EXALTED
DESPONDENT UNDEAD



The creators of this world did not design the afterlife. The dead were meant to reincarnate immediately rather than linger. Then, however, the Primordial War occurred, and some of the creators of the world died, breaking reality in the process. After all, Creation was not designed to handle the death of one of them, as a Primordial dying was not something that any of them thought possible. And yet it happened, and the Underworld is the result. As they fell and clogged the mechanisms of reincarnation, the dying Primordials witnessed everything they had made, their life flashing through their vision just like any mortal would experience. This flashback granted them even greater understanding of their creation in their final moments, and as the understanding of a Primordial lends substance, so too did their sudden understanding form the Underworld around them.

The dying Primordials, now named Neverborn, found themselves at the edge of Oblivion, tethering off the cliff's edge between existence and cessation. And they could not take the plunge, as tormented and despairing as they were, for something held them back. The newly arising mortal dead in the Underworld gave them the insight to realize why; just how like a mortal ghost lingers beyond death, unable to move on due to their attachments and fetters to the life of the living, so too were the Neverborn too closely tied to Creation itself to truly embrace Oblivion. From then on, they have schemed and plotted to destroy all of Creation, so that they may finally plunge into Oblivion and cease to suffer.

But of course, the Underworld was populated by the ghosts of mortals, mainly humans thanks to their rise to supremacy following the Primordial War. And those mortal ghosts did not want to submit to the madness of the void. They built cities to house themselves in, to repeat the toil they remembered from their life. And thanks to the aid of the Exalted Host, they managed to hold back the forces of the Neverborn. Later, during the Usurpation, the greatest armies of the Neverborn started pouring out of the Mouth of the Void, and it was thanks to the repentant ghosts of the Solars that they were beaten back and defeated.

Now, it has been some years in the living world since the Scarlet Empress has vanished from her throne in the Realm. On top of that, Solars have started appearing in mass quantities again, not seen since the last years of the High First Age. Already, some Solars have been captured, tricked, or were sorcerously bound into servitude by some of the Deathlords, not to mention the newly arrived Abyssals, also known as Deathknights, who act as powerful agents of the Deathlords as well. It is the year RY 768, and the future certainly seems to hold much tumult. You will be in this world for 10 years, although perhaps to the dead, such an amount of time might not seem much. And lastly, you may have a gift, to help you survive better in death;

+1000 Corpus Points

Origin

You won't actually get to choose what you are. Instead, here's an explanation of the state of being that ghosts experience.

Ghost -0cp

The Primordials did not design undeath. Neither ghosts or the Underworld existed under Primordial rule. No, the Underworld only appeared once the first Primordial casualties of the Primordial War happened; reality was not designed to process the death of such immense and powerful beings, and it broke a little. This is why in current times the souls of dead mortals can linger in Creation after death. While initially the Solars of the First Age disapproved of this lingering, they came to appreciate the potential allies against Oblivion, and created various rites to prevent the hungry dead from rising and to empower their undead allies.

As a genuinely unnatural state of existence, ghosts are unlike other spirits. Instead of Charms, like other spirits obtain, they have Arcanoi, which are inherently restricted to be aligned with a domain of death and decay, and do not have All-Encompassing variants that provide more power than normal. Additionally, the innate attunement to death that all ghosts have provide them with greater senses, and an instinctive ability to recognize all wounds, diseases, and infirmities. This is why, to a ghost's senses, everything in creation stinks of decay; a blooming rose carries in its petals its own inevitable rotting, for example, leading to most if not all ghosts thinking of Creation as a dreary place. Additionally, ghosts are unable to respire living essence, able to recover essence only in the Underworld or through their Fetters.

To be a ghost is to be a memory given form, a pale reflection of who and what the ghost was during their life. Due to this, most ghosts take on the forms they had during or slightly before their deaths, and usually bear some identifying mark related to how they died, such as a large circular bruise around the neck of a ghost who was hanged, persistent coughing for those who died of tuberculosis, or eternally wet skin for those who drowned. These are simply markings, however, not actual wounds; even those ghosts who died of old age and thus look frail will be just as athletic and enduring as those who died young. Similarly are their clothing not such a thing in the normal sense; rather a memory of what they wore during death, the clothing their corpse was outfitted with in burial, or perhaps even an outfit that best represents their station in life, depending on which is more important to the ghost, formed out of the same essence that composes their naturally immaterial bodies.

All ghosts feel the subtle pull of Lethe, as their souls instinctively seek to continue on the journey designed for mortal reincarnation. If you ever succumb to this pull, of course, your chain will end. You at least will be guaranteed to possess the bare minimum strength of will to resist the pull of Lethe for a full decade and a little more, so the only way for you to succumb to such an instinctive temptation will be willing choice or someone forcing you into Lethe in some way, such as a ruthless necromancer.

As a former mortal, it is worth noting that human souls are structured peculiarly, relative to other spirits; unlike demons, elementals, or gods, a human being is composed of two souls, the Hun, the soul in charge of higher thought, and what becomes a ghost after death (and what you become in this jump barring certain options), and the Po, the soul in charge of instincts and baser functions, which becomes a hungry undead akin to ethereal zombies after death if not placated.

Locations

Choose where you want to begin. If you want, you can roll a 36-sided dice to leave it up to fate instead. This is not recommended, as there are many unpleasant places in the Underworld.

The Stygian Isle

The center of the Underworld and mirror to the Blessed Isle, the Stygian Isle is perhaps the most barren and empty part of the Underworld. Not just because of the Mouth of Oblivion at its center, taking the place that Mount Meru occupies in Creation, but also because of the Immaculate Order, which frowns upon ancestor cults and exterminates any ghosts they find, while also teaching mortals that the virtuous end up in a paradisiacal afterlife. As such, those who die in the Blessed Isle and linger as ghosts tend to wonder if they had sinned in life, to be punished in such a manner as to find themselves there.

1. The City of Stygia

The largest city of the Underworld, Stygia is a city made by the dead, for the dead. The Dual Monarchs rule it, even if only in name due to the power of the ambitious Deathlords, and the city is divided in many districts whose culture is influenced by the local governor. The entire point of Stygia is to cater solely to the dead, so the economy is designed to cater to the endlessly repeating toil of the ghosts that live here, and the law is designed to prevent mock wars from escalating into true violence. And of course, the local ghosts react violently to any who try to bring peace or change to the city, as they want only their empty passions and the predictability of their memories. For years, however, the Deathlords have not so subtly ruled Stygia, each wanting control of the largest city of the Underworld.

And of course, it bears mentioning that Stygia is in a state of constant construction and renovation. Not just to imitate the shifting balances of power that the ghosts knew in life, but also to stave off the influence of the Void, as the city constantly sinks into the hole beneath it, built on layers upon layers of Stygia's old construction. Every few years, a new layer is made, and another layer is lost to the Mouth of the Void beneath. And of course, the Calendar of Setesh hands from the firmament above, an upside down mountain of machinery and artifice, where a dense mist of prayer and faith converges to grant the passage of time to the Underworld and move the pale sun and stars in its sky.

East

In Creation, it's difficult to tell whether the Blessed Isle or the East holds the larger population. In the Underworld, it is undeniably the East that has the most ghosts. Every single petty kingdom and city-state that existed in the history of the East remains in the Underworld, or at least, any ghosts wish the nations they lived in still existed and remembers their slice of history still. The nature of the East is also a mirror of the woodlands of Creation, but the trees are either a sickly pale or a deep black in color, and bear blood-red fruit.

Unsurprisingly, the East is filled with the ghosts of those who died in the Great Contagion, particularly in the region corresponding to the Scavenger Lands. Of course, all the competing territorial claims would normally lead to endless wars, but as wars are largely pointless in the Underworld (any slain soldier is likely going to come back later with a grudge), other systems of resolving territorial disputes were implemented. Either everyone involved gets a portion of the territory they consider their own, or perhaps more simply any that live in such lands is considered a citizen of all nations laying claim on the land simultaneously. After all, the only resource an undead ruler would really need or want from their subjects is prayer, and a ghost can pray to multiple figures. If a ruler is useful or dangerous enough, it's generally not an issue to convince their subjects to pray to them on top of praying to all the other rulers that claim lordship over their lands.

After that, it wasn't much of a leap to implement rotations of power between all members of a ruling dynasty, to prevent kings and queens from warring against their ancestors for the position that both they and all the other rulers in their bloodline held. These seasonal transfers of power also affect the actual seasons of the East, marking the passage from winter to summer as each ruler gets their turn on the undead throne.

2. The Empire Of Aki

The largest empire of the Underworld, the Empire of Aki was formed by the warrior Aki 200 years ago, and then she disappeared, leaving behind her Council of Royals to govern the lands. The various dukes, daimyos, mayors, and mandarins dislike working together as a council, but they very much do not want to cede the collective power that the empire represents by laboring for independence. This has gotten to such a point that, due to Aki's long absence, petty conflicts between the empire's provinces are quite common, and if squabbles don't begin in the Council, they almost invariably end up there. At this point, fistfights are practically accepted as parliamentary procedure. Frankly, most ghosts of the empire suspect Aki has entered Lethe.

Still, despite the internal struggles, the rising powers of the Deathlords are worrying, and as the Empire directly borders the territory of the Walker In Darkness, the Empire is preparing for war, mustering and training troops while their smithies work day and night to arm them all. Perhaps you will seek to become the Emperor and truly unify the Empire once again?

3. Hanau And Tyoka

This dual kingdom had long been a classic example of cyclical monarchy, as Queen Defiance-In-Shadow and her great-granddaughter Princess Annuaski crushed all other claimants to their territory. During the reign of Queen Defiance-In-Shadow, the land is wracked with winter and poverty, as she had ruled during the harsh years right after the Great Contagion, when famine killed many who had escaped both the plague and the Fair Folk. The ghosts living in her lands become thin and desperate due to the Queen's memory of those years, and must beg on the streets for crumbs of bread or a whiff of ritual incense. All food, fuel, and shelter in the land has to be rationed as well. However, none doubt the Queen's just rule, as she starves alongside her own subjects, and her soldiers and officials are honest and hardworking.

The rule of Princess Annuaski, however, fills the land with a summer abundance, and the Princess herself bears a welcoming smile to any who arrive at her kingdom, hiding her tattered, rotten flesh and twisted bones beneath robes of fine silk. Despite all the prosperity of her rule, she squanders it as she squandered the kingdom's wealth in life. During her rule, the guest-fires in every home burn cold, and drain the essence of the people for the Princess. She fills her palace with feasts and celebrations, all illusions unable to nourish even ghosts. The fruits of her orchards are full of maggots and gall, and her ministers are cruel and quick to punish any who do not openly enjoy the prosperity of the kingdom.

It is only in Hanau that people hopefully anticipate the coming of winter. And recently, this hope has grown sharper. Long has Princess Annuaski needed "reminding" about performing the rites that turn the seasons and passes the throne to the Queen. This year, she is a full month late. She has managed to gain some control over a district of Stygia, and with the power she gains from the city's mausoleums she prevents the turning of the seasons. Meanwhile, the Queen prepares her own troops in the fortress that belongs to her alone, knowing that the kingdom will soon face civil war. She also knows that her kingdom cannot face civil war, as the power of the Mask of Winters reaches her borders. Perhaps with your aid, things might change.

4. Deheleshen

Lookshy follows the Immaculate Faith, so their dead do not often become ghosts, but it does happen. Those that linger dwell in a modest but well-fortified town they've named Dehelsen, after Lookshy's predecessor. They retain the castes they followed in life, and they even still provide their mercenary services to the kingdoms of the dead. And while they are not buried with magitech weapons, and thus lack the technological advantage they wielded in life, they do have many arms and armor of a more mundane make to wage war with, not to mention the sorcerer-technicians and sorcerer-engineers among them that have worked for centuries to replicate Lookshy's magitech in the Underworld, with remarkable success. And while they do not know much about necrotech, they are the first outside of the Deathlords to develop it at all.

5. Sijan

Every building in Sijan is an offering to the dead. As such, the Sijan of the Underworld is almost identical to the Sijan of Creation. Much of the outer city is subterranean, too, as crypts sink into the marshy ground and the living Sijanese build new tombs on top of them, as well as tunnels that allow the ancient sunken graves to still be tended to. Next to Stygia, Sijan is perhaps the best place for ghosts to dwell in the Underworld. A big part of this is the Mortician's Order, which ensures that every ghost receives a small stipend of prayer and offerings from the living. It's not much, and it is not all that often sometimes, but it is delivered without fail. Beyond the minimal rights of residence in the necropolis, however, Sijan is an expensive place to dwell in.

Just as in life, mortals are not equal in death within Sijan, as it has distinct social classes. The Mortician's Order arranges the greatest privileges for itself, and they train every member extensively for their careers during death. The morticians do not generally flaunt their wealth and status, but none has doubts about who rules the city. Citizens form the second class, those who have living relatives that pray for them and offer them sacrifices. And while ghosts do not need many mortal occupations, the security provided by Sijan allows many mortals to continue the occupations they had in life, resulting in many excellent restaurants and teahouses populating the city. And of course, the third class is composed of those who were simply buried in Sijan, those who do not retain living relatives. For the third class, the Mortician's Order arranges the bare minimum, but any additional services are costly.

And finally, ghosts that immigrate to Sijan are of the lowest class, possessing no entitlements at all. Anything they want from the city, they must buy. Still, Sijan has a large population of immigrants, and there are many spare quarters, thanks to ghosts that accept Lethe or Oblivion. Having to share tomb-apartments isn't rare regardless. Despite all this, Sijan offers stability, a quality widely prized among the dead, and some opportunity for the ambitious.

6. The Pyrron Ossuary

This shadowland had a baleful reputation long before the Deathlord Walker in Darkness claimed it. It used to have the city Pyrron in the First Age, which was destroyed during the Usurpation, forming the shadowland of today. Later, during the Great Contagion, it became a dumping ground for bodies, expanding the Shadowland. Today, bones choke the soil. Additionally, the Princess Magnificent's attempt to take control led to her defeat by the gods of Great Forks, and the reveal of the Deathlord's existence to Creation. Before fleeing, she laid a curse on the shadowland, killing any mortals who entered it. Three centuries ago, the Walker in Darkness claimed it, and built his fortress amid the shattered ruins. Due to his control, this shadowland is also often called the Walker's Realm, and all of the ghosts that dwell here are the Walker's troops, constantly training for war, crafting weapons and armor, and praying to their master and to the Neverborn.

7. Thorns

Thorns used to have a community of ghosts, as with many cities. That community is gone. A behemoth stepped on it, and then the real Thorns took its place. When the Mask of Winters assaulted Thorns, it was the first time a whole city merged with the Underworld while its inhabitants were still living. People in both Creation and the Underworld have yet to learn the full implications of the shadowland, as they are too busy with the Deathlord who made it. The living inhabitants of Thorns no longer enjoy the prosperity of their city. Ghosts and informers that obey the Mask of Winters watch the citizens for any sign of rebellion, and any defiance is punished harshly. While the Deathlord pretends to be a reasonable head of state, his policies clearly show that the population is just as useful to him dead as it is when alive, perhaps even more so.

Most of the ghosts dwelling in Thorns are part of the Mask's army, and they patrol the city or roam around however they please during the night. The least terrible among them force the living to play out little melodramas with them, from the ghostly maiden who wishes she'd made love with a certain boy to the artisan who wants to tell off the shop foreman he hated. The original targets of their sentiments are gone, so they seek stand-ins among the population of Thorns. When dawn approaches, however, they retreat to the corpse-fortress of Juggernaut, and leave Thorns to its misery.

The native ghosts abhor the invaders, and are in fact the most fervent members of the city's resistance movement. Their pride in their city sustains them against Lethe and the state Thorns was reduced to outrages them. Mercifully, they do get to mingle with their living descendants thanks to the shadowland. Unlike most ghosts elsewhere, the native ghosts of Thorns do not generally ask for worship or offerings, as they associate the practices of ancestor cults with the lunatic demands of the invaders. Still, telling a group of Thornfolk about the good old days and breaking bread with co-conspirators while some bread goes into the fire isn't *technically* worship, is it?

8. Noss Fens

Few know about the shadowland of Noss Fens, but it is arguably the most important and dangerous in Creation. Here, the Dowager pulled the Great Contagion from the terrible Well of Udr, and here she still dwells, meditating on the enigmatic well as she seeks another way to destroy the world. This close to the Elemental Pole of Wood, even shadowlands are fecund, where stagnant, scum-covered streams and pools divide islands of peat. Curtains of black moss hang heavily from the branches of immense cypresses and bog oaks. Yet, everything is dead and rotting even as it grows, and the stench of decay fills the air.

In the center of Noss Fens rises a large hill, the Mound of Forsaken Seeds. There, a small, strangely angled shrine at the top is merely the visible summit of a long-buried ziggurat, riddled with tunnels and chambers. The stonework is like nothing else in Creation, with naught a single right angle or parallel line or surface. None of the Deathlords would be able to identify the builders, any more than the Solars of the First Age could before them. In the deepest chamber lies the Well of Udr itself. Who opened that chasm to Oblivion, none save perhaps the Neverborn know, and the Neverborn themselves haven't revealed such knowledge.

Here, kidnapped children of villages slaughtered by the Dowager are forced to worship their terrible foster mother. Their furniture and toys, and even the plates and cups and forks they use during meals, are all soulsteel forged from the ghosts of their parents and the Dowager's other victims. The children know this, and they also know that when they are grown, the Dowager will send them out of the Noss Fens to form a village of their own, and to bear children themselves. They know that someday, the Dowager will slaughter them as well, and take their children to begin the cycle anew.

9. The Bayou Of Endless Regret

This massive shadowland lies to the southeast of Creation, albeit it is usually assigned to the East by geographers, due to the massive mangroves that block the daylight from the stagnant waters. While the shadowland is short on normal swampland fauna, mosquitoes, spiders, and other biting, stinging insects swarm in unnatural profusion. Even in the First Age, this region was a swamp, even if a populous and prosperous one. Eventually, however, the river that passed through it silted up and shrank, and the province was already weakened by disease when the Great Contagion arrived. Now, only ghosts remain, still paddling spectral craft through the stench and mist. They all hate and fear outsiders, mortal or undead. Still, the Deathlord Eye and Seven Despairs claims the shadowland as his own, even if none of the native ghosts recognize his rule. If any can truly control the shadowland, however, the many bizarre drugs and dire toxins it produces can be quite useful, as some even work on spirits such as Fair Folk, demons, or ghosts.

South

In the Underworld, the South is a land of great wealth and terrible hardship, often existing side-by-side. It is dominated by the pale Underworld sun and the dry, gritty winds that blow year round from the deep desert. The landscape is one of harsh, black stone sculpted by the winds, bone-white sands stretching to dim horizons and prairie grasses that whisper curses in the wind. Because the South has long been inhabited, the ghosts of abandoned towns, ruined farmlands and hollow-eyed houses litter the inland territory. The bones of cattle watch travelers with empty eye sockets, and less pleasant attention hides in the shadows beyond caravan campfires. Rutted tracks cross even deserted areas, but they seem to lead nowhere, and even the most traveled path might end abruptly, leaving travelers lost and at the mercy of the beasts and horrors that lurk in the empty lands of the South.

The lands around Chiaroscuro are grassy plains that the ghosts of farmers and ranchers plant and herd, harvest and slaughter in an endless round of seasons, all powered by prayer and sacrifice. Further inland, away from the sea, the land dries quickly, becoming hardpan plains and steppes to the west, while the forests to the Southeast die away, the skeletal remains of trees preserved like abandoned bones in the lifeless earth. Rare oases are held by the strongest and most ruthless ghosts, to whom many desperate cults are dedicated. These tyrannical ghosts control access to the sacred waters, charging exorbitant prices in Essence, favors, information or grave goods. On the coasts, the density of ghosts is the greatest in the Underworld, even if the population is not as large as in the East, and such coastal kingdoms are similar to those in the East. Further inland, however, rulership is more stable, and most inland kingdoms have sworn fealty to the First And Forsaken Lion.

10. Chiaroscuro

A huge and ancient city, Chiaroscuro has been inhabited since the First Age. In the Underworld, that persistent presence is evident. Most ghosts of the city are Contagion dead, as is true across the Underworld as a whole, but Chiaroscuro has a solid population of older ghosts as well. Thanks to its wealth, location, numerous small shadowlands, and the well-established ancestor worship in Creation's South, newly dead constantly arrive to the city. Still, the native ghosts of the city, those who lived within it in life, are easily distinguished thanks to the signs of their funeral pyres.

In the South, such pyres are a doorway between the lands of the living and the dead. The days-long funeral celebrations guide the dead to the Underworld through music, incense, and prayers. For the native ghosts, their new existence in the Underworld begins, and remains centered, around their urns. It is their primary grave good, and it signals the value their living family placed on them. These urns are made of the finest materials available to the family; gold and silver are common, and jade and hand-carved ivory are sometimes used as well. Their urns also anchor them against Lethe, and function as fetters that allow them passage to Creation.

11. The Thousand

Running from the dank, mist-covered beaches of the Sea of Shadows to the depths of the arid Southern desert, the gigantic mountain range called the Thousand has been transformed from a deserted territory of rocks and extinct volcanoes into a massive citadel. The scant few small cities and towns in the lowlands of the mountains are now gone or have fallen under the control of the First and Forsaken Lion.

In the southern end of the mountain range, the fortress unofficially known as Merciless can be found buried beneath the jagged peaks of the Thousand, though the First and Forsaken Lion takes no pleasure in his fortress. After all, he is not there willingly, but was exiled to the South as punishment for his ambition during the Great Contagion. Since then, conquest of the South has been his goal, and it is difficult to say that he has not made progress. As the fortress is expanded to fit the Lion's ever growing army, it eats away at the foundation of the Underworld, great mining manufactories crawling beneath the earth and grinding away at the rock.

Despite all this, the Deathlord's territory has no shadowland of significant size, a dangerous weakness that impedes any plans he has for the living world. To change this, he focuses on Gem. The city itself is one of the anchors of Creation against the Wyld, but the Lion does not care if turning the city into a shadowland would allow more Fair Folk incursions. Thanks to this, he has managed to ally himself with some of the forces of the Fair Folk, who are fascinated with the Underworld. Together, the Deathlord and southern Fair Folk are planning the destruction of Gem, which would accomplish the dual purpose of destabilizing the southern borders of Creation while also creating a shadowland of significant size.

West

The oldest ghostly sailors (some older than the gods of the Second Age) claim that the Sea of Shadows that covers the Western Underworld never ends. They say its endless waters will someday wash in and drown the entire Underworld, then rise up to the land of the living until all of Creation drowns. The western Underworld is not very populated, as the sounds of the sea reminds the dead too much of the song of Lethe, so few ghosts of great age last long in the west.

Those towns and kingdoms that do exist in the West are usually standoffish and insular, generally just preoccupied with their own affairs. Most are of little influence, but many are ancient in origin. Only the Skullstone Archipelago, led by the Silver Prince, is a major force in western Underworld politics. With his strong ties to the world of the living, the Deathlord dominates all other lands in the direction. Most sailors do not sail beyond sight of land in the west of the Underworld, fearful of the dangers of the Shadowed Sea, and only the ghostly fleets of the Lintha and the black and silver sails of the Skullstone fleets travel frequently beyond the sight of the dark shores of the underworld.

12. Fallen Lotus

The greatest inland civilization in the West, Fallen Lotus is located on the western side of the Thousand, serving travellers from all directions. Before the Contagion, it was little more than a collection of warped cypress shacks where the ghosts of river pirates dwelled. Like many places in the Underworld, the Contagion changed it. The arrival of millions of Contagion-touched ghosts bloated the town, and it grew massive, sprawling across miles of swampy lowland in the Southwest. As it is built where many of the currents of the Underworld collect, the city is where many ghosts, ships, memories, and promises of forgetfulness wash ashore. Seagoing vessels dock at the city's extensive port, and the presence of the Font of Mourning deep in the jungle brings the treasures of the living world to the dead.

13. Whale Bay

Offshore and north of Fallen Lotus, the settlement of Whale Bay is as old as Fallen Lotus, but has had very different luck. The island on which it is built is harsh and bitter, surrounded by a collection of smaller coral islands. Whale Bay controls the safest deep-water bay, but a dozen or so smaller ones are scattered over the surrounding islands that support fishing villages and towns, being more than adequate for smugglers and pirates. Storms and tides torment the coast of these islands, as well as large numbers of hungry ghosts washed ashore with the tide. Dank mists veil the sun most days and hide the guiding stars at night. Many of the inhabitants of the coast divide their time between fishing the black waters of the Shadowed Seas and pilfering salvage from unfortunate vessels that run afoul of the shallow coral beds around the islands. There are many small communities that reject both the Deathlords or the Dual Monarchy as masters, but Whale Bay is largely a stronghold of the Dual Monarchy.

14. Haggard's Keep

The location where the only large-scale and permanent Monarchy presence can be found in Whale Bay, Haggard's Keep still only holds a few hundred troops at most, many of them on regular patrols and manning a dozen Monarchy ships docked in the bay. The keep itself is utilitarian, with the shrines all dedicated to the cult of the Dual Monarchy. The important part of it is not the troops or ships, but the 150 foot high tower that rises like a black needle from the northwest corner of the keep.

The tower is called Haggard's Eye, one of the great treasures of the Dual Monarchy. It is likely it existed before the Monarchy's rule regardless. The lighthouse is built of smooth, black onyx that sticks up from solid bedrock like a needle punched through cloth. It is not hollow like true lighthouses, but it has narrow steps that wind around the outside of the tower, carved into the rock. There are no handrails or barriers, which makes climbing the tower a challenging affair, especially in the unpredictable coastal weather. The stone is bitter cold too, so the already treacherous stairs are often covered in a rime of black ice.

The top of the tower ends abruptly in a flat, slick platform, again without shelter of any kind. Here, the unblinking Eye that gives the tower its name stares endlessly out over the Shadowed Sea. The Eye, being about 30 feet in diameter, hovers a few feet off the platform, suspended by no known magic or recognizable power. Its optic fibers and blood vessels trail off into nothingness, and the air around it thrums with the cool, chancy Essence of the Underworld. The Eye also casts a pale blue light, illuminating the platform around it. It's direct gaze, however, is much more than gentle luminescence; it is a blinding, brilliant white-blue light that reaches hundreds of miles off shore, acting like a guide and warning to ships at sea as it scans wave and wind in a steady pattern from south to north and back again. Those unfortunate enough to be caught in its gaze while on the platform find their motes being ripped from them at great speed. It is thanks to this eye that the Dual Monarchy can hold and stabilize its western border.

Guidance is not the only function of the Eye, however. The Warden of Haggard's Keep carries the key to the eye, a small, translucent red hearthstone threaded with dark veins. Thrusting it deep into the eye and holding it there causes the eye to swell and its pupil to dilate, while the brilliant light of its gaze transforms to a deep red and ravages anything it touches, boiling the waters of the Shadowed Sea, blasting ships to splinters, and driving the spirits of the dead screaming into Oblivion. Additionally, the one holding the key can also see as the Eye sees. Those who have seen through the Eye rarely speak of what they saw beyond the dark that obscures the horizon. It is said that the half-blind owner of the Eye yet exists somewhere out beyond the edge of the Shadowed Sea, and that the Eye calls out to it as it gazes over the water. Likewise anyone who activates the Eye with the Key can hear that call. If the Eye is left active long enough, who knows what would come to fetch it back?

15. Lintha Ng Oroo

The Lintha were a powerful people before the Primordial War. This is no longer the case, but the dead ghosts of Lintha that remain still retain memory of their former glory. Thanks to this, the dead Lintha are more than their living counterparts, even as they maintain a connection to their living kin. They live upon the rotting, ghostly corpse of Lintha Ng Oroo. As she once provided shelter and succor to the living, she now offers the same to the dead Lintha. Her rolling hills are no longer covered with sweet blue grass but by fields of bones, half submerged in fleshy, ivory-colored mud. With Lintha Ng Oroo at their backs, the Lintha ghosts sail freely across the Shadowed Sea, and they attack any isolated or weak Skullstone ship they come across, albeit they avoid a full commitment of forces and have not openly allied with any land-based ruler.

16. The Skullstone Archipelago

Nestled within the oldest of the Western shadowlands, the Skullstone Archipelago is the most powerful nation of the Underworld's West. The archipelago runs north to south with the Silver Prince's capital, Onyx, on the largest, northernmost island, Darkmist Isle. Most of the islands are remnants from a long-sunken continent, though others rose from the dark waters like strange dreams. The largest islands of the archipelago are heavily populated, not only with ghosts but also with a significant population of the living. An enormous ancestor cult provides essence to the Silver Prince, and he keeps his people content enough to continue to obey him.

17. Saigoth That Was

Many wonders were crafted by the Solars of the First Age, and most of those wonders have been lost since the Usurpation. Then, the Great Contagion and Balor Crusade diminished Creation, wiping many traces of First Age times. Still, beneath the crushing black depths of the Underworld's sea lies something much more than simple memory. The lost continent of Saigoth endures. It was once a great island continent of the First Age, raised from unformed chaos by the decree of Exalted lords. Spanning thousands of miles, filled with treasures untold, it was home and host to many of the greatest Solar Exalted.

Never a true part of Creation, Saigoth depended on an interlocked system of geomagnetic arrays, powerful Celestial Charms, bound spirits, and many reality engines for its stability and existence. When this system was sabotaged by a cleverly designed sorcerous spell, the Great Western Ocean rose up in rebellion. Saigoth sank beneath the waves in less than a day. Entire armies and cities, millions of mortals, thousands of Terrestrial Exalted, and some Solars who had survived the betrayal at Sumeru, they were all taken by surprise and dragged under the destructive currents as the island sank. The continent didn't simply sink under the living water of the West. So much death and destruction concentrated in one place wrought a terrible miracle; the continent of Saigoth passed entirely from the land of the living and sank into the Underworld's Sea of Shadows.

That could've been the end of it, but it was not. As the water tore away shorelines and earthquakes shattered the glorious palaces of Clepsys, the greatest tactical minds of Creation abandoned their petty warfare and banded together to defeat the death rushing in on them all. Some attempted to flee on the great aerial battle barges, while others retreated to the ships that had originally brought the conquering armies. Yet the ocean raged wild, and even the currents of the air rebelled in a paroxysm of chaos as Saigoth died. Most of those attempting to flee the island died as well. The remaining Dragon-Blooded rebels and Exalted oppressors worked together to stabilize the collapsing geomantic arrays. Powerful Charms that had been used to leash elementals for entertainment were restructured to buffer the hungry ocean. Gigantic war machines were field stripped and reforged by Twilight Exalted into oxygen-generating machines or pumps or barriers. In that drowning day, the Exalted, both Terrestrial and Celestial, proved again that, working together, they could bend Creation itself to their will.

But still they could not break it. Saigoth still sank into the waters and into the Underworld itself. Death did not take everyone on the island, however, even as the entire island passed into the land of the dead. With the unimaginable powers of unified reality generators, the desperation and skills of hundreds of sorcerers, Exalted and minor godlings, a tiny pocket of life and air was preserved like a luminous jewel in the unrelenting darkness of the Shadowed Sea. Few survived Saigoth's transition, a bare thousand or so survivors huddled under the fragile, shining barrier created out of the ruins of Saigoth's glory. Thousands more died, most entering Lethe. Others became ghosts to haunt the dark, shattered land lying on the bottom of the Underworld Sea, many having sacrificed themselves to create the bubble of life hidden in the black depths. A tiny corner of the great city of ancient Clepsys lies under a dense magical barrier. Shining like burnished gold, the barrier protects the descendants of the original survivors. Most of them are Dragon-Blooded, as almost all mortals died in Saigoth's destruction, and most are Water-aspected as fits their trapped state beneath the ghostly water of the Underworld. They are not ghosts, but truly living people, buried so far beneath water and so deep in the Underworld that they have no hope of ever escaping back to surface, let alone the land of the living.

The survivors of Saigoth eke out a precarious living, using magic and ingenuity to survive in their small world. Fungi, mutated grasses, ghost-white apple and featherless chickens are their only food, for they gain no nourishment consuming the ghostly creatures of the Sea of Shadows. Their homes are the glorious, half-ruined buildings of Clepsys. They live with rubies as playthings, gold platters to eat their meager meals from and spidersilk to sleep on, but they have not seen the sun for thousands of years. There is no energy or magic to spare for luxuries or chancy expeditions. All their energy and power is directed to maintaining the ancient enchantments that support the golden dome above them.

The Sunken Ones have been totally isolated since the island's destruction, unaware of the fate of the Celestial Exalted, the march of history, the growth of the Underworld, the rise of the Scarlet Empire, the birth of the Abyssal Exalted, or any other aspect of history. Teams of Dragon-Blooded warriors, armed with spells (or anima powers) to breathe water and protect their Essence make expeditions outside their bubble to salvage abandoned artifacts and hearthstones from the shattered manses littering the landscape around their home. Those who die become ghosts and are mercilessly driven out of the city by the fearful, ignorant survivors to be swept away by the currents of the Sea of Shadows.

Surrounding the bubble is the drowned city of Clepsys, its glory half-buried in silt, its tall towers rising up like desperate reaching hands, and the eerie beasts of the Underworld Sea now making their homes where the Exalted of old once lived. There was no time for evacuation or rescue, so the entire city is littered with bones, some with confused and angry hungry ghosts still clinging stubbornly to them. Powerful artifacts are buried in the city, attracting and warping the creatures of the deep, the Dragon-Blooded of Sunken Clepsys and those who search for the puissant treasures of the First Age. Coral masks grow thickly in drowned Clepsys. Influenced by ancient spells and Essence pools, they often grow strange and twisted, unnaturally distorted and asymmetrical, as well as to incredible size. Those who swim in drowned Clepsys do under the eerie, empty but disturbingly aware gaze of the masks.

Despite their best efforts, the survivors know their time is limited. The Charms and machines holding the water and the death Essence of the Underworld at bay are old, and they will fail. Yet their home is far from any surface, any hope of rescue, and the survivors have not found a way to cross back into the living world or escape the crushing weight of the dark sea around them. The death of Saigoth has been delayed for thousands of years, but it will arrive.

North

It is a strange irony that winter, a time of suffering and want for so many in Creation, is a time of bounty for the ghosts of the North. As bitter cold sweeps across the snow-covered lands, the living in those territories redouble their prayers to their honored ancestors in hopes of receiving some blessing in return, and the ghosts of the North batten themselves on essence drawn from desperate descendants. The religious rites of many of the North's barbarian tribes establish winter as the burial season. People, naturally, die all throughout the year, and their remains are tended to as custom dictates, but the traditional ceremonies to recognize the passing of the honored dead are always held in winter months.

18. The Northwestern Islands

The Northwestern Underworld is dominated by a small island chain. Rajtul is the largest one, with more than 200,000 square miles, and there are three smaller islands to its southwest; Lakshadi, Ravanna and Shriranga. Lakshadi itself lies in the middle of the three, and is home to one of the Underworld's most extensive collection of First Age lore outside of the citadels of the Deathlords. This archive is preserved by the Lakshadi Academy, a small colony of First Age Dragon King ghosts. These ghosts decided to forgo reincarnation in order to preserve as much of their society's lore as they could, until Dragon Kings can rise in influence once again.

There are 57 of such Dragon King ghosts precisely. During the Contagion, while their isolationism kept it free of the disease for longer than most, they knew that even if the Dragon Kings avoided extinction, not enough enlightened Dragon Kings would be able to properly educate, and thus fully enlighten them to sapience, the new generations of Dragon Kings. Thus, their race might be doomed to be trapped in barbarism and mindless savagery. Thus the archive remains in the Underworld, protected by patient ghosts awaiting the resurgence of their living kin.

In Rajtul proper, the fearsome Varajtul cannibals reign. Thanks to their rituals which bind the ghosts of those they consume as their property, they've established and expanded the Empire of Hunger in the eastern part of Rajtul. It is only a network of wards dividing the island, set up by the Dragon Kings from Lakshadi, that they have been unable to conquer the rest of the island. The other two islands, Ravanna and Shriranga, have had negligible impact in the Underworld.

19. The Kunlun City-States

There are four major city-states in the Kunlun region of the North, lying in the western side of the North but before the ocean and the northwestern islands. In the First Age, the city-states would've been considered tiny, insignificant villages, but in the current day they are viewed as far more impressive, a testament to the grandeur of the First Age. The city-states are called Kunlun Shan, Thar, Nauru, and Ikh Bayan. There used to be a fifth, called Cholistan, but that one was destroyed 300 years ago.

The Bishop of Chalcedony Thurible has a firm sway over the city-states. The Deathlord does not actually rule them, but he controls them indirectly through his religious writings. Infused with the Bishop's mind-altering Charms, the various scriptures of the Tome of Endless Night have swept through the Kunlun city-states, encouraging ancestor worship. Unfortunately, none of the city-states received identical copies, and the resulting doctrinal schisms have caused centuries of religious conflicts between the city-states. While some ghosts realize that this was deliberate on the Bishop's part, that realization does little to make them doubt the validity of their own interpretations of the text, and thus does nothing to quell the religious bigotry fueling the wars between the city-states.

20. Whitewall

There are no ghosts in Whitewall. One of the Syndics that rules the city is also one of Creation's most preeminent gods of peace, which causes a powerful feeling of spiritual contentment to permeate the Underworld in the vicinity of Whitewall, preventing all but the most extremely stubborn and willful ghosts from resisting Lethe for more than a mere moment. In fact, Whitewall has no reflection in the Underworld at all. In the place where Whitewall would be in the Underworld is naught but a massive bonfire glowing with an unearthly white flame, taking up an area roughly identical to the city's walls. Stretching south of this white inferno is the White Scar, known in Creation as the Traveler's Road stretching from Whitewall to the coastal city of Wallport. The road is enchanted to prevent the dead from crossing it, and this power is strong enough that it extends to the Underworld, making a 500-mile long barrier that is impassable to the undead.

This is also the reason for the Bishop's intrigue against Whitewall. When he wants to send agents east, whether ghostly or Abyssal, they must travel the long way around through the treacherous mountains further north in order to bypass the White Sear. And with the Syndics' attempts to shrink and destroying the massive shadowland known as Marama's Fell, the Bishop is in a race against time to claim and consolidate his hold over the shadowland. You will not start within this location but somewhere nearby, roughly far enough away that you won't fall prey to the aura of contentment around Whitewall.

21. The Icewalker Lands

For the Icewalker tribes, the Underworld is little different from Creation. The lands of the dead are cold and uninviting, but so are the lands of the living that they inhabit. When an Icewalker dies and is buried, they usually emerge in the Underworld to joyous greetings from their forebears, who welcome them back into the tribe and set them to whatever duties they held in life. The Icewalker dead retain their nomadic lifestyle, following ghostly equivalents of their totemic animals.

Despite their tribal origins, the Icewalker dead are among the Underworld's most wealthy societies. Their living kin venerate their ancestors more than any other culture in Creation that is not under the sway of a Deathlord, and Icewalker dead are almost always buried with totemic animals, lending them generous grave goods that the Deathlords hardly leave in the hands of young ghosts. Their most important advantage, however, is their numbers; many Icewalkers die every year, and their culture means that they are more likely than most to linger after death, lending the Icewalker dead incredible numbers. And of course, their barbarian upbringing lends incredibly well to an unlife of raiding and pillaging.

22. Dead Gradafes

In Creation, the Kingdom of Gradafes is a small nation of farmers and shepherds known for their production of cashmere wool. Their true ruler is the Lover Clad in Raiment of Tears, who leads the kingdom from the shadowland known as the Vale of Dust and Shadows. The current king, Aolan Graf-Chani, is thought of as a fatuous old fool besotted with the Lover's charms, just like the previous 17 kings. The seat of power for the monarchy is named the Palace of the White Ram.

The dead of Dead Gradafes live much like their living counterparts, relying on ghostly sheep to provide most of their income. Politically speaking, Dead Gradafes is ruled by Aolan Graf-Ducat, the grandfather of Aolan Graf-Chani. Of course, it is the Lover who rules in truth. However, the two kings are not quite so wrapped around the Lover's finger as even she believes. The two men already serve another master, and their loyalty is firm.

The Palace of the White Ram was not named, as many believe, after the cashmere goats that form the backbone of Gradafe's economy. The truth lies hidden from the Lover by enchantments that were old long before her birth. In actuality, Aolan Graf-Chani and Aolan Graf-Ducat, like every member of their family line going back to their First Age founder, secretly worship Sacheverell, the Lidless Eye That Sees. Every member of the family line is *born* a Yozi worshipper, inculcated from the womb with a subtly ingrained loyalty to their yozi master. They have never engaged in grand rituals or ever summoned a demon.

Instead, their duties are threefold; to love Sacheverell, to conceal that love from all, and to wait for the Day of Reckoning. When that day comes, two sons of Aolan, one living and one dead, will open the door between Creation and the Underworld together to find a path to "the Third Place". No Aolan king has ever had any clue what the Third Place is, and they have never cared. It is the will of Sacheverell that they wait until the day comes, and when it comes, they will know what to do and will do what they must. If by doing so they consign all of Gradafes to Hell, then that is perfectly acceptable.

23. The Frozen City-States

In Creation, the Haslanti League is a new and emerging empire. However, it has not existed long enough to be reflected in the Underworld. Dead Haslanti find not a grand city-state, but a collection of small villages, or perhaps even an empty field. If they wish to survive they must find shelter in one of the frozen city-states of Ydrossos, of the late First Age. While little of the magitech continued to function in the Underworld, the infrastructure of the cities endured, and the ghost of the Solar hero Varan Pen protected them from invaders.

While Ydrossos is loyal to the Dual Monarchy, its people are not blind to the fact that the Dual Monarchs are essentially hostages of the Deathlords. So the nation of Ydrossos subtly prepares to fight against the Deathlords, giving the appearance of loyalty while ignoring or subverting any that would weaken the nation's defenses against the Deathlords.

24. Tzatli

Once a wonder of the First Age, the flying city of Tzatli plunged into the ground during the Usurpation, slaying most of its two million denizens. The mass death and destruction meant the city's reflection in the Underworld appeared nearly intact, and the ghostly population has carried on ever since. While the city can no longer fly, the protective shield works to some extent, giving the city a deep blue sky with no stars, even if it does not prevent the bitter winds of the northern Underworld from chilling every part of the city.

While some say that the terrible cold is responsible for the inhabitant's lack of passion, they are wrong, as Tzatli's people were like that in life as well. The Solar who built the city robbed their citizen's capacity to feel to make it. While they are surrounded by more functioning First Age artifacts than any in Creation, they cannot be bothered to make any use of it.

25. Marama's Fell

Sometimes referred to as the Monument of Murder or Genocide's Nation to the people of Whitewall, Marama's Fell is the single largest shadowland in the North, covering almost 10,000 square miles. The westernmost tip lies less than 100 miles from Whitewall's city gates, so the Syndics consider it the most significant threat to Whitewall. The cause of the shadowland was a massive concentration camp built during the Shogunate, to dispose of the many living creations of the Solars in fear of their possible loyalty to their golden masters. Camp 17, led by Anjei Marama, was the most prominent due to Marama's feat of turning it into the model of brutal efficiency, seemingly enjoying finding new ways of exterminating living beings.

It wasn't long before Camp 17 became the site of a shadowland, but the Shogunate was too busy with other matters to address it, and the Great Contagion prevented any plans of shrinking the shadowland. Marama herself descended to the Labyrinth and offered herself to Oblivion. The shadowland does not mirror surrounding societies as most shadowlands do, but rather its denizens organized themselves into gangs and associations. Over the last decade, however, the ghost known as Thrice-Dead Achiba has brought a significant number of the roaming gangs under his control, and is well on his way to uniting the whole shadowland under his banner.

26. The Silent Meadow Of Dust

The domain of the Bishop of Chalcedony Thurible, this is the largest shadowland of the Kunlun region, with an area of about 70 square miles. Like the desert around it, it consists of arid steppes covered in ashy snow. The Bishop's citadel, the Hidden Tabernacle, was forged from the ruins of the First Age city of Cholistan, and moves around the shadowland in a preset course. The ghosts of the Meadow congregate in "tent villages" of two types. Some flock to the Abyssals in the Bishop's service that favor a martial bent, training to become paladins in Kunlun's next holy war. Others flock to Abyssal priests who preach the deeper mysteries of the Shining Path in roaming tent revivals that follow the Hidden Tabernacle across the Meadow.

The Labyrinth

As old as the Underworld itself, the Labyrinth is a seemingly endless network of caverns and passages that stretch all over beneath the Underworld's surface. In it, things like distance matter less than it normally does, allowing unmatched travel speeds for those with the wit to navigate the Labyrinth and the might to survive its innumerable dangers. Few in the Underworld know that any cave system of sufficient size in the Underworld connects to the Labyrinth, or can be made to do so with minimal excavation. It is as much an idea as it is a place, and its passages and tunnels often seem to open themselves up to any who seek them enough, as well as to any who do not.

27. The Mouth Of The Void

In the center of Stygia is a roughly circular hole that is so deep that few can stare into its depths for any length of time without risking madness. This is the Mouth of the Void. In the northern and southern sides of the hole stand two balconies, each of which opens into a downward-spiral staircase running counter-clockwise (in defiance of reasonable geomancy), known as the Venous Stairs. These are seemingly made of the same material as the walls of the Mouth, but none know who built those steps to Oblivion. While the Mouth is roughly 100 meters across, it sometimes enlarges or shrinks fractionally, like the throat of a great beast.

As the Venous Stairs descend, they cross many tunnels dug into the sides of the pit. Stygian savants divide the depths of the Mouth into 10 different strata referred to as bolgias, each representing a layer where the composition of the Mouth's wall changes. The highest three bolgias are under the control of the Monarchy, and as long as the miners that work here stick to lighted areas and marked paths, finding the way back to the surface is relatively simple.

The other seven bolgias are considered too dangerous for any sensible ghost to trod, as Hekatonkhires dwell in these levels, as do many other ghostly threats. Still, there are inhabited places there, largely controlled by Deathlords or nephwracks who serve Oblivion. The tenth as final bolgia is superficially less disturbing to visit, but very much as dangerous, if not more. The tenth bolgia is, after all, the home of the Neverborn. Those that make it here experience not the dread of the earlier levels, but a strange peace, a feeling that soon all questions will be answered and all doubts stilled.

These answers come in one of two ways; either the visitor hears the whispers of the Neverborn that corrupt them into their slave, or the visitor loses themselves to the soft hum of Oblivion. There are no caverns or passages in the tenth bolgia, and the Tomb-Corpses of the Neverborn are the only constructs, albeit there are some small towns of spectres that are built around the Neverborn that the spectres venerate. All the Tomb-Corpses are massive in scale, some even large enough to call mausoleum-cities, providing plenty of dwelling space for the many spectres that perpetually venerate their dead lords.

Any light brought into the tenth bolgia flickers and fails, and not even the most powerful senses can penetrate the gloom for more than a few dozen feet. Additionally, the Venous Stairs end abruptly in a landing of basalt where visitors can step into a vast and blasted plain. The Mouth of Oblivion continues down, of course, but to take another step is to plunge directly into Oblivion itself. Those with the strength to resist Oblivion's call can move away from the Mouth's edge, and can stagger through the darkness until they reach whatever Neverborn deigns to meet them. Those seeking a specific Neverborn find them effortlessly and quickly.

Each Tomb-Corpse has a face looking out directly over the Mouth of the Void, with a view it shares with no other Neverborn. This is, of course, spatially impossible given the number of Neverborn, but space itself means little so close to utter annihilation. For whatever reason, the tombs easiest to find are those of Neverborn that have had the most impact on Creation. It is more difficult to find the tombs of others, but easy should the Neverborn want to be found.

Spectres, nephwracks, mortwights and even Hekatonkhires can be found on the tenth bolgia in large numbers, but these denizens rarely pose a threat to any intruder. No one comes here save by the will of the Neverborn, and no one leaves in defiance of their will either.

28. Cavern Of The Ending

Usually found about 500 miles north of Stygia, the Cavern of the Ending is a mammoth cave whose ceiling is more than a thousand feet above its floor. The whole cave is oval-shaped, about 10 miles in width and triple that in length. Unlike most other kingdoms within the Labyrinth, it is quite well lit, thanks to the ceiling being covered in a thick, viscous growth of fluorescent algae, giving the whole area a perpetual sickly green sheen. Occasionally, an enormous glob of algae falls to the cavern's floor, where it devours anyone nearby with its acidic tentacles until the spectral guards destroy it.

The tens of thousands of disfigured spectres that reside here are generally those who considered themselves superior in life for any number of reasons, and are now trapped in the cavern's vast maze. The geomancy of the maze forces any who wander it to face reflections that show them visions of their worst nightmares, usually scaring them enough for them to jump backwards, right into the waiting soulsteel spikes adorning the whole place.

At the maze's center lies a blasted ruin of shattered basalt and onyx. Not long ago, the ruin was a temple to the Neverborn known as Tears of Want, but it was destroyed under circumstances unknown to the ghosts of the Underworld. Some say that an Abyssal who served another Neverborn destroyed the temple for reasons of his own. Others say that a Solar Exalt somehow passed unscathed through the maze surrounding the temple and that alone caused the temple to self-destruct, allowing her to escape with some nameless artifact. Only the spectres of the Cavern know, and few would dare to ask them.

29. Oblivion’s Passage

Just a few hours north of the Venous Stair off of the sixth bolgia lies a warren of tunnels that lead to Oblivion’s Passage. The passage itself is a vast, subterranean canyon stretching for about 80 miles. In its heart lies a vast military encampment, the operational headquarters of the Hundred Nightmares Army, the Labyrinth's biggest, and possibly only, military company. Under the command of its mortwight general, Seven Murder’s Son, the army offers itself out as support troops to nearly any military force in or out of the Labyrinth that can meet its price. The price in question fluctuates according to the insane whim of Seven Murder’s Son, but usually takes the form of fresh ghosts for the company to torment.

30. The Ocean Of Unending Night

A traveler stepping off the Venous Stair onto the eight bolgia soon finds themselves in brackish cold water up to their knees. After a half-day of journeying, assuming they don’t get lost, they find that the tunnels open into a vast grotto, where the waters are lit by the glow of thousands of luminescent fish. The grotto is hundreds of miles across and is filled with small islands and dangerous reefs. While its name is pretentious, it comes from the unusual property that a captain that knows the currents that flow throughout the grotto can pilot their boat through any of the several fog banks within to emerge wherever they wish in the Sea of Shadows. With enough skill, one could even sail to the living Western ocean of Creation.

The grotto is ruled by the nephwrack Never-Ending Silence, who provides the Bodhisattva Anointed by Dark Water free and secret travel into the heart of Stygia and other places across the Underworld, in exchange for amenities such as boat repairs and necrotic weaponry. Never-Ending Silence’s flagship is in truth a Hekatonkhire named Orcinus Rex, Father of Whales. It is practically as large as a city, and many spectres reside within its hollowed out innards.

31. Zhokai

The dark kingdom of Zhokai is the largest spectral kingdom within the Labyrinth. Zhokai is accessible through the ninth bolgia of the Mouth of the Void, through a long forgotten crypt within the Font of Mourning or by way of the crematorium in Camp 17, among other entryways across the Underworld. Even Creation has hidden pathways to Zhokai. There is a butcher in Sijan who steals children in the night and slaughters them in his basement to feed his cats, and in the back of one of his storage closets, one can find a passage to Zhokai. To the extent that Zhokai has any fixed geographic location, it occupies an area of about 3,000 square miles that is located about five miles beneath that part of the Underworld bounded by the rivers Acheron and Eridanus. Ultimately, however, Zhokai accepts visitors from anywhere.

Zhokai is a spectre-ruled kingdom dedicated to the concept of genocide and ritualistic murder. While most of Zhokai's citizens are spectres, the kingdom is unusual in that so many of its citizens are non-human spectres. Almost 30 percent of the nation's burgeoning population consists of alien life forms. Some are lost races fashioned by the Primordials and later exterminated by the Solars, while others are artificial species created by the Solars and then exterminated by the Dragon-Blooded usurpers. Regardless of origin, Zhokai welcomes all those who died to satisfy the hatreds of bigots and xenophobes. The only thing uniting them is their shared adoration and worship of the Primordials.

32. Cadaverous

Located a day's journey from the fifth bolgia or through a half-dozen burial cairns located across the island of Rajtul, the amphiskopolis of Cadaverous is the sacred "lower city" of the afterlife as envisioned by the Varajtul cannibals. According to the traditions of the Varajtul, those who have served their tribes well, who have won many skins for their families and who have battened themselves on the flesh of their enemies are rewarded with a place of honor in the twin cities of Ravenous and Cadaverous. Varajtul who become spectres (that being most of them) reside in the so-called lower city, close to the Neverborn that they worship. These spectres do not enter their holy land empty-handed, however. The cannibalistic rites of the Varajtul are not without a purpose, for when a Varajtul devours their victim according to the sacred rituals, they always keep a memento such as an ear or a scalp. In the afterlife, the ghost of that victim is bound to the cannibal as grave goods, doomed to spend eternity as slave to their devourer.

33. The Deaconry Of Profanation

Found four miles off the seventh bolgia, the Deaconry of Profanation is the largest cult within the panoply of heresies collectively known as the Disciples of the Abyss. As with all Disciple cults, the spirits who reside within the Deaconry are, for the most part, ghosts rather than spectres. This does not make the Profane Deacons any more palatable to the Dual Monarchs than spectres are, however. The cruelties that spectres inflict out of insanity, the Deacons inflict out of choice. The Deaconry itself is relatively small compared to most amphiskopoloi. Rather than a city, the Deaconry is a single building, albeit a huge one.

It might also be a familiar one to any living Dragon-Blooded unfortunate enough to encounter it, for the Deaconry is designed as a grotesque parody of the Cloister of Wisdom. But where the Cloister is topped with majestic spires, the Deaconry's towers twist and turn skyward as if they had been melted and then reformed. And where the Immaculate Order forbids iconography, the Profane Deacons revel in it. Seemingly every inch of the Deaconry's walls are covered with lewd and disturbing images, many of them blasphemous reinterpretations of Immaculate scripture.

Such profanity is perhaps understandable when one realizes that most of the Profane Deacons are, in fact, the ghosts of Immaculate monks and faithful Immaculate worshipers who find themselves post mortem, in a dark Underworld instead of the blissful reincarnation into a better life that they were promised. Truthfully, any of the Profane Deacons remains as free to enter Lethe and seek reincarnation as any other ghost is. They have not done so for the same reason that every ghost who lingers in the Underworld has not yet reincarnated: because they remain emotionally tied to something in Creation that they cannot let go.

Unfortunately, the most devoted servants of the Immaculate faith (which shuns ghosts as perversions of the natural order) are the least likely to realize this fundamental truth. Those who cannot do so are the ghosts most likely to be swept up by the Deacons for indoctrination into a new faith, one that teaches that all of the Immaculate Philosophy is a lie and that those who espouse it deserve only misery and death. Consequently, the Profane Deacons conduct themselves very much like an Immaculate monk might, if the Immaculate were a psychopath obsessed with the destruction of Creation's most widely spread religious faith.

34. The Infinite Prison

Four days' journey from the eighth bolgia stands the Infinite Prison. It can also be found by hanging yourself in a prison cell to evade your own just execution or by being buried alive by someone whom you wronged badly enough to justify such a punishment. The Infinite Prison is the ultimate expression of sadism masquerading as justice, and its populace has two categories of citizen: prisoner and guard. All those who come to this place, willingly or not, are adjudicated by a nephwrack known only as the Warden of Conscience, though they have no conscience themselves. After just a glance at a visitor, the Warden decides whether that visitor is fit to be a guard or deserves to be a prisoner. Whether the Warden has any criteria for his judgments other than mere whim is unknown.

Those sentenced to imprisonment are placed into one of the Infinite Prison's seemingly infinite number of cells, where they are tortured by the most ingenious devices. Those chosen as guards are assigned to inflict those tortures on the prisoners, with the understanding that any hesitation in carrying out a torture, even the appearance of doubt, will lead to the guard and the prisoner swapping places. Those who have suffered for centuries in the Infinite Prison are often experts at appealing to the sympathies of new guards. Once those prisoners suddenly find themselves in the uniform of the jailer, they rarely hesitate in introducing their unwitting saviors to the agonies they have just avoided themselves.

Of course, that's not the only way for the prison's caste structure to change. The Warden of Conscience regularly wanders the corridors of the Infinite Prison, reassigning guards who lack ingenuity and drive to the status of prisoner and prisoners who are beginning to accept or even enjoy their misery to the status of guards. Every few centuries or so, a small coterie of guards and/or prisoners, invariably those who haven't been at the prison for very long, actually think that they can overcome the Warden and escape the Infinite Prison. Their hopes are soon dashed, for the Warden of Conscience themselves is just another guard, albeit one with privileges the other guards lack. Indeed, the current Warden is only the latest of thousands of prior Wardens of Conscience, each of whom was replaced when the Infinite Prison became disappointed with them or else felt it was time for a change.

The truth is that the Infinite Prison is, if not alive, then at least aware. The entire amphiskopolis is actually a Hekatonkhire that takes the form of a giant cube of pure basalt, over half a mile on each side. The Infinite Prison seems incapable of movement, but that doesn't stop it; the creature can teleport itself anywhere in the Labyrinth that its Neverborn masters desire. Some say it can even manifest in shadowlands and that soon, one Deathlord or another will deploy it as the Mask of Winters did with Juggernaut. If so, it will be a Deathlord steeped in the ecstasy of suffering and the agony of control. The Infinite Prison will accept no other master.

Although its walls seem featureless, the prison can open an entry point for those who want inside. Presumably, it could do the same if it wanted to release one of its prisoners. It has never done so. The very first inmate of the Infinite Prison is a spectre known only as Xo, once a mortal soldier executed for cowardice after fleeing battle in the Primordial War. Today, untold millennia later, Xo rots in a cell on the prison's lowest levels, nervously awaiting the next day's round of torture, even as he patiently awaits his next turn as a guard. An ancient spectre of unimaginable power, Xo would be a terrifying opponent even to an Exalt, yet he is only one such being among the prison's populace, hundreds of whom date back to the earliest days of the First Age. Xo has served as Warden of Conscience four times over his long sentence, and he has been switched from prisoner to guard and back again untold thousands of times. In the Infinite Prison, *everyone* eventually gets a turn.

35. Orak-Tau

Sometimes called the Hanging City, Orak-Tau is a testament to the ingenuity of ghostly artisans, builders and engineers. The amphiskopolis takes up about 14 square miles and is populated by about 5,000 ghosts and spectres. Virtually all of the ghosts are Disciples of the Abyss, but a few are just so obsessed with their work that they are happy to stand alongside spectres and Disciples. Orak-Tau is located about seven days' journey from the fifth bolgia. It can also be accessed via certain tree hollows in the Far East (including one in the Noss Fens) or by digging at least 10 feet down from the base of a tree from which an innocent man was lynched.

From an engineering standpoint, Orak-Tau's construction resembles that of the tree cities of Halta but in reverse, with the buildings constructed in and among the roots of trees instead of their branches. But where the Haltans build their cities of wood, Orak-Tau is constructed almost entirely of soulsteel, and vast quantities of it. Long before the Dual Monarchy rose to power, the city called out to the artists, builders and engineers of the Underworld. In response to its urgent whispers, they came by the thousands, ghost and spectre alike. And the message that all of them heard was, "Come to me. Help me to grow, and know peace." The message was heard and answered, and today, the dead of Orak-Tau do indeed know peace. Of a sort.

The spectres of Orak-Tau are far less violent than those found elsewhere in the Underworld. Even the hungry ghosts found here seem almost tame. Likewise, any new arrivals in Orak-Tau immediately sense a feeling of peace and contentment. Even the construction noises that constantly fill the city's air with hammering and clanging seems almost musical. When they're not working on the city's construction, Orak-Tau's citizens attend plays and operas, relax in taverns and bathhouses, and engage themselves in the activities that the people of any civilized city-state would. The problems arise when the noises stop.

The peace of Orak-Tau lasts only as long as the city's construction continues. When it ceases (for any reason, but most commonly due to a temporary want of soulsteel), the people of Orak-Tau are suddenly overcome with a feeling of nameless dread and hopeless despair. Such is the intensity of this dread that the citizens will do anything to get construction restarted. The source of the city's obsession with construction originates in the city's very heart. One of the oldest buildings in Orak-Tau is its Council Chamber, where the Chief Architect (the city's ruler) meets with his underlings to discuss the city's future expansion.

The Chief Architect has another name; Orak-Ro. The forbidden god for whom the city is named was once the city-god of Meru when that fabled city was occupied by the gods and the Primordials ruled Creation. After the War, Orak-Ro, ever loyal to his Primordial masters, fled to the Underworld to avoid execution. After communing with the Neverborn and with Oblivion itself, Orak-Ro decided to create a new city to rival Meru, one that would bear his name, one that would be the last inhabited city in all of existence.

36. The House Of Succulent Tears

Accessible via the eighth bolgia or by the bloodstains of any prostitute ever murdered by her pimp, the House of Succulent Tears styles itself as the Labyrinth's "pleasure house." A more accurate description is rape camp, a place where ghosts and spirits alike are subjected to the most grotesque of sexual torments and debasements. All of the shapely sex slaves and concubines chained to filthy beds were once rapists themselves, now moliated into the form of desirable women and enslaved for the pleasure of lustful spectres, morally debased ghosts and even a handful of Cynis orgiasts who would quite literally go anywhere for a new thrill.

There are no men in the House of Succulent Tears. Or rather, there are no prostitutes there who bear the shapes of males. The only "true" women in the amphiskopolis are its rulers, the Blue-Painted Ladies, a council of 29 ancient mortwights who made their way to the Labyrinth after being raped to death in a single night by a lust-crazed Solar Exalt not long before the Usurpation. Save for these 29, all of the hundreds of broken ghost-whores of Succulent Tears were once men who exulted in the cruel exploitation of women. Some were drawn here by the Whispers of the Neverborn to be molded into more "interesting" identities. Others came here of their own accord, foolishly believing that they could prey upon the "helpless women" of this amphiskopolis as they did mortal women during their living days. Still others are kidnapped and smuggled here.

When a spectral client begins what it might generously call "lovemaking", the victim's chains cause them to display whatever emotions the client wishes. They may scream in terror or in ecstasy, whichever their attacker wishes. The victim's true emotions are perfectly concealed. From the exterior, the House of Succulent Tears appears to be a palace of blue salt crystal, supposedly fashioned from the dried tears of every rape victim in Creation's history. Inside, there are thousands of rooms each designed to fit the aesthetics of the bordello's clients. Some are richly decorated with red silk sheets and satin pillows, while other rooms are deliberately designed to resemble a dingy back alley. The House of Succulent Tears caters to all tastes.

Perks

Of course, you'll have the opportunity to gain some power at least. You have a number of floating discounts with which to halve the price of a given perk, as well as making 100cp perks free. You gain 2 discounts for each price tier, except for the 800cp perk.

Dark Unlife -100cp

Ghosts are beings of memory and stasis, and as such tend towards gravitating to the roles and jobs they had in life. Farmers who died are farmers in the Underworld, the ghosts of blacksmiths ply their trade in the Necropoli cities of the dead, and so on. Moreover, ghostly society has changed little if at all since the formation of the Underworld. You're used to this stagnant society, not finding it mind-numbingly tedious, and additionally you're able to perform repetitive and tedious tasks without getting tired or bored of them. Certainly a help for killing the eternity of time you can now look forward to as an undead.

Rock Bottom -100cp

Sometimes it can be hard to find the things that still tie you to life, especially if some disaster befalls them. Still, it would be painful to be unable to find the things you used to value in life, and perhaps you'd rather not have to worry about that. With this, you are unusually good at finding people, especially those you are attached to. Whether it's your scattered descendants after a disaster wiped out your main lineage, a specific person you still bear a grudge against, or perhaps even individuals that would have proven to be exceptional but yet lay dying ignominiously by some dark twist of fate. Perhaps you'll find estranged and unfortunate people and grant them some power and a second chance?

Luminary Of The Underworld -100cp

Despite the general disturbing air surrounding the dead, there are many among the living who admire, or perhaps even worship death. Ancestor cults are simply the most inoffensive example, and anything from suicide artists to mass murderers can be considered among those who are not repulsed by the undead. You, in particular, have somehow accrued a positive reputation among such people, being known as a great sage of death. This reputation as a luminary of the grave will make forming connections with such groups significantly easier. Just remember to prove your reputation isn't baseless.

Power Of The Dead -100cp

Arcanoi, just like spirit charms, can be developed and innovated on with much effort and experience. If you'd like to skip ahead a few steps, with this you'll gain a small number of custom Arcanoi, to perform whatever feats you'd like to be capable of. They won't be too potent to start with, but nobody else will know of them unless you tell them, and it's entirely possible to develop them further to grow in strength. Maybe you'll share these Arcanoi with your allies?

Mortician Order -100cp

Ancestor cults are not particularly rare. But that also means there are many ways that the living venerate their dead ancestors, and not all such ways are particularly effective. There is a group that takes care of designing such methods of worship though, to help the living better worship their lineage. This being the Mortician Order of Sijan. Whether you're one of their priests or somehow infiltrated it for a while, you've now gained all the training that a professional in the Mortician Order has, being an expert in funeral design and ancestor prayer, and well qualified to lead an ancestor cult in ways that maximize the benefit to the ghosts receiving the worship. Perhaps you'll sell your services to ghosts?

Ominous Divinations -100cp

The sky of Stygia is nothing like the sky of the living world. Even putting aside that only the Calendar of Setesh keeps it moving every day, any form of divination using the stars of the Underworld is too ominous to gain any useful information out of. However, ghosts who know astrological divination techniques can perform divinations regarding the Underworld normally. Perhaps you'd like to look into such matters yourself? With this, you've learned many divination techniques, and can use them in the Underworld to attempt to predict future events. It's not always reliable and tends to be vague, of course, but it's better than nothing, no? In future jumps, you will also be able to perform divinations regarding the realms of the dead and the fate of those who linger after dying.

Exalted Past -100/200/400cp

Oh, it seems that you weren't simply another mortal in life. Rather, before you died, you were one of the Exalted, blessed by the gods with immense power and potential. Unfortunately, now that you are dead, you no longer have the power of your Exaltation at your disposal, but that does not mean you have lost all of your experience and skills. While you can no longer wield the charms you used in life, you still have all the puissance you developed as you grew in power, however strong you became in life. But of course, there is a world of difference between a young and an old Exalt, so below you'll see the price options you have for your level of experience.

For 100cp, you were very young, just starting out even, and likely hadn't lived more than a decade after your Second Breath. You're comparable to a Heroic Mortal, reaching the limits of ability for mortals. Hell, you may optionally simply have been a Heroic Mortal in life rather than an Exalt, if you would like. While you certainly stand head and shoulders above most ghosts, keep in mind you aren't the most powerful undead around.

For 200cp, you used to be somewhat experienced, having a few adventures under your belt and likely having accrued much power, and your natural abilities and skills will be stepping beyond the limits of mortals, albeit not by much. As a Sidereal, you can now use your divination in the Underworld, and likely retain knowledge and perhaps even usage of many Terrestrial Martial Arts, and one Celestial Martial Art. As a Lunar, then regardless of where your focus lies you'll find that you are very talented in intrigue, espionage, as well as hunting prey, whether that be beasts or people. As a Dragonblooded then you're almost definitely very experienced at court intrigue and politics, and as a Solar you'll have noticeably better raw abilities than the rest, and are more of a jack of all trades in terms of skill.

And finally, for 400cp, you used to truly be one of the elders of your kind, firmly superhuman in all but your least attributes. Few in the Underworld can match your sheer breadth of skill, much less the depths of it, and you could easily be a major player in the geopolitics of the Underworld. The Deathlords will definitely consider you a threat, so be careful and make sure to leverage your abilities to the fullest. Just remember that the Deathlords are stronger than any ghost. Perhaps you intend to become one of them?

Listen To The Whispers -200cp

From the depths of the Labyrinth, the maddened whispers of the Neverborn and even those of Oblivion itself emerge, straining the sanity of those who can hear. Still, these whispers hold many secrets, as the Neverborn know anything that happens in the Underworld or is known by any mortal souls in the Underworld, so those willing to take the risk can stand to gain much information. Whether by training or instruction, you've learned how best to avoid the worst of these whispers and how to extract as much useful information from them as possible.

While you are very much not immune to the sanity-eroding influence of the whispers, you know when you're reaching your limit of resisting the influence and should leave to try again later. If you aren't particularly resilient then you probably won't be able to listen to the whispers long enough to get much of import, but if you're powerful, there is much knowledge and lore you can gain by taking risks.

Fetters To Mortality -200cp

Ghosts are tied to the mortal realm through something called Fetters. Sometimes an object, other times a friend or family, other times a location, Fetters aid ghosts in anchoring themselves in Creation to avoid succumbing to Lethe. For you, though, Fetters are a bit more useful. You see, ghosts can draw energy from their Fetters daily, replenishing any spiritual exhaustion they might be in, and obtain an amount of energy appropriate to how important the Fetter is to them. However, ghosts cannot have more than a handful of Fetters they can actually draw energy from in general, which can lessen the benefit they give.

Fetters also allow ghosts to enter Slumber when near the Fetter itself or a representation of it, during which the ghost falls asleep and merges with the Fetter or representation for a duration that the Calendar of Setesh indicates lasts approximately 8 hours. After this, the ghost wakes up and heals to a limited extent from any damage it suffers from, if it is wounded. This is the only way for ghosts to heal from damage, as they cannot heal naturally. Needless to say, the ghost is completely vulnerable while in Slumber.

You, however, can treat as a Fetter anything you consider important, and are able to draw energy, usually spiritual, from all of them rather than only a handful. It is worth noting however that the amount of energy you can draw from Fetters every day is directly relevant to how much you value it. An interesting trinket that's ultimately a curiosity will yield very little, while the love of your life would provide a significant although not vast amount of energy. While it's not possible to draw great amounts of energy from Fetters, it can be done daily with no particular limitations, so it is still a great boon to those ghosts able to utilize it.

Additionally, you were a particularly virtuous person in life, and this has resulted in you having particularly potent Passions, especially when compared to most ghosts. This strengthens your will, enduring for longer than most would be able to, and even enhancing your own efforts whenever you are acting according to said Passions. What those passions are is up to you, likely being things you are particularly attached to, but as a special bonus, unlike other ghosts you'll be able to change what your Passions are if they ever become invalid, such as finally vanquishing a hated foe.

Maddening Whispers -200cp

Well. It seems that you've somehow learned strange tricks from the Neverborn, as you can now inflict your own Whispers on those in proximity to you. Just like the whispers of the Neverborn, your own whispers can damage the sanity of any who hear in whatever manner you please, or perhaps not at all if you want, and it also lets you reveal information that you know through these whispers. Unfortunately this doesn't guarantee that such information will be received properly, as those who are trying to not hear too closely might not get much more than vague visions and metaphoric imagery rather than the full information you're trying to communicate. Lastly, anything that you imbue your own essence into can be made into a conduit of these whispers too, spreading them beyond your immediate presence.

Necromantic School Of Thought -200cp

Despite thousands of years passing since its discovery, Necromancy is still just a budding art, at least compared to sorcery. This is to the extent that there are no Absorptions of Necromancy, as in specialized charms that any sorcerer can learn, and which modify their ability to utilize sorcery to enhance certain sorcerous endeavors to the detriment of others. Now, however, you've gained your own Necromantic Absorption, a true innovation in the land of the dead. You could keep this secret, and use the strange benefits you gain as a trump card, or spread it through the Underworld to advance overall Necromantic knowledge. In future jumps, this Absorption will also apply to any necromantic magic you encounter.

Forced Enlightenment -200cp

Sometimes a teacher must be a bit harsh to truly impart important lessons onto their students. Or at least, that's what you insist. With how effective your teaching methods are, it's hard to argue. You're a very competent teacher, able to impart not just your skills, but even your expertise to your students, and have quite a lot of experience in indoctrinating your students into whatever philosophies you'd like. The teaching process may seem horrific to those watching, and it's certainly quite painful for the students, but results speak for themselves, no? Even if a student isn't putting in all their effort, or don't want to learn, that won't be a particularly big obstacle to making them learn new things. And even if their minds break from the knowledge you're giving them, that would simply mean you can fit more knowledge in their head.

Advanced Necrophysics -200cp

Ash, Bone, Pyre, Blood, and Void. The Five Elements of the Underworld are twisted parodies of the elements of Creation, lacking the vitality of life and infused with the nihilism of the Neverborn. Still, unlike the elements of Creation, nobody truly knows how to tap into these dead elemental essences in the same way that the living can tap into the powers of Air, Wood, Fire, Water, and Earth, and unlike the five varieties of Jade the living world has, the Underworld can only boast of Soulsteel as their unique magical material (albeit the five varieties of Jade can be found in the Underworld too). Until you came along that is. Somehow, perhaps from sheer chance or a vision from the Neverborn, you've learned how to utilize the elemental essences of the Underworld.

At first, you will know how to produce Jade variants of the Underworld elements, whether by corrupting Jade materials or through some esoteric method, and have enough understanding of geomancy to construct Demesnes and Manses attuned to one of these dead elements. With more work, immense amounts of resources, and perhaps some help from more powerful beings, you could develop necrophysics into an actual science, perhaps even developing Martial Arts attuned to those elements. Hopefully you have a way to protect yourself from the Deathlords, as they will doubtlessly want to both procure your skills and deny you from their rivals.

Black Reflections Of Craftsmanship -200cp

There are many craftsmanship disciplines in Creation, and the Underworld is no different in that regard. The craftsmanship of the dead is generally unknown among the living, either because it is jealously guarded, or because the living cannot practice it. You, however, have become a master at all the disciplines of craftsmanship unique to the Underworld, and possess all the relevant Arcanoi that allow you to perform them. Jadecrafting, for directly manipulating jade, Moliation, for shaping the corpuses of other ghosts, Necrosurgery, for preparing corpses for necromantic spells and rituals, Pandemonium, for haunting and manipulating the living world, and finally Soulforging, to forge souls themselves into useful items or batches of soulsteel. All these are the disciplines you are a master of.

Dual Jumper -200cp

The Dual Monarchs of Stygia are quite a mystery. Seemingly normal ghosts, and yet possessing significant power (even if not as much as the Deathlords). But the Dual Monarchs aren't the same as the ones from the founding of Stygia. No, the Dual Monarchy is a position that is passed down. This is done through their masks; a ghost that wears one of the four masks of the Dual Monarchs becomes them, and the ghost that used to wear that mask loses that identity and becomes another ordinary ghost. However it happened, you've learned how to craft these sorts of masks, imbuing them with powers and skills you possess so that the wearer may use them. Be careful though, as you will lose anything you infuse into the mask.

Darkest Nadir -200/400cp

Wrested from the Corpse-Tombs of the Neverborn by a group of Exalted during the First Age, Necromancy is a dark mirror of sorcery, manipulating the essence of the dead to manipulate and create undead and perform other similar horrid feats. Now, you've learned Necromancy down to its second circle, the Onyx Circle of Necromancy, as far as most know even exists, much less can use. Even if you're a normal ghost, you're still capable of Necromancy somehow, definitely a curiosity that will attract attention. Of course, if you're strong enough, you'll also be able to wield Void Circle Necromancy, the third and greatest circle. Do note that while you can lie and pretend that Necromancy isn't inherently evil, all forms of Necromancy harm the world, living or dead, and bring it ever so slightly closer to Oblivion.

If you'd like to pay an additional 200cp, for a total of 400cp, you also become capable of teaching anyone down to the Onyx Circle of Necromancy, even if they wouldn't normally be capable of it. Should this be known, you will essentially have an endless quantity of volunteers among the ghosts of the Underworld to become your student, and of course quite a bit of attention from the Deathlords, and perhaps from those of the world of the living as well.

Tired Beauty -400cp

Well then. It seems you have quite the background of your living life, or perhaps you were simply very good at hiding while alive. Either way, you would certainly catch a lot of attention. You are extremely beautiful, certainly more than normal mortals can be, and have quite the talent in seduction and corruption. With some time and effort, you could single-handedly corrupt a whole staunchly chaste monastery into a degenerate orgy of debauchery and lust. Any charms or other abilities that revolve around manipulating others comes more easily to you, and you're very good at learning what you need to seduce someone. Hopefully you don't indulge so hard in debauchery that you burn yourself out.

Abyssal Torment -400cp

As ghosts are aligned with the essence of death, and the Neverborn wish to corrupt the undead to their own service, quite a few very nasty arts have spawned from the agents of the once-Primordials. While you may not be actually in service to them, it certainly would seem like it, what with your sheer expertise at tormenting other beings. Torture, psychological mind games, identifying what a person values most and how to break it in front of them in the most impactful way, you are nearly unmatched in your sheer knowledge, skill, and experience in how to force people to feel great physical, mental, and spiritual pain.

You might require special tools for the really exotic or esoteric torments, but you know how to perform them should you have such kinds of tools on hand. You are well learned in the arts of breaking people's wills, although such will require total control on what forms of stimulation your victim has access to, such as having them locked up in a dungeon and barred from anyone else, as well as plenty of time to work your art. You also have some minor skill in crafting mundane torture tools, but your focus is on implementation, not crafting the implements themselves.

Theological Void -400cp

As with everything, you can spin quite a bit of theology around something as powerful and incomprehensible as Oblivion. And it seems that you've gazed upon it directly, or perhaps received very peculiar blessings from the Neverborn. Either way, you're able to write scriptures about the Void that drive readers as insane as if they had approached the Mouth of Oblivion personally. You can also write safer scriptures to use as a basis for ancestor cults if you'd like. And of course, you yourself possess an incredible mental resistance to the insanity of Oblivion, being able to operate generally fine even with the maddened whispers of the Void filling your mind. All the better for you to spread the unholy word.

Nadir Of Concordats -400cp

Initially, the Neverborn were locked in their Corpse-Tombs, only able to affect the Underworld indirectly. Most of the horrors they held were firmly entombed within them. But then, a group of Exalts of the First Age cracked open their tombs, extracting the secrets of Necromancy from within and allowing the Neverborn to act far more directly. If it weren't for those Exalted, things might've gone very differently for the Underworld along Creation's history. Perhaps you'd like to benefit from such turns of fortune yourself. In essence, whether by chance or hubris, you'll find that when you are trapped somewhere, there will be a group or individual coming along to free you eventually, whatever their reasons might be.

Ancient Memories -400/600cp

You aren't just any ghost, you're one who has been lingering since the First Age. While this means that your connection to Creation is rather tenuous and it is slightly more difficult to resist the pull of Lethe, it also means you have many memories of the time where humanity was at the peak of its power. Of course, you can choose what disciplines you learned the most about, such as combat, or sorcerous and occult lore, or perhaps social techniques. In such a discipline you're the best at it as a normal human can get, perhaps from being tutored by Exalted teachers to be their assistant. Even in other areas you're well-learned, certainly knowing more about it than most in the current Age.

And of course, if you also have the Exalted Past perk, this also means that you're one of the Exalted who lived in the First Age, with all the expertise and knowledge that comes with. If you purchased the maximum tier of Exalted Past, and also purchase this perk, you may optionally spend an additional 200cp to become a Deathlord, enhanced by the powers of the Neverborn themselves to approach the immense power you wielded in life. Hopefully you'll train your deathknights well.

Necrotech Scientist -600cp

Death in Creation is irreversible. Once the spark of life leaves a soul, only Lethe may return it. However, some curious scholars discovered ways to make use of the corpses left behind. Experimentation and innovation resulted in the creation of zombies and other lesser undead, crafted from preserved body parts and animating it with the essence of death that wafts through the Underworld. Thus the field of Necrotech was born. Since the millennia that followed the first few First Age Solars investigating this new field, many advances have been made, and while the Usurpation and the resulting loss of knowledge set necrosurgeons back nearly to square one, most innovations have been rediscovered by the Deathlords and built upon by the many undead scientists investigating and learning the arts of reanimation.

You in particular have mastered the field of necrotech, at least the subject as it has been advanced to at the moment when the Solars will return to Creation. Provided you have preserved corpse parts and a proper workplace, you'd be able to make anything from the common zombie or skeleton to more powerful undead designed as siege weapons, to even the titanic forms of the behemoths themselves. Sadly, by yourself you are restricted in the undead you can reanimate by your own power, but should you have powerful allies you will be able to teach them the proper rituals to imbue a constructed corpse with the essence of the Neverborn and gift your creations with a twisted mockery of life. Additionally you have some experience with teaching your craft to others, and know the designs for acceptable tools and can handcraft those, but your knowledge concerns primarily the building of undead.

The field of necrotech is still young, however, and there is much to learn and experiment to expand your expertise and knowledge. And expand it you likely will, as you are one of the foremost innovators of necrotech science, matching the Deathlord known as the Mask of Winters in your innovative designs and your masterful advances in this science. Even alone you could make significant strides in this discipline with some level of regularity. Perhaps you'll try to form an actual scientific community around necrotech so that you have some help?

Gentle Embrace -600cp

In the world of the living, there are martial arts that call upon the powers of the elements. But that shouldn't be unique to the living world, right? Thankfully, you have sufficient talent in martial arts to bring that kind of thing to the Underworld as well. Whether calling on the dead elements of the Underworld, or the energies of Oblivion itself, you can develop it into a martial art with some time, and less effort than you would think would be needed. Calling on such greater powers not only grants significant might, but can also allow you to spread their influence. Perhaps a strike allows someone to hear the whispers of Oblivion, or a kick makes their bones wither and crack. After that, all that's left is teaching the martial art to others, no?

Pioneer Of Undeath -600cp

Necrotech deals with corpses and dread unliving creatures. But that's only one side of the dead. What about the soul? What about the transformations ghosts suffer when corrupted by the Neverborn and Oblivion? The arts of Soulforging seem promising, but perhaps you'd rather take things a step further? You've already taken a few steps in learning about the nature of death and undeath, enhancing and improving any Necromancy, Arcanoi, and other abilities that pertain to modifying spiritual forms, or even those related to shaping new forms from raw essence. Additionally, you'll find yourself particularly receptive to self-modification, especially in regards to improving your power and evolving your essence. Perhaps, with the right opportunity, you might be able to turn yourself into a Onceborn, a better, more active mockery of the Neverborn themselves.

Righteous -600cp

Many of the dead, especially those who used to be Solars, miss the feeling of warm sunlight. As undead, it burns them, so they cannot truly enjoy the warmth of the sun again. However, it is not impossible for the Unconquered Sun to grant his blessings to ghosts. You serve as living proof of that, as somehow you have been blessed by the Unconquered Sun to become a Righteous Dead. Perhaps the most obvious effect of this is that you are no longer a creature of darkness, and may walk under the sun like any living being. Additionally, Necromancy no longer works on you, as if you weren't undead at all, and the same goes for the powers the Deathlords wield. And most importantly, you are empowered to crusade against the forces of Oblivion, effectively having an Excellency that makes all of your actions Holy so long as you pursue the goal of overthrowing the forces of the Void. And of course, any ghost or other undead that accepts and joins your cause is transformed into a Righteous Dead as well. You could likely snowball your own forces into a great golden army unmatched in the Underworld. In future jumps, your vow of fighting against Oblivion will also apply to any forces of nothingness or pure destruction that seek to unmake all that is.

Absolute Horror -800cp

Oh. You aren't a ghost at all. Not the ghost of a mortal at least. You are a Hekatonkhire, a tormented remnant of a Neverborn's soul hierarchy. Your power is comparable to that of a Deathlord, but it is entirely yours, and likely far more horrible and disorganized besides. Your power is immense, practically unmatched in the Underworld, and your rampages would be calamities to most who are living or dead. You can even deny the pull of Lethe to ghosts that fall under your power, trapping them forever should you wish to have some company in your torment. Unfortunately, existing is painful for you, wracked with the energies of Oblivion yet unable to take the plunge into it, and incapable of growing deaf to the whispers of the Void. Still, it's not too incapacitating, and you may think the power is worth the suffering.

If you also purchase the Ultimate Heresy item, you may optionally choose to be a Neverborn outright. Tortured, immobile, and dreaming, every second will be transcendental pain for you, hanging oh so close to Oblivion yet unable to take the final step into cessation. Well, perhaps with enough strength of will and resolve, you might be able to keep your wits to some degree, but even with transcendental willpower this won't be a permanent solution. Hopefully you find either a way to truly kill yourself, or a method to heal and reincarnate yourself properly.

Items

You'll have a number of floating discounts to use on each price tier. 2 discounts for 100cp items, 3 for 200cp items, also 3 for 400cp items, and 2 for 600cp items.

Grave Goods -100cp

The objects that ghosts are buried with form a plasmic copy of themselves in the Underworld, providing them with a panoply called Grave Goods. Only the wealthiest or most popular of ghosts are buried with significant objects, however, with most ghosts possessing a few trinkets or automata based on effigies as their panoply. You in particular have a handful of minor objects, such as a particular vase, or perhaps a picture, that reminds you of your best memories in life. Pondering them, aside from giving you some measure of spiritual energy due to automatically being Fetters, will always lift your spirits from even the darkest depths of despair, and will help you greatly in retaining your will to live. If broken or lost, they are repaired and brought back to you after a day.

Getting Started -100cp

Necrotech, being a science of undead flesh, generally requires resources with which to craft. Likewise, necromancy does require appropriate regents too. Unfortunately, having a good supply of such needed ingredients generally requires you to be part of some faction or other. Fortunately for you though, you've somehow managed to secure a steady if small supply of such things, fresh blood for necromantic rituals and corpses to experiment on. They are not of particularly high quality, but it's better than nothing, isn't it? Besides, the aspiring necromancer has to start somewhere.

Soulsteel Materials -100cp

There are two ways of obtaining soulsteel. One is to forge it directly out of ghosts, forming normal soulsteel that wails with the pained howls of the ghosts that were used in the forging, and mining the soulsteel veins found in the Labyrinth, which lets you obtain soulsteel that is eerily silent. But perhaps you don't want to go through the hassle. In such a case, with this purchase you will find that you receive a monthly shipment of a few dozen kilograms of soulsteel, of whichever of the two variants you would like. It would be enough to forge some equipment for yourself, but if you want to outfit an army, you'll have to find other sources.

Hungry Anger -100cp

When mortals die, their Hun lingers in the Underworld to become a ghost, but their Po remains in Creation, bound to the corpse. To those with the right tools and knowledge, manipulating these hungry ghosts can be quite convenient, for intimidating or dealing with normal mortals if nothing else. Here, you will gain a small pack of about a dozen leashed hungry ghosts, bound to follow your orders. They're about as weak as a normal hungry ghost, so most well-trained mortal soldiers will likely be able to defeat them, but maybe you just want to bully a poor village or something.

Sacrificial Animal -100cp

Just like how mortals can raise and bond with pets during life, so too can they bond with pets during death, perhaps even keeping their old pets by their side in the Underworld as they did in life. You're no different, and you have one sacrificial animal bonded to you, essentially the ghost of a tamed animal of your choosing. They'll be as loyal as the most devoted dogs, and quite brave too. Thankfully, even if they get killed again, you'll find them back at your side the next month. Please treat them well.

Ancestor Cult -200cp

Ghosts, just like every other spirit, can benefit from worship by mortals. This has influenced the creation of various ancestor cults across Creation greatly. You are now among the ancestors of a notable family, which might hold an important position in some minor kingdom but are ultimately mortals. Your bloodline will, for the most part, survive even without your intervention, but they do not have good chances of survival in great cataclysms such as the Primordial War and the Contagion. They will provide you with regular offerings of food and drink that they know you prefer, letting you indulge in sustenance even if you do not require it, as well as steady worship throughout the generations.

You will be expected to take in and be responsible for any members of the family that die and choose to stay in the Underworld, of course, guiding them to life in the Underworld until they can fend for themselves. If you neglect both your dynasty and your deceased relatives, however, your relationship with them will likely sour and worship shifted to a more approachable ancestor, although this situation is reset at the start of a new jump by getting a new dynasty. You can of course request specific offerings, but you do need to keep in mind that they are still mortals, and not among the wealthiest families, barring your intervention to change this. Finally, they will benefit from any inheritable powers you might've possessed in life, as they are of course your descendants. For example, if you purchased the Exalted Life perk and decided to be a Dragonblooded, your descendants will have the potential to Exalt as Dragonblooded as well. In future jumps, your descendants in any given jump will have whatever inheritable powers you might've had in your background if you haven't decided to be a Drop-In

Depths Of Death -200cp

The Labyrinth, despite crawling with the whispers of Oblivion and the Neverborn and generally being an incredibly unpleasant place to be in, is still populated by nations of ghosts, usually protected from the natural hazards of the Labyrinth in some way. You in particular have come to own a place within the Labyrinth, the exact details of which are up to you. Maybe it's a humble home despite the location, or perhaps a dungeon where you torture captured enemies. Either way, it has some artifacts to shield the property from the terrible whispers, and you'll find that the monsters and twisted ghosts that prowl the Labyrinth tend to ignore your little abode.

And of course, this can be a rather useful place to hide in when running from your enemies, unless they are truly foolhardy or have the means to navigate the Labyrinth with some measure of safety themselves. In future jumps this abode will be in any similarly dangerous locations within the local afterlife, or is simply hidden by a chunk of the Labyrinth that otherwise wouldn't be present.

The Skull Diaries -200cp

A collection of engraved skulls first found in the later years of the High First Age, the Skull Diaries describes the findings and knowledge of an unknown necromancer, detailing many spells of the first two circles of Necromancy and theorizing about a way to achieve access to the third. It is perhaps the most complete record of Necromancy you can find outside the private libraries of the Deathlords, and now you have all of it somehow, or at least a full copy of it. With it, even a complete novice could become respectable in the art of Necromancy, potentially being able to master the first two circles with effort and time. As for the third circle, achieving it will depend on your own power.

Necropolis -200cp

There are many cities by and for the dead in the Underworld. And now, there's one more, yours. This necropolis is about as large as a normal human city, and is almost definitely connected to a city in Creation as well, as those who die and yet linger find themselves in the equivalent location in the Underworld. The running of the city is up to you, although keep in mind that ghosts generally just want to repeat the events of their lives and do not like new ghosts (or even particularly old ghosts) trying to enforce their culture on them. Given that the cultures and nations of the living world can change a lot with time, this unsurprisingly can cause issues. Still, ruling your own city does have some prestige, and you can tax some essence from your citizens. If you've also bought the Calendar of Setesh, you may optionally be one of the Dual Monarchs ruling Stygia, even if only in name since the Deathlords appeared.

Mercantilism Of Unlife -200cp

Arcanos, just like the charms of spirits and living beings, are not easy to learn. And while they are technically immortal as spirits (despite the pull of Lethe) allowing any ghost plenty of time to learn, few have the inclination of spending their time training to get stronger, much less possess enough acuity remaining to give the idea any thought. However, people selling their services is an ancient tradition that even the oldest ghosts are familiar with, so ghosts that possess uncommon Arcanoi and have the motivation to do so can sell their services to other ghosts, perhaps even taking in young ghosts and training them to expand their business into a whole guild.

It seems that you've skipped this initial process, as you are now in command of a relatively small guild, stretching across a few cities in a Direction of your choosing, that utilize some Arcanoi of your choosing to conduct business. Maybe they use corpus-shaping Arcanoi to perform what are essentially aesthetic surgeries, or maybe it's something closer to a mercenary company. Whatever your business sells, it'll bring a tidy profit of essence, and it's definitely possible to expand with some effort. In future jumps, you will find a branch of your guild already set up in the local afterlife to conduct business there if you wish.

Dark Connections -200cp

But the afterlife is just one world. There is plenty of opportunity to be had in the land of the living for the (vanishingly rare) enterprising ghost. And just like a certain puppeteer's guild, you've obtained some connections with a powerful organization among the living, most probably the Guild or something. Through them, you can have help with whatever goals you might have in Creation, in exchange for providing your connections with a bit of help of your own of course. In future jumps you will similarly have connections among one powerful organization among living mortals, and they will be willing to help you in exchange for you helping whatever goals they might have in regards to the afterlife.

Sacrificial Slaves -200/400cp

As some of those who die to the raiders of the northwestern islands learn, dying does not mean you escape the troubles of life. In fact, it's entirely possible to be sacrificed in a ritualistic manner such that you are bound to your killer after death. This is what happened to these half-dozen ghosts, which are now bound to be your servants. Technically they don't have to follow your orders, but they are marked as property (which most ghosts in the Underworld generally accept) and are particularly vulnerable to your social manipulations. If you don't want to bother with even that, for an additional 200cp you can instead get slaves that are actually supernaturally bound to follow your every order. Be careful with how you word your commands.

Shadowland -200/400cp

Shadowlands are places where the barrier between Creation and the Underworld is thin. So thin, in fact, that the two realms are practically joined together; when exiting the shadowland, you'll find yourself in Creation during the day, and in the Underworld during the night. Thanks to this, shadowlands serve to connect the living and the dead together. Even more so by the fact that ghosts are material during night time while within the Shadowland. You, in particular, have obtained control and ownership over a relatively small shadowland, not much bigger than a town. You can expand it easily by killing many people within the shadowland, or perhaps through geomantic sorcery and landscape engineering. Either way, it'll be a good spot to communicate with your descendants should you have any, and perhaps you'll even try to grow it into a nation of the dead, just like the Skullstone Archipelago. This shadowland may be anywhere in Creation that you prefer, although it's recommended that you don't be too close to a major player in Creation's geopolitics.

If you would like a large shadowland to start with and don't care for performing genocide to expand it manually, then for an additional 200cp you may gain one, large enough to house a small country, in fact. Additionally, with this level of a shadowland, it also comes with a specific region within that is particularly ominous. This region will be immune to divinations and other such supernatural observation, and will somehow be difficult to find without your explicit guidance. Perhaps you can use it to hide large scale military forces you may be building?

Artifacts -200/400/600cp

Despite the dreadful environment of the Underworld, it very much still has resources, and of course, ghosts can still craft artifacts with the right know-how. If you'd like some Artifacts of your own but don't want to craft them yourself, you may purchase some with this option. Each individual purchase must be discounted separately, mind. For 200cp, you may purchase Artifacts of a rating of 1 or 2 dots, relatively minor but still significant to most ghosts. For 400cp you may instead gain Artifacts of 3 or 4 dots, powerful enough that you risk the attention of the Deathlords if you're a nobody of no renown, but unsurprising if you are an influential figure in the Underworld. And finally, for 600cp, you may gain a 5 dot Artifact, extremely powerful and the like of which the Deathlords prefer to wield. There is also another level of Artifact, of N/A rating, but those aren't available for purchase here. Below is a non-exhaustive list of examples for Artifacts of each available tier.

1 dot Artifacts are as minor as a collar that keeps the wearer clean in every respect no matter how much they dirty themselves, or perhaps amulets with a Hearthstone slot that might provide minor benefits to the power of a Hearthstone. Bracelets that provide notable bonuses when slotted with a Hearthstone would be Artifact 2, and so would a mask that allows the wearer to change their appearance to look like anyone they can think of and permit them complete conscious control over their expressions, on top of making it easier to misdirect others as to one's true intentions.

At the 3 dot rating, Artifacts can be something like an intensely sharp dagger that is able to grievously harm immaterial spirits cut with it, or perhaps a shapeshifting nearly indestructible suit of armor that allows the wearer to take on any appearance (within their own species) they can think of, including any form of dress of protection, although the armor would not be able to increase or decrease the amount of protection it offers.

A third good example of a 3 dot Artifact would be the Ultimately Useful Tube; a stick a third of a meter thick, which may be twisted one way or the other for two different modes, that of a flute, or a snorkel that keeps out water waves and spray while modifying its own length up to two meters to maintain an ideal length to the water surface. If used as a snorkel above water, it also filters out toxins in the air to a limited degree. It can also be twisted to be a cm thick, to use as a straw to filter any poison in imbibed drink to a limited extent. Additionally, by pulling on the ends of the stick you may lengthen it to be a meter long, allowing you to use it as a blowgun, shooting sleeping darts made from essence if blown from the blue end or deadly poison darts if blown from the red end. Finally, the stick may also be lengthened to two meters in length to use as a fighting stick. The stick also always hides its own power, seeming as a mundane object when under scrutiny, although the darts it can shoot don't benefit from this. Such is the level of versatility 3 dot Artifacts are capable of.

4 dot Artifacts are even more impressive. They can be a very protective suit of armor that allows the wearer to breathe underwater, manipulate their buoyancy to rise or sink, and swim at twice their normal speed, as well as allowing the wearer to ignore water drag, to fight normally underwater, although this protection would not extend to ranged projectiles. Its visor would allow the wearer to see through water as if it were air, as well as possess two Hearthstone sockets, one on the helmet and one on the chestplate. Another example is a thick and always clean cloak that allows the wearer to teleport to anywhere that they can clearly see in their line of sight in a flash of white light, or perhaps a bow whose arrows shine red like the setting sun and always strikes true, unless the target utilizes a Perfect Defense to dodge the undodgeable, as well as allowing the wielder to supercharge the arrows with a small cost of essence to let the arrows hit immaterial targets as well as aggravate the damage dealt to those who are struck by the arrows.

5 dot Artifacts are considered true marvels to the learned of Creation. Examples of such Artifacts are the Forgotten Blade, which cuts away at memories instead of a target's flesh, as well as the Ring Of Being, a ring that prevents creatures of the Wyld, demons, gods, and even the ambient chaos of the Wyld itself from affecting the wearer with supernatural abilities. It does not block physical or social attacks, but no Charms or powers sourced from beings not of Creation itself work. A third example is the Soul Mirror sword, which can imprison within itself up to 7 souls of those killed with it, which can be consumed to greatly increase the sword's efficiency in combat for a week, or condemning one of them, along with most of their motes, to Oblivion, to fully block an attack that would've killed the wearer and heal all damage. The Soul Mirror also possesses a dreadful aura that cows the weak-minded.

All Artifacts tend to share a number of traits. Firstly, they are all magical. Perhaps because of this, or some other reason, all Artifacts are eternal, and extremely difficult to break. Artifacts don't wear down, rust, or break accidentally. Some exceptions are fragile by necessity, but even these Artifacts never wear down from constant and regular use, provided they are used properly. An Artifact's power never fades and does not require maintenance, although knowing how to use it is another issue entirely.

Stygian Advisors -400cp

The Dual Monarchs of Stygia once had Seven Counselors, who provided advice to the rulers. After an altercation with the First And Forsaken Lion, however, they were beheaded and their heads attached to a belt that the Deathlord carries with him. Somehow, you have come to possess a similar item. A belt with seven heads attached to it, that will dispense wise, if perhaps occasionally impractical, advice, at your behest. They will only obey your commands to provide some contribution to some particular choice, of course, and nobody but you will be able to hear their whispers when they offer their guidance. After the jump ends, you may choose to have the heads turned into soulsteel boxes that house the seven ghosts instead, if you wish to have a less foul source of help.

Po -400cp

Ghosts are the Hun of human souls, the higher reasoning and what is generally considered rational thought. The Po of human souls are the base instincts, the animal within, the primal part of the mind that governs passion and violence. Sometimes, ghosts are able to put their own Po on a leash, using them as powerful guardians, as the Po is just as powerful as the Hun. Now, you have obtained command over your own Po. If you're a Hekatonkhire or a Neverborn, then something truly strange must've happened.

They are a part of you, and share in your raw power, even possessing mirrors of any of your powers and abilities, albeit twisted towards death and decay (if your abilities weren't like that already) but possessing none of your skills or knowledge. They are recognizably you in appearance, although ragged and crazed. The main difference is that they are almost mindless, being driven mostly by instinct and emotion rather than what any sane person might recognize as logic. Thankfully, they follow your own orders to an extent, which depends on how much self control you yourself are able to exercise. Your Po is literally your instinct and passion, after all.

Dread Army -400cp

The living go to war quite regularly, almost constantly even, and as the dead generally wish to repeat the labor of their lives, so do many of the dead wish to wage war eternally as well. And with war, come armies. However it came to happen, you're now the general of a massive undead army, comparable to the one that the First And Forsaken Lion has built up in his remote southern fortress. Thousands of siege weapons constructed using necrotech, and possibly millions of ghostly footsoldiers, and everything inbetween, your army is truly a sight to behold. And thanks to their undead nature, they require very little attention and resources to maintain, although expanding the army is another matter. Hopefully you have some fortress where you can house this army, although given the might of your forces, it probably wouldn't be difficult to conquer one anyway.

Calendar Of Setesh -400cp

The Underworld was not created by the Primordials. It was not a world intended to exist. And yet it does, which comes with a few issues. Chief among them is that time does not pass within the Underworld; when it came into being, the pale sun in the Underworld's sky did not journey from East to West, but hung low in the sky, stationary. Then came the Calendar of Setesh, a great clockwork artifact hanging from the Underworld's sky, fueled by the prayer of the dead, which caused time in the Underworld to pass, revealing the dark stars of its night. Beneath it was built Stygia, foremost city of the dead that the Dual Monarchs rule. Whether you had a turn at taking on the role of one of the Monarchs or some other reason, you've obtained access to the Calendar of Setesh, and some manuals on the astrology of the dead.

Through this strange astrology you're able to divine the fate of the ghosts dwelling in the Underworld to learn their futures or any other information about the Underworld and its events you might want to know, for whatever purposes you might want. The Calendar also has a few flaws in its making, which while they are not critical and can be safely ignored, does mean all the prayers focused upon the Calendar leak out in a mildly intoxicating mist of faith and essence that greatly boosts the rate at which ghosts regenerate essence.. In future worlds, you'll bring the Calendar of Setesh with you, although you'll need the Necropolis item if you wish to take the city of Stygia along as well. With it you'll be able to build an afterlife in the world you're going to, even if it didn't already have one before.

The Tomes of Endless Night -400cp

Personally written by the Bishop of Chalcedony Thurible, the Tome of Endless Night is a philosophical and theological treatise on the Void, and how everyone should embrace it. This, and many other of the Bishop's various tomes and books related to the Void and the nature of undeath, are now in your possession, in what is possibly the most outrageously dangerous library in Creation. Some of the books are relatively harmless religious texts that could easily be used as the foundations of ancestor cults, others are meaningless gibberish, and yet still others describe Oblivion in such perfect detail that it drives readers as insane as if they were standing in front of the Mouth of Oblivion in person. Needless to say, with a bit of clever scheming, you could easily use the contents of this library to undermine the foundations of nations, whether those of the living or those of the dead.

Industry Of The Forsaken -400cp

Having a big army is all well and good, but you know what's better than a big army? Having the industry and resources to make and reinforce said armies. Something you have a claim on now, as you've become the owner of a decently large military industrial complex, one comparable to the military industry of the Skullstone Archipelago ruled by the Bodhisattva Anointed By Dark Waters. With it, you could churn out naval fleets or land armies, provided you have a way of obtaining the large numbers of souls to provide as victims to the soulsteel forges. If you don't, it's not too much of an issue, but you'll have to settle for your army having inferior equipment. Now the question is what you're planning to use your armies for.

Monstrance Of Celestial Portion -600cp

The Abyssal Exalted are twisted forms of the Solars, changed so utterly and thoroughly that they are ironically recognizably their mirrors and opposites. The process of this corruption was done through an N/A ranked Artifact called a Monstrance Of Celestial Portion, a nearly unbreakable large black sarcophagus, barely big enough to hold one human adult. The Monstrance has an unholy design that causes terror in the hearts of those mortals who look upon it, and being trapped inside is a thoroughly unpleasant experience. Additionally, it is nearly impossible for those locked within to escape, even with external aid, for the Monstrance rejects any magic which attempts to unlock it. Additionally, the Monstrance is just as solid to immaterial beings as to material ones, so intangibility provides no escape. Even peaceful sleep is denied to those locked within the Monstrance, for all dreams yield the dreams of the Neverborn themselves.

When the will of a Solar placed within the Monstrance finally breaks, they have three choices; kill themselves, become permanently catatonic unless supernatural healing is used on their mind, or to become an Abyssal. Normally the last option requires a powerful necromancer who knows a specific spell, but this particular Monstrance takes care of that step itself. Those Abyssals produced this way are loyal to the master of the Monstrance, at least initially, and they may be communicated with or punished through the connection between their Exaltation and the Monstrance itself.

In future worlds, this Monstrance will be able to twist the powers of any being to be aligned with death, in the same way Solar Exaltations are turned into Abyssal ones, although this will do little if the subject doesn't already possess potent powers to corrupt in the first place, and those who are already steeped in death will simply have their loyalties realigned. One last noteworthy facet of this corruption is that any curses, even those laid by great and powerful beings, such as the Great Curse of the Neverborn, are replaced with a similar mechanism for control over the corrupted being, which is tied to the energies of Oblivion. And should said twisted beings find a way to undo their corruption in some way, undoubtedly requiring a legendary and arduous journey, they will find that the curses they once held do not return to them.

Final Maelstrom -600cp

Just because they are dead and stagnant, it does not mean that ghosts are incapable of innovating. And the designs and blueprints you've gotten your hands on is quite an innovation indeed. Being penned by the First And Forsaken Lion, these are the designs to build a flying warship on par with the Five-Metal Shrike, an obscenely powerful First-Age weapon. But of course, this is just the design, not the ship itself. Building it will be entirely on you, but if you manage to obtain the resources and expertise required to fully understand the blueprints and implement them, you'll find yourself with one of the most powerful weapons Creation has seen since the end of the Primordial War. Make sure to keep these documents secret.

Strange Well -600cp

One day you came across a hidden place, a terrible and dark place. Merely being there makes any but those deeply attuned to death such as ghosts uncomfortable, but that's not the most interesting trait of this location. In the middle of it is a well. A circular hole marked with a wall of stone, but not one that leads to a reservoir of water. Instead, looking into the well lets you see other things. Strange universes and potentialities, vague and twisted "what-if"s, and incomprehensible visions.

What you have come across is the Well of Udr, mixing the terrible nothingness of Oblivion with the unstoppable chaos of the Wyld, resulting in a doorway into strange and alien possibilities that Oramus did not approve of existing. The Dowager pulled the Contagion, the deadliest disease known to Creation, out of this Well, and has constantly sought for an "anti-Creation" within the Well since, in search for a weapon that would let them destroy all of Creation. But the Well of Udr gives access to all kinds of strange things, not merely weapons of destruction. Hopefully you have less malicious plans for the Well, as it can be very useful for procuring strange and otherwise impossible resources, provided you're willing to spend time looking into its mind-bending depths.

In future jumps you will find a door leading into a room containing the Well in your Warehouse or somewhere in the world that you choose, and find that new kinds of visions and strange twisted mirrors of reality have joined the ones already swimming among the alien contents of the Well, appropriate to whatever settings you have visited. What will you drag up from the Well?

House Of The Void -600cp

Oblivion is utter cessation. The complete destruction of all, that erases anything that falls into it. Only Exaltations are known to be able to survive such metaphysical nothingness in this world, and while the Neverborn would love nothing more than to plunge into it, their ties to Creation forbid them from doing so. From Oblivion itself creeps up horrible whispers, twisting any who hear them for long enough into omnicidal monsters.

Now you have direct access to this hungry void. You now own a large manse attuned to the energies of the Void, the specifics of which are up to you, although it'll be a very useful base of operations regardless of what you decide its composition to be. What's peculiar about it, however, is that it has a balcony overlooking the Mouth of the Void itself, connecting directly to the deepest level of the Labyrinth. This close to utter destruction, size ceases to matter, so if you wish to dispose of something, you may only need to carry it through the passage and drop it into the hole of Oblivion, even if normally it might be too big to fit through the doors and hallways of the manse. Of course, as mentioned before, there is one thing in this world that Oblivion cannot destroy, and that's the Exaltations, made by the Primordial Autochthon. In future worlds, you might find other things that transcend Oblivion's nothingness, but to do so would require quite the mighty power indeed. Try not to fall in yourself, even if you somehow survive it's not going to be very pleasant.

Ultimate Heresy -800cp

Well then. Somehow, you have managed to create a Corpse-Tomb of your very own, or somehow managed to evict a Neverborn from theirs or something, or some other bizarre and unprecedented occurrence. Whatever the case, you have your own Corpse-Tomb in the lowest layer of the Labyrinth. It serves as a body of yours, of course, so even if any other body you have is killed, if this one remained undestroyed then you'll still survive. The tomb is initially shaped like a massive gothic cathedral, but you can reshape it to some extent slowly, as long as the aesthetic remains dreary and dark.

In practical terms, the tomb is nearly indestructible, requiring extreme power to even dent it from inside, much less crumble its walls. Additionally, within it you'll find that your mind exerts extreme influence, similar to the influence the Neverborn have within their own Corpse-Tombs, albeit you're probably a bit more benevolent than them (not a high bar to clear). Unfortunately, this does not grant you the immense powers, awareness, and Primordial knowledge of the Neverborn, but having a practically indestructible body down at the edge of cessation can be plenty beneficial on its own, with how difficult you'll be to kill.

Of course, if you buy the Absolute Horror perk, you can be a full-fledged Neverborn if you like, as described in the perk itself. It cannot be overstated how much of a bad idea this is.

Companions

Dragging Them Down With You -100/200/400cp

Do you have friends? Loved ones who you don't wish to part with? If so, you may kill them by importing them into this jump, turning them into ghosts and granting them builds. Each Companion imported here gains 800cp and can take drawbacks to gain more. For 100cp, you can import up to 2 Companions. 200cp increases this limit to 4. And 400cp allows you a full roster of up to 8 Companions to import. Why would you want to drag other people here though?

Lethe, Oblivion, And The Third Option -0cp

Alternatively, maybe you've gotten attached to some specific character in this world. If so, you may take them with you as a Companion, if you can convince them to come with you. A surprisingly easy task, frankly, given that any who agree to become your Companions will be returned to life when this jump ends, albeit they'll be normal mortals, and those who weren't mortal in like such as Hekatonkheires or the Neverborn that you somehow convince to tag along won't get this benefit.

Green Lady -100cp

The Green Lady is a peculiar Sidereal, who seemingly serves as a spy under the services of many Deathlords simultaneously through many different identities, each of her masters believing themselves the Green Lady's true master and the only one who knows her true identity. In truth, none of her current identities are real, and it is only when she finds a way to permanently defeat the Deathlords that her original and true personality will resurface. For now, however, it seems she has a new master, you. You will, of course, be her true master with whom her true loyalties lie (allegedly) and she will show her true identity to you as a token of trust (supposedly). Even if you know the trick, she is still a powerful Sidereal, and you can definitely make use of her service if you're fine with her acting as a double agent in service of other Deathlords. Once you leave this jump, her actual true identity will likely surface as the Deathlords are no longer in reach, and whatever their true personality is, they'll still remain loyal to you. Try not to spurn their loyalty.

Death Isn't The End -100cp

While the afterlife is a commonly accepted thing, some people have… let's say strange, reactions to knowing for certain that people can still continue to exist even after dying. This particular Heroic Mortal is oddly stoked about the concept, and wants you to kill them to experience undeath for themselves. They have also agreed to do your bidding for some time in return, so you don't have to kill them immediately if you don't want to. Additionally, if Companions respawn in your chain, this mortal will be incredibly happy about this and it will cement their loyalty to you, while they ask you to kill them repeatedly (apparently they find the experience of death fun somehow). Perhaps having a gladly suicidal agent might be useful?

Ashen Moon -100cp

Most ghosts retain the forms they had in life, with aesthetic wounds that represent the form they died in. It's unusual for the corpus of a ghost to not take on the shape they had in life, but it seems that this one was particularly unfortunate. However it happened, they have been sealed into the form of an ash tray, and whether or not their sealing is the cause, they appear to be somewhat insane, making bold and unbelievable claims. Among these claims are that he has a set of Graces as his Fetters, that obtaining those Graces again would undo his sealing, and that he swears to be loyal to you if you help him obtain freedom once again. The strangest part of it all is that those three claims are true, even if the rest turn out to be baseless rambling. This ghost used to be a Lunar in life, a thaumaturgist at that, and is a surprisingly knowledgeable expert in occult matters, despite their insanity. Maybe you'll help them undo their seal after all?

Enthusiastic Chef -300cp

The kinds of friends one can make in the Underworld are quite varied, and some can be rather dangerous. Whether fortune or misfortune, you've found yourself with a 'friend' that is particularly enthusiastic about sharing their cooking with you. Taking the form of an anthropomorphic and remarkably well-groomed rat whose disturbing number of limbs end in strange ever-shifting edges, this is actually a Hekatonkhire, albeit perhaps the most benign one you could find. They are obsessed with cooking the perfect dish, whatever that's supposed to be, and has chosen you as a taste tester. If you can survive the influence of a remnant of a Neverborn's soul hierarchy, and the horrifying ingredients they use for their dishes (such as soulsteel flakes, bits of the brains of mortals driven insane by Oblivion, pyreflame sauces, etc), their food is surprisingly tasty. Or maybe that's the corruption of the Void taking hold. Who can tell? Certainly not you once you've tasted their dishes. Either way, if you have the resilience to make the Hekatonkhire's cuisine a non-issue, you could hardly ask for a better chef in the whole of the Underworld and even most of Creation as well.

Golden Undead Heart -100cp

While the ghosts of mortals need a certain amount of stubbornness to be able to linger beyond death at all, you'd be surprised how easy it is for mortals to refuse the call of Lethe. So common it is, in fact, that it's not particularly strange to see the ghosts of children wandering around the streets of the Necropoli of the Underworld. This ghost is one such child, albeit one with an unusual amount of maturity. Somehow, they've attuned themselves to a soulsteel Artifact forged using her own Po, and with it she endeavors to hunt down hungry ghosts to help the living whenever she finds herself in Creation. Additionally, she sometimes attempts to help other ghosts accept Lethe and pass on, but is cagey about her reasons for not accepting Lethe herself. This child has grown attached to you, however it happened, and has slowly come to see you as somewhat of a father figure. While they cannot grow up due to being dead, hopefully you'll be a good parent to them.

Mistakes Were Made -100cp

Sciences cannot be advanced without research and experimentation. Still, some people do tend to take things a bit too far in ways that don't seem to provide much of import. This set of haunted armor here is the victim of one such case. A ghost whose Hun and Po were merged together after death, using strange forging methods to turn them into a living set of soulsteel armor, the necromancer responsible has long ago been killed by its creation, which now prowls the world, hungering for living flesh. Despite its completely broken mind, it has somehow gotten attached to you in particular, and seems willing to be worn in battle. Be careful about training it properly though, or it may begin to rampage while you're still in it. Or perhaps you have the means and inclination to separate the two souls into a Hun and Po again?

Drawbacks

There is no limit to how much cp you may gain from drawbacks. Torment yourself to your heart's content.

Holding On +0cp

Have you been to this world before? If so, perhaps you'd like to return to the same instance of Exalted that you've visited before. Perhaps you could even arrange it so your state as a ghost is due to dying as whatever identity you had last time you were in this world or something, provided you were a mortal. Even if not, you'll be able to see what effects your actions had on the Underworld. The only restriction is that the Underworld will exist one way or another, despite whatever changes you might've made. It would be quite difficult to avoid the circumstances that resulted in the formation of the Underworld though.

Dying Dreams +0cp

All that said, it's wise to acknowledge how much of a mess the lore of Exalted is. To avoid most of the headaches, you may use this toggle to tinker with the lore to some extent, to make it make sense, or perhaps to change things to a greater extent to enter a sort of fanfic of the official Exalted lore, or maybe simply focusing on the first or third edition of Exalted, as this jump mainly focuses on the 2nd edition. Do note that whatever you change, what you get from your build here won't change, so try not to make things too different.

Underwhelming +100cp

There's something to be said about intimidation. After all, the living don't like anything that has to do with death, and even the dead don't like the Neverborn and their forces which represent Oblivion. Due to that, it's not difficult to come across very terrifying things in the Underworld, whatever you are. Unfortunately, you won't be among them, as somehow you don't look threatening or intimidating at all. You look kinda pathetic actually, and your appearance makes it difficult to take you seriously. Expect most to think little of you. Well, maybe this can be a book if you want to be ignored, but you'd need a lot of power to avoid the brunt of the downsides of being looked down on, as you can't expect anyone to bother holding back if they're punishing or fighting you.

Age-Old Grudge +100cp

Ghosts are generally inclined to repeat the events of their lives. There are those who take this a bit too far, though, and now you're one of them. Whatever happened, you're absolutely obsessed with eternally tormenting a small group of people who slighted you who knows how long ago, perhaps even while you were still alive. This will generally be your main focus, and while you can tear yourself away from revenge if you have something important to do, it'll be begrudgingly at best. Hopefully you have the resources to carry out your eternal revenge smoothly, or you might start resorting to desperate measures.

Strange Vistas +200cp

There are many things that can break one's mind in the Underworld. Unfortunately, it seems you've had one too many brushes with such things, and as you could expect, you've lost your sanity. This means you lack most of your self control, and your desires and impulses have been twisted to be far darker and more horrible than they used to be. You do retain enough wit to scheme and perform diplomacy, but you will not be a reasonable person by any means.

Mortwight +200cp

While the minds of ghosts can be twisted, their forms are similarly vulnerable to corruption and mutation as well. Unfortunately, you'll be very familiar with this fact, as your own corpus has been 'rearranged' by an unlucky encounter with the forces of the Void. You are extremely ugly and disgusting to look at, and for whatever reason this can't be fixed through moliation, and while it isn't too significant, you'll find your powers and Arcanoi are somewhat harder to utilize. Maybe you had an extremely violent death?

Slave +300/400cp

You are not a free ghost. You're someone's property, almost definitely the property of one of the ghosts of the dragon kings of the northwestern islands. Mercifully, you aren't actually bound to obey them, but you are particularly vulnerable to their social manipulations, and they very much do not want one of their servants running off. Unfortunately, you've also lost most of your power, leaving you at a level comparable to Heroic Mortals at best, and you will need to trick your master into returning you your power if you want it back. Even if you don't, you'll at least regain what you lost when the jump ends. If you're feeling particularly masochistic, for an additional 100cp you actually are supernaturally bound to obey your master's orders. Perhaps you'll try to look for a way to break these bindings? Thankfully, you won't fail your chain or anything if you're still bound by the time the jump ends, and your master is unlikely to want you dead, as that would deprive them of a useful servant. Still, it's probably quite miserable to be at the mercy of another.

Penalty For Failure +400cp

The Neverborn are not merciful masters. And it seems that you've failed them sometime in the past. If you don't follow the Neverborn, then either you had a similarly cruel master, or were just incredibly unfortunate enough to be the victim of a necromantic experiment. Whatever the case, just like the First And Forsaken Lion, you've been trapped within a full set of superheavy plate armor constructed of soulsteel. Not only is it nailed to your corpus, inflicting immense physical pain on you at all times, but every inch of the armor wails with the voices of the ghosts that went into its forging, likely of those who you knew and perhaps even loved. Maybe you're heartless enough to think that the protection of superheavy plate is worth the constant physical and mental torment, but it's not like you gain any ability to fight or the strength to move normally within the armor with just this drawback. Hopefully you're powerful enough that this is more of a benefit than a punishment.

Weakness +400cp

Having power is all well and good, but a strange part of this world is that powerful beings tend to have weaknesses that they are particularly vulnerable to, despite all their might and abilities. You're no different. You possess a secret weakness that, if exploited, could easily be used to kill you, no matter how much power you've accrued (or perhaps even *because* of how much power you've accrued and the manner in which you did so). To start with only you know the secret, but you have no guarantee it isn't recorded in some remote hidden cranny somewhere in the world, and it's very much not impossible to divine the weakness, and probably won't be impossible to divine even if you take extensive measures to prevent that method. Have fun ensuring this weakness of yours remains secret.

Whispers Of The Damned +600cp

The whispers of the Neverborn are not a pleasant thing. Too bad you have a very strong connection to them now. Rather than whispers and abstract visions, you can see and understand precisely what the Neverborn attempt to communicate with you, which given their alien awareness and cosmic nature, is usually not a good thing. Additionally, they'll expect you to obey them and will punish you with unimaginable horrors beamed directly into your head if you don't. And given that you can tell exactly what they want, you have little leeway to loophole your way around orders. You cannot take this drawback if you choose to become a Neverborn.

Whispers Of The End +600cp

The Neverborn are pretty bad, but they're downright preferable compared to Oblivion itself. Unfortunately, you won't be able to look away, as for some incomprehensible reason you've gained a strong and firm connection to Oblivion, through which its whispers and strange essence floods into your mind. Resisting will require immense willpower and a relentless determination to ignore what it tells you and resist the corruptive essence coursing through you, and every time you slip it will manage to corrupt you until you can put up a resistance again. Unfortunately, you won't be able to benefit from any perks or the like that boost your willpower, so you will have to resist entirely on your own efforts. The corruption of the Void will slowly twist you into a monstrous and genocidally violent mockery of yourself, existing only to end all things and hurl them into the Mouth of the Void. Even being a Neverborn is no escape, particularly because you'll be stuck next to the Mouth of Oblivion itself. Mercifully this corruption will be undone when the jump ends, but you will likely need divine levels of therapy to cope with the experience if you were too corrupted.

Scenarios

Revolution Of Unlife

The Deathlords rule the Underworld almost unopposed. The powers they wield, granted by the Neverborn, allow them to simply control ghosts, and to strike down those strong enough to resist. Before they grew bold enough to rule, the Underworld was a safe haven for the undead, free to the endless repetition of their mimicry of life. Now, many are forged into soulsteel, conscripted into their armies, or simply terrorized by the horrors they allow to crawl out of the Labyrinth. This cannot stand.

You must overthrow the Deathlords. However you do it, you must vanquish all of them, push back their armies, and reclaim the city of Stygia from the horrors and abominations that crawl from the mad dreams of the Neverborn. This will of course be nearly impossible, as each Deathlord has immense power over ghosts, being able to slay them with a look or worse. You will have to not only muster armies, but find ways to protect them from the powers of the Deathlords. Perhaps you'll try to bring some Abyssal Exalted to your side?

Should you succeed, your reward shall be your own empire of the dead; You'll be able to bring the Underworld with you to future jumps, complete with all the ghosts living under your reign, and potentially even the Abyssal Exalted should you convince them to join your empire, serving as an afterlife should there not already be one in the worlds you arrive in.

ONCEBORN

The Neverborn hold great, immense, cosmic power. And yet they are practically catatonic, stuck at the bottom of the Labyrinth and wanting nothing more than to plunge into it. But perhaps you can be something more?

Your mission here is simple; become a Onceborn, a being with all the power of the Neverborn, with few or none of the drawbacks. Chief among the differences would be that you aren't immobile and stuck at the bottom of the Labyrinth, instead capable of moving freely and wielding your power however you wish. Your reward is simply keeping the power you've gained, no doubt enough to obtain anything you want anyways.

PLEASE NO MORE

The Neverborn see that the only option for them to end is to plunge all Creation into Oblivion, so that their connection to it is severed and they can take the plunge into Oblivion themselves. But perhaps there's another path? One they are blinded to by their misery and depression? Whether or not there is one, it is one you must achieve.

Your mission is as simple as it is incomprehensibly difficult; you must rehabilitate the Neverborn, either kicking them out of their funk and restoring them to sanity, or perhaps even reviving them as full-fledged (and most importantly, *free*) Primordials. The biggest obstacle to this, of course, is Oblivion itself, which constantly twists and torments the Neverborn as they hand precipitously but firmly over its edge, unable to truly plunge into it. Alternatively, perhaps you'll aid in their deaths, and somehow sever their connections to Creation such that they can in fact truly fall into the Void.

As for your reward? If you manage to revive the Neverborn, they'll come along with you as Companions, almost definitely wanting nothing to do with Creation anymore. If you instead aided in their suicide, then you'll be given all of their Tomb-Corpses, which will function as the Ultimate Heresy item describes. It's approximately a dozen of them, so killing you will be rather difficult as you can no doubt imagine. Additionally, you will gain a strong connection with Oblivion, but also near-immunity to it, such that you can spread its whispers and corruption however you wish on future worlds.

EMBRACE OBLIVION

What a terrible choice. Are you sure about this?

Well, if so, then you gain a very straightforward task; plunge all of Creation into Oblivion, leaving not a trace behind, and then jump into Oblivion yourself. There must be nothing left, so throwing the Wyld and Pure Chaos into it will likely be quite tricky, but after all of Creation is gone, Oblivion will be strong enough to warp concepts such as “quantity” and “consistency” in the same way as Pure Chaos can, so it won’t be impossible.

If you manage to surmount all the powerful defenses of Creation designed to prevent those like you from destroying Creation, and then jump into Oblivion yourself, you’ll find yourself merging with the Void, becoming it in a very literal sense. This is your reward; all the dread destructive powers of Oblivion at your fingertips, ready to be used, and a nature that makes you one with it rather than merely an agent or a puppet.

You can alternatively use this scenario as an endjump scenario, receiving your Spark as you become Oblivion and finishing your chain. Perhaps you’ll go on to devour other settings as well?

Ending

Once the decade is over, then comes the choice of what to do. You have three options, outlined below.

Never Let Go

What, why? Why do you want to stay here? Maybe you found a way to return to life and somehow don't want to use the other Exalted jumps to stay in this setting? Or maybe you just want to help Oblivion devour everything and then yourself? Whatever the reason, you may choose to stay in this world. Keep in mind that, as a normal ghost, you won't have the guarantee that you'll be able to resist Lethe, although you may not find that an issue at this point.

Peace At Last

A very reasonable choice, after the horrors you've no doubt seen here. You'll finish your chain and return to your world of origin, keeping everything you've gathered thus far. Hopefully you won't bring the horrors of the Underworld to your world with you, although maybe you want to set up an afterlife of your own there?

Through And Past Lethe

This could be considered the default option, really. You'll continue your chain and move on to the next jump. Ideally one without as much horror as this one, but it's your prerogative if you want more misery. Regardless, hopefully you won't let your experiences in this jump traumatize you too badly.

Notes

It is worth noting that ghosts cannot use more than one Arcanoi at a time and do not have Excellencies.

>What the hell are those Labyrinth locations

There is a ton of edgy shit yes. Feel free to declare most of it noncanon with the Dying Dreams toggle if you want, I wouldn't blame you.

>Deathlord powerlevels

Please, for the love of all that is holy, fanwank responsibly.

Specific Deathlord abilities

They may take command of any undead weaker than them, overriding the command of lesser necromancers, they may slay any mortal with but a gaze, and those they slay in a shadowland or within the Underworld must obey them for a millennia, although heroic mortals may resist this, and those imbued with great power like the Exalted are simply immune, they may drain the powers of lesser ghosts to recover their motes, and they can shape their own corpus in a manner similar to shapeshifting with great effort.

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