armor will guarantee you and whatever other Heroes remain make it through the Barrier with your Lances without being poisoned by its vile clouds. After this, you will be forced to sneak, run, and fight your way through Wischtech lands until you find the High Sorcerers responsible for this invasion. Before you get there, a confrontation occurs.

That plot armor I've been mentioning? It doesn't protect the other heroes, and it is here where the cracks spread into full breaks. Most of the survivors will choose to stop and remain behind to "hold the line" – only the canon Heroes will continue onward to complete their mission, and you will not be able to convince the remainder to go on. If you were exceptionally successful before you entered the Barrier, you may have additional heroes with you who died in canon – how they will choose is anyone's guess. Anyway, it is here where you must make a choice;

Stay, and plot armor will ensure you live? Or go, and plot armor will leave you to live or die on your own?

Whichever you choose, the Four (or Three, if you replaced one of them) who continue will succeed in their mission and return, exhausted and their supplies spent.

Stay:

Though it won't be nearly as dangerous as choosing to go, staying will still be no cakewalk – Wischtech hasn't become any less infested with monsters, even if the worst of them have been drawn away by the Four. It will be made worse by the fact that those who have chosen to remain, having already broken once, will rapidly break down further. Should matters remain unchanged, they will eventually choose to wait in ambush for the Four, to kill them and take credit for the victory themselves. You might be able to convince them otherwise, but it is supremely unlikely – they'll not tolerate anything they think to be a threat to their accolades back home, and will try to kill you without hesitation if they judge you to be against them. And of course, choosing to stay yourself in the cold dark of Wischtech lands will do your own psyche no good, your choice eating away at your heart and your mind further straining under the weight of war without apparent end or support beneath these hostile trees.

Assuming you don't convince them to retake their heroism, and you don't kill them yourself, the ambush will continue as it did in canon – the Four will be slain, their Lances cast aside and their bodies left to rot. All of you will return to Szaalenden with a fabricated tale to take all the glory and slander the names of the Four. And it is here where your final trial begins.

Your task here is is a long and grueling one, for rebuilding Szaalenden to its pre-war heights is the least of your duties. For with your hearts burdened by your sins and the endless adoration of the masses raising your sense of self-importance, all of the remaining Heroes will turn to cruelty and vile behavior – not the least of which is embracing the vile arts of Wischtech to one degree or another. Somehow, you must put a final end to the corruption these former Heroes will spread without driving Szaalenden into complete anarchy – civil war and redemption alike are acceptable, so long as they are kept relatively contained. To make matters worse, 20 years to the day you killed them, Ascheritt will make a return in a new body. With a little aid from interested parties, he will be as strong as he ever was, and will adamantly seek the death of all those who betrayed him and his friends – including you. And all the while you are not immune to this fall from grace, for the same internal conflict will plague you as well. Should you also fall into the depths of corruption and evil as they did, it counts as a scenario failure.

Should you manage to do all of this – defeat or redeem the Heroes, defeat or reconcile with Ascheritt, rebuild the nation, and do it all without Falling yourself – the Scenario is complete.

Go:

Should you choose the true Hero's path, the first thing you will notice is a hollow sensation as your plot armor leaves you. Fortunately, you are not alone, for the comrades who accompany you will be the greatest of the Heroes, and all the power you've honed thus far will be in full bloom. Finish the mission – drive through the heart of Wischtech towards the fortress where the High Sorcerers reside, and kill them all. Then make your way with the survivors back home. Be wary, for this is the heart of their dark power, and they will sacrifice anything they can possibly manage to see you dead. Fortunately, killing them will release their control over their creations, so the way out will be considerably easier than the way in.

Before you finish your journey, you will be accosted by your allies who chose to Stay.

They will promptly try to kill you and your fellows, and will likely succeed – for the bloody road back here will have left all of you bone-deep exhausted, without any usable supplies you may have had before now, and longing for rest. In the very unlikely event you manage to kill them all, you may skip the next few sections and go straight to the rebuilding phase. The same holds true for the even more unlikely event you manage to truly, genuinely talk them down and you all make your way back home peacefully.

But most likely, you will lose. And with no quarter offered or expected, you will die.

But this is the land of Wischtech, and the dead do not rest easily here. A year and a day after your death, you will awaken – cripplingly weak and twisted in form with the mostly-eaten corpse of an odd creature next to you. This weakness is equivalent to 5 purchases of the Broken drawback, one for each of your four limbs and your torso, the first level of Mooners Anonymous, and the Fae-Blooded perk. Just barely enough to move, to struggle for survival with a chance of success.

It is here that a different form of plot armor will kick in, for Vengeance will burn bright in your heart. The drawbacks inflicted upon you are not Fiat-enforced; with enough training and experimentation, this plot armor guarantees you can build yourself up enough to remove them. And at least in this little patch of secluded glen, the forest you find yourself in is relatively safe. But regaining what your body has lost will be a trial like few others, for you will literally be rebuilding your strength from nothing.

Once you judge yourself fighting fit, which will most likely take years, you must struggle your way back to the Empire – first through what remains of Wischtech lands, then across the border, alone and with no supplies to aid you. This will not be nearly as dangerous as it was during the war, but it is still no picnic, and you are far enough away that making the journey on foot will also likely take years – especially since the Toxic Barrier seems very slow to fade.

Upon your return, some casual investigation will reveal what the Heroes did to your name and whoever you've left behind, as well as the fact that they maintained the Barrier to keep Wischtech remnants away from Empire lands. It will also reveal the sorry state of the Empire, still struggling after 20 years of rebuilding. But most pressingly, it will reveal that there is a large force of raiders and reavers calling themselves the Black Wing Army, pillaging the countryside...and that their leaders have taken the names of you and your fallen companions for their own.

From here, your task is essentially the same as if you had Stayed. Kill or redeem the Black Wing Army, kill or redeem the Heroes who have fallen to evil, and rebuild the Empire to what it should be – without becoming a monster in the process.

Rewards:

Gauntlet-lite; your reward is simple – 25,000 free acquisitions of Hiring Hall Followers to be distributed as you please, enough Airship purchases to carry 10,000 of these Hirelings (or equivalent troops) and all their gear into and out of battle, and a Fortress designed to the highest standards the Empire can manage which can house them all, either within its walls or within the town surrounding it (depending on exactly how many hirelings you have). All of this comes with a free purchase of Magic Artillery to enhance them. You gain no other rewards.

Stay; In addition to the rewards listed in Gauntlet-lite, you will gain something truly amazing – a complete library of all Wischtech's sorcery integrated into your Fortress, purged of its evil and reworked such that none of it requires the sorts of heinous sacrifices lesser practitioners indulged in. It won't be any less costly, but nothing in it will require you to, for example, mince and drain young men and women of their blood.

Go; In addition to the rewards listed in Gauntlet-lite, your unwavering dedication to Heroism and exceeding your limits gives you a singular gift – the body you finish this jump with and the Perks you gained from this document will be integrated into your Body Mod.

My Big Fat Heroic Family: You probably noticed the bits where it speaks of redeeming yourself and your opposition. Should you manage to accomplish this, which is to say should you somehow manage to complete the scenario with none of the Heroes falling to Evil and/or successfully reconciling with Ascheritt, then you will gain both sets of rewards.

Challenge Mode (can only be taken with Standard Jump): Oh? You think you're real hot shit do you? Want something even more difficult? As you wish – activating Challenge Mode strips you down to nothing but your Body Mod and your own strength as described above. You will still go through the Doc and purchase things as normal, but you will have no access to them. Completing the Scenario under these restrictions will integrate your Stay and Go Rewards directly into your Real Body – not your Body Mod, your actual factual Body as it is without all the Benefactor toys.

Notes:

Credits: Xenon and PlotVitalNpc for help with drawbacks.

If you really desperately need a baseline for how this doc measures up to others on the power scale, I personally rate it as something equivalent to the sillier ends of D&D 3.5e – each tier of purchases placing you at around one of the 5-level marks, with maxing out an Origin's perks sticking you in the Low Epic/Low Mythic field.

Rules-munchkining stuff like Pun-Pun or the Peasant Railgun is explicitly excluded from this power measurement.

Among other things, the source manga suffers from what TvTropes calls the Gratuitous Foreign Language trope. If it sounds like I'm using that same trope in this document, it's probably because I find the wordplay too funny to try for proper usage of the language.

The most immediate example is the title – "Blatt" can technically mean "blade" in German, but that usage specifically refers to certain kinds of blades used in some gardening tools or pieces of machinery, whereas different words are used to refer to sword blades and such.

Yes, this does mean that if you pick the Blatt Meister perk, you are heavily encouraged to

become a Hoe Master.

Or a Saw Master if you have a hankering to be a particularly violent lumberjack.

The setting and plot of the manga that inspired this Jumpdoc is neither especially thorough nor the most coherent. Certain elements of the series have been changed in this doc because I thought they were stupid, or filled in because the manga didn't give enough information to make a coherent option/setting mechanic out of it.

Concerning the whole "Falling to Evil" thing mentioned throughout the scenario; this metric is left deliberately vague so as not to damn you by bad luck, but it roughly consists of regularly acting in a manner consistent with the description of the 300 CP Box of Black and Gold drawback, or a particular instance of the 400 CP version of the same.

Unless some truly spectacular efforts on your part prevent it, all the Heroes who chose to Stay will, over the course of their reign, fall into variations of the 400 CP Box of Black and Gold drawback as they did in canon. Should you also choose to Stay, you will also become vulnerable to falling into this mindset, though in your case it's not Fiat-backed for you to join them. If you choose to Go, you won't be forced into that heady mix of self-recrimination and self-adulation driving you down – but that doesn't help you against other mental twists leading down into similar Evil.

While there is a certain amount of leeway concerning what constitutes falling to Evil as described above, attempting to cheese the actual parameters of the Scenario itself with:
*Perks,
*Items,
*Overly obedient Companions and/or Followers,
*clever rhetoric, roundabout logic, twisted dogma,
*Xianxia Young Master-style bullshit about how "Evil doesn't exist" "Evil is subjective" "It's not Evil when I do it because…",
*or any other such and/or similar shenanigans that would lead to the same or similar effect will instantly and automatically count as a Total Scenario failure. You will gain no Scenario rewards, will be left to fend for yourself with no plot armor of any kind, and will possess only what you started the Scenario with until you die or 9 years from the day of your failure; at which point your standard Chain mechanics kick in. The entire raison d'être of the scenario is that you will be consistently and fundamentally ***BETTER***, both in deed and in character, than the Canon Heroes were – not how silver your tongue is.

Capstone Booster Effects:

The Song Of Life – In their speculations on the nature of Life, The Universe, and Everything, many philosophers come to some theory of interconnected reality. Nothing exists in a void, everything is connected to everything else, actions and reaction; thousands of years and entire civilizations have been born and slain in the search for a better understanding of the relationships of the cosmos.
And with this Capstone Boosted, you'll be brought one step closer to a piece of that

understanding. Reaching this level allows you to more directly match your music to your surroundings and your intent. If the unboosted version of this Capstone was akin to directing an orchestra from the conductor's podium, the Boosted version would be like having the ability to play the instruments with your own limbs. And you won't be limited to sentient creatures either; with the right mind and sufficiently skilled hands, everything has its own tune to play, or can be given one with sufficient understanding. While this won't actually improve your skill on its own, it does open the way to becoming a true Maestro of the Music of Creation. But beware – not all tunes are of pleasant melody and rhythm, and not all songs finish in a climax you desire.

Thrice-Wrought Smile – It is often said that words carry weight, and that one should not speak frivolously lest this weight be wasted on trivial things. Whether that's true or not, there is much to be praised in those who can raise themselves and others to new heights and greater achievements with nothing but a clever tongue.
Should you Boost your skills at wordplay with this Capstone, you gain an increased ability to communicate more information with fewer words. Where before you might have required an hour-long lecture to teach someone basic mathematics, now you can get it done in much less time. Where others would need to rant and rage to fully communicate just how angry they are, it only takes you a short phrase to make brave men shake in their boots. If you happen to know a magical method that requires chants, cutting long arias down to a few words resulting in a stronger spell is within your capabilities. And if you take this newfound skill and practice long and hard with it, you may – after ***MUCH*** practice – find yourself approaching the lofty heights inhabited by a certain Doctor and other such word-wielders.

Blatt Meister – The Ludenschoft school of swordsmanship calls their version of the Master Strike "Black Wing" for a very good reason. When done properly, the simultaneous use of the Eight Strikes creates an illusion of a pair of black-tipped wings sweeping forward to rend and destroy everything it touches. But with the right impetus behind it, such a thing need not stay an illusion.
When Boosted, this Capstone grants you a particular talent for physical conceptualization; taking what you see in your mind's eye and making it real through nothing more than focused will and harmonious action. Due to the nature of this perk, your only real initial benefit is an improvement to your Master Strike – where before you were limited to what your physical body can manage, now the strength of your Strike is increased by adding the entirety of your being to it. Every thought and emotion, every memory and virtue and flaw brought together as one into a Blade like no other. If you wish for more, it is up to you to figure out how else your Being can be manifested.

Command Without Doubt – Armchair generals will often talk about "managing morale", as if the collected thoughts, emotions, wants, and needs of an army are nothing but a collection of ledgers to be edited with a penstroke. Those who try such *editing* will be disabused of this notion in short order, or see their commands collapse around them. And yet the allure of such thinking is ever present, for any decent army is a community all its own. Cultures and hierarchies that have nothing to do with training, families by blood and by oath...and of course all the myriad disputes and flaws therein.

Though your skills are praiseworthy with the Perk on its own, Boosting it brings you to a point that many hardened generals think impossible; the incorporation of those weaknesses into your command. Though it's not much of an improvement on its own, you've acquired just enough understanding of this particular facet of warfare that character flaws can become boons with the right preparation and supplementary skills. Commanding an army of fresh-faced cityfolk who will break and run at the slightest pressure? Well, you recruited enough greedy thieves and protagonists that the scattered deserters will regroup on their own to make an assault the enemy command center – and the now-vulnerable loot (and commanders!) your enemies left behind. Trying to wrangle a bunch of unruly clans that hate each other's guts? Just arrange their objectives correctly, give them some carefully worded orders, and they'll happily ride to each other's aide just for the opportunity to brag. Ambushed by an angry army that will gladly die en masse if they can take you with them? A fair bit more difficult, but arranging kill boxes and running bait on the fly is within your capabilities. With a lot of practice and many, many battles under your belt, you might eventually grow to the point where there is no such thing as a weakness in your army.

High Summoner – If you ever want to introduce a LOT of excitement into your life, walk up to a High Summoner and tell him he's just a glorified diplomat. Assuming you don't get bitch-slapped through half a dozen walls by a summoned entity or some such, it's not entirely wrong. For all the heavy magic, fancy rituals, duels of body and wit and will, and so on and so forth, summoning often does boil down to "Here's what I want, I want you to do it for me, here's what I'm offering in exchange".

Boosting this Capstone allows you to take that one step further. If the average Summoner is a diplomat, then this Boost takes you closer to being a King – not all the way, but enough that the truly perceptive will notice the difference. Your first little piece of royal regalia is a particular technique for forcibly manifesting your Summoned counterpart as a singular entity. You won't be given any additional power, skill, leverage, or whatnot to get what you want out of them, but you now have what you need to make things like planetary bodies or distributed hive minds and such send you a single representative to negotiate with when they otherwise would not do, or be incapable of doing, so – assuming you can bring them to the table in the first place. The other mark of Royalty granted by this Boost is effectively the same thing but in reverse; assuming you conclude a deal or treaty between you and the massed Entity in question, the terms of that agreement will be equally applied to its parts after it separates again. Don't let your greed exceed your common sense – collecting all the pieces together like this is a double edged blade where all the fragments that would normally be incapable of doing so can now, for example, punch you in the genitals if they wish.

Let's Not and Say We Did – Purity is one of those ideas that tends to be a bottomless pit in philosophy. As an example, pure pacifism tends to be an all-encompassing thing by necessity because is it really pacifism if you drop it when convenient? But pure pacifists generally don't live long enough to achieve much because they get killed by non-pacifists, so is pure pacifism actually a worthwhile commitment? Maybe you should measure and judge when to be pacifist and when not to be – but isn't that just being indecisive and weak, letting others push you around? Such puzzles are not easily navigated, and legions of would-be explorers are lost on a regular basis to both pure and impure hazards born of trying to solve them.

You'll not be getting any answers to such conundrums when you Boost, but you will get a measure of protection against jumping the shark or getting bogged down in a mire of insane troll logic. Regardless of what the actual source is, Boosting this Capstone improves your ability to your (im)purities are against such hazards. At its core, this manifests as a set of techniques tailored to you that grant a sort of mild existential renewal when practiced. At this level, spending a decent portion of your time practicing these techniques allows you to slowly heal minor injuries to the mind – things like the ennui of old age, boredom from monotonous lifestyles, and other minuscule yet significant weights that break people down over time. Like all the other Boosted Capstones, this can be trained further.