Lord of Light

By Mir

Lord of Light is set on a planet colonized by some of the remnants of "vanished Urath," or Earth. The crew and colonists from the spaceship Star of India found themselves on a strange planet surrounded by hostile indigenous races and had to carve a place for themselves or perish. To increase their chances of survival, the crew has used chemical treatments, biofeedback and electronics to mutate their minds and create enhanced self-images, or "Aspects," that "strengthened their bodies and intensified their wills and extended the power of their desires into Attributes, which fell with a force like magic upon those against whom they were turned." The crew has also developed a technology to transfer a person's atman, or soul, electronically to a new body. This reincarnation by mind transfer has created a race of potential immortals and allowed the former crew members to institute the Hindu caste system, with themselves at the top.

The novel covers great spans of time. Eventually, the crew used their now-great powers to subjugate or destroy the native non-human races (whom they characterize as demons) while setting themselves up as gods in the eyes of the many generations of colonist progeny. Taking on the powers and names of Hindu deities, these "gods" maintain respect and control of the masses by maintaining a stranglehold on the access to reincarnation and by suppressing any technological advancements beyond a medieval level. The gods fear that any enlightenment or advancement might lead to a technological renaissance that would eventually weaken their power.

Sam, the god known as Kalkin and Binder - who has developed the ability to manipulate electromagnetism and gravity - the last "Accelerationist": He believed that technology should be available to the masses, and that reincarnation should not be controlled by the elite.

Sam introduced Buddhism as a culture jamming tool and fought to cripple the power of the gods with this "new" religion. His carefully planned revolt against the gods… failed completely, and as his judgement he has had his *atman* cast into the Bridge of Light that rings the world, never to return from Nirvana.

Until, that is, the day you arrive.

"I shall tear these stars from out the heavens, and hurl them in the faces of the gods, if this be necessary. I shall blaspheme in every Temple throughout the land. I shall take lives as a fisherman takes fish, by the net, if this be necessary. I shall mount me again up to the Celestial City, though every step be a flame or a naked sword and the way be guarded by tigers. One day will the gods look down from Heaven and see me upon the stair, bringing them the gift they fear most. That day will the new Yuga begin."

Locations:

Roll 1d8 to determine time and place or choose for 50CP.

1: Heaven – You step forth unto the streets of the Celestial City, perfect and glorious. Around you is the soft scent of flowers, before you lies pleasing statuary, and around you is the exultant Festival of the First, a celebration of the ancient conquerors of the world.

2: Kaniburrha – Adjoined to Heaven, beneath its dome, lies the wilderness. With its streams and smells of growth and decay, ancient trees and dark shadows. Life spins as it should here, and king of all the many predators are the phantom cats – great and pale, silent and completely innocent of divine or human concern. While through neurological controls they do not see the City as anything but the forest, and do not hunt its inhabitant, those who stray into the forest lose all such protections.

3: Alundil – Not an overly large city. Mostly thatched huts and wooden bungalows, with unpaved roads and many small bazaars. It grows wide fields of blue-green grains and is most known for its Temple, which holds seemingly endless carvings of gods and dancers, goddesses and demons, spiralling around to an inner courtyard that holds shrines and great statues to all the major deities – chief in this Temple, Kali.

4: Purple Grove – Near Alundil, there is a small grove around which there are many tents. Followers flocked to hear the teachings of the Buddha, and with his death, they still come to listen to his disciples. Great drums declare speeches, and there is song and dervish dancing. You might be in the crowd, sitting in the saffron robe with the monks, or in makeup and ankle-bell upon the stage.

5: Mahartha – The Gateway of the South and Capital of the Dawn, one of the greatest cities in the world, crowded by merchant house, bankers, Temples, inns and brothels. Home to the most princely hostel of them all – that of Hawkana, the Most Perfect Host. Upon the shores all manner of wealth flows through her ports, and thousands come for judgement and new bodies – should they have built up enough Karma to afford them, or bought enough prayers. That finest of hostels is where you begin, either as staff, chef, slave or most honoured guest.

6: Fortress of Niritti the Black. Once the catholic chaplain of the Star of Indra, this basalt fortress on a distant island is a darkened place. He has devoted himself to the destruction of the Gods and their heretical self-worship, amassing a mighty pirate fleet and army of soulless never-born warriors – brain-dead clones implanted with reflexive combat skill – using technology gifted to him by a cunning god so that he might prove an amusing diversion for Heaven. They have severely underestimated his resolve.

7: Hellwell - Hellwell lies at the top of the world and it leads down to its roots. It is probably as old as the world itself; and if it is not, it should be, because it looks as if it were. Barring passage is a huge, burnished metal door, erected by the First, that is heavy as sin, three times the height of a man and half that distance in width. It is a full cubit thick and bears a head-sized ring of brass, a complicated pressure-plate lock and an inscription that reads, roughly, ***"Go away. This is not a place to be. If you do try to enter here, you will fail and also be cursed. If somehow you succeed, then do not complain that you entered unwarned, nor bother us with your deathbed prayers."*** Signed, "The Gods."

8: **Free Choice**

Origins:

As all who live upon the world are entrusted into the Wheel of Karma, few die of old age. At the appropriate time, having presented oneself before the **Masters of Karma** for psycho-evaluation, each life is weighed and sent to its next step towards Enlightenment. Those who stray from the path of Karma, as revealed by the Gods, may instead be lowered to a lesser form than man - dog, ape, jackbird - to teach them righteousness.

Note that by default the **Masters of Karma** and their devices will not be able to see anything but the experiences of your background and time in this world.

You may choose your gender and age freely.

Free: Drop-In – From nothing you have come, with no past and uncertain future. While the Masters of Karma may be unable to read your alien history, they will have little reason to reward you in this brief span of time.

+100CP: Animal - Your actions in a previous life have become a great weight, that has dragged you down to the form of an animal. Wretch, know that you may yet be blessed with human - even Divine - nature yet again, should you attend to your spirit as carefully as you did not before. You may be any animal as large or larger than a cat - but rare would it be for a great beast's form to be chosen by the Masters of Karma.

Free: Petitioner - Humility, prayer, living virtuously before the Gods. A common trade refines the soul, and you may yet be granted new life. This may be your first body, or else you may have been working your way up the ladder of Karma for many lifetimes.

200CP: Demigod - Blessed child. Your righteousness and piety have become the seed of Divinity in you. From your old form you have become young, vital. The body of a God is yours, handsome, strong, fast and with the correct mudras and psycho-conditioning, you have begun to align yourself with an **Attribute** and develop your godly **Aspect**. You are very much at the bottom rung of Heaven, but even Death Himself was once like you.

800CP: God - Cloaked by your **Aspect** and bearing a mighty **Attribute**, the universe declares you a God. The City of Heaven is your home, a paradise eternal. This is a power for the singing, the joy and embodiment. You are more than man, you are a legend, surrounded by legends.

You may freely import Companions - all of whom are granted the gift of a strong and healthy Human form. If you have led a virtuous life and ascended to any higher spiritual level, for 300CP all may have followed your noble example and attained the rank of Demigod in their own right.

Perks

100 (Free for Drop-Ins): Knowledge of the First - Those rare few who, generations past, beheld a pristine world from afar as a blue-green jewel in the night. The First were explorers and colonists, from lost Urath - Earth - and did not then know of their destiny as Gods of the new world. You know of the truth of this world, the great genocide conducted against the natives, of the psycho-conditioning and controlled mutations that allowed men to become Gods and command the fate of all. With time and attention, you might be able to divine the true names of the Gods and claim to be one of the First yourself.

100 (Free for Animals): Bestial Gifts - Despite your lowly nature, you have strengths. Some animal traits express themselves strongly in you - be it acute senses, speed, claws and so forth. Those who are not themselves animals, have mutated to express these features and would be well advised to keep them hidden. The Masters of Karma may judge fairly, but the common man can have little mercy. You may take whatever animal features you like - but they are clearly and distinctively animal. If you are an Animal, then of course you have the entire form, for what little it aids you.

100 (Free for Petitioners): Worthy Reincarnation – Your deeds have been judged as just and wise in your lifetimes, and the Masters will grant you great leeway in the next body you take. You may choose your mortal social class and most physical qualities without fear. Though the Masters will not notice if you abuse their generosity, anyone investigating you might discover something extremely unusual and suspect you of manipulating the process somehow.

100 (Free for Demigods and Gods): Divine Physique - The body selected for your enjoyment has been carefully shaped beyond the apex of humanity. Strong, vital and beauteous - it is a form that one could live within for hundreds of years, though at any time you may approach the Masters of Karma for a replacement, should the flames of your divine lifestyle burn it out. Care has been made that it expresses the initial mutations and brain structures to develop Aspect and Attribute - though once they have been induced, they will carry with your soul through whatever form you take.

100 (Free for Gods): Approach of Splendour - It is goodly for a God to cultivate more than just his Aspect and Attribute. Dance, music, art - all are the pastimes of Heaven, and you have some skill in each in its kind. With this you may make elegant discourse on matters spiritual and material, create works of passing art and behave with the decorum and bearing of the Divine.

300 (Discount for Drop-Ins): The Divine Machines - Many and varied are the wonders of the Gods. From the Vasty Hall of Death, Yama brings forth Thunder Chariot and Bright Spear, Trident of Destruction and Wand of Universal Fire. In Heaven, there is an elegant statue with eight arms that plays the lute when addressed, and endless machines that keep all in perfect stasis. The elementary forms of these great sciences and artefacts are laid bare to you, and you may service and understand the technology of this world. While great innovations and the wonders forged by Yama might escape you, you have a solid basis that escapes the vast majority of men and gods in the world - sufficient to greatly impress those who understand the value of such things. With this you also gain one artefact costing 200CP or less for free.

300 (Discount for Animals): Wild Mutant – In truth, the powers attributed to the gods originated with mutations brought about by the exotic radiations and atmosphere of their long voyage and first battles. More powers than just the Aspect or Attribute have existed, and more will come – though they are vanishingly rare. You are one such recipient. You might have great luck with games of chance, or be strangely invisible to those who bear you ill-will. More blatant displays are possible – from your hands poison may drip, or metal might rust away.

These powers are basic and lack the extensive training and support of heavenly virtues – but with time and such methods, they have the potential to be as grand and storied as any of the gods. Many also are accompanied by physical signs, usually where it would simplify their method – those poison hands may have needle-fangs under the nails, and even psychic senses might be joined with large black eyes, sensitive fingers and long ears.

This power is not the same as an Attribute and does not yield to the same training, but if you develop one as well, there may be strange parallels in their effects.

Be warned, however. Heaven does not share power – at best you might be welcomed as a Demigod. More likely, you will be met in the night or day by one of the divine executioners of Kali.

300 (Discount for Petitioners): The Noble Eightfold Path – The path to the cessation of suffering, in wisdom, ethics and concentration you have developed your virtues along the new way revealed by the Buddha, Mahasamatman in the purple grove where lilies grow. A new religion, yet with a vitality and rising popularity that belies its peaceful overtures, it challenges the doctrine of Heaven but resists their attempts to integrate it.

There has only been one Buddha and he is dead, but in his dying he – a mortal – almost slew the God of Death himself. Not defiant, but wilful, not angry, but firm. In you is a focus and cosmic awareness that brings all of your *atman* into alignment with your goal. Absolute powers raised against you find that you are of their essence, that the nature of the universe – to a tiny degree – recognises you. If mortals can become gods, why should gods not also become mortal?

Absolutes wielded against you are not, and irreversible changes may be reversed by you. They might still strike you down, and you may still be transformed – but there is always a path to their negation, though it be fraught with perils.

300 (Free for Gods and Demigods): Attribute Induction – The Attribute is the capacity to effect the world with your will in a single, highly iconic way. It is a mutant strength, carefully developed with millennia of experience by the scientists of Heaven. With your attribute you might encourage silicates to grow into splendid – and razor sharp – trees of crystal, or have the wind sour and sicken your foes. Food cooked by your hands might keep a thousand men fed with one loaf, or you may will the birds to sing sweet praises in your favour and fly against your foes.

Many Attributes are known best for their utility in war, but the days when mankind's position on their world need be defended by flaming fists and opalescent eyes has passed, and Heaven cares as greatly for Attributes of craft and fragrance as those of iron and blood.

Demigods and Mortals have just begun to harness their virtues, they are like flickering embers – offering feeble warmth, but needing careful stoking. Their attributes are unstable and untested, often needing some tool to focus their energies. The former may rely on the assistance of their superiors in the Divine, the latter have only their own wills to push further.

300 (Discount for Gods): Divine Pursuits – Sword, Bow, Brush, Lyre, Harp, Drum, Cask, Kitchen… there is a realm in which your skills stand out in Heaven. Those who are of the finest skills call you their ally, proud to call your name and offer their talents in return for yours. Heaven is grand in its play, and loves little more than contests of all manner of skill, and you have always acquitted yourself magnificently – though you are not yet the undisputed first of your field. Taking this multiple times may either grant a new area of excellence, or advance one to stand equal with the very greatest who have ever been.

600 (Discount for Drop-Ins): Chosen of Death - Great **Yama**, Death-god, has seen you clearly and bade you enter the **Vasty Hall of Death**, to serve as his partner in creation. Not merely revealing his secrets of science - you are his equal in the arts. Your creativity is that which may forge ten unique treasures each day, or mass produce legends. Design of all forms of weapons, armours, vehicles, and utilities comes to you with blinding light and strength of inspiration. With this position comes the virtual guarantee of rebirth in your next life, as a **Demigod** of the forge. You also gain a Discount on all artefacts and equipment.

600 (Discount for Animals): Native Demon – When the Star of Indra arrived at this jewelled world, ringed by the golden aurora called Nirvana by some, they found it was not empty and awaiting them as some had hoped. It had its own cultures and peoples – strange and alien in all respects.

Once rulers of the land, the **Rakasha**, are beings of living fire. Pure energy, sustained and shaped by will alone – the Rakasha are the descendants of an ancient civilisation who cast off their physical form to live eternal as dancing light. And they are cruel and powerful. Summoning energy is trivial to them, fires and lightning at their command, kinetic force making winds storm, condensing water vapour into spouts or tearing rocks from the ground. They may cast illusions, though rarely do they deceive, or make themselves invisible or fearsome to behold.

No mortal arms may harm them, but their energies are vulnerable to disruption from greater sources – such as the Universal Fire or Trident of Destruction – and in Heaven there is a well-known chemical aerosol that repels their energies.

They are deceitful by nature, and think themselves tricksters – but their complete lack of morals and their sadism makes it hard for them to maintain ruses for long. Their greatest virtue is their love of gambling and their devotion to honour bets made. Their greatest desire is for a human body to puppet, through which they can indulge the pleasures of the flesh denied to them.

You share their lack of physical sensation – your existence is one of pure thought. While you do not lack for your humanity, in time, in the company of your peers and sharing their memories of the flesh… you may yet learn better.

They control lesser orders of energy beings, such as the fire elementals – mindless, deadly, and stronger than a thunderbolt. The strongest Rakasha are masters of small armies of these creatures, who appear in a flash when summoned via radio-telepathy.

> **All Rakasha are bound within Hellwell, and so are you. You are a flame bound by Kalkin to eternally light your niche, with only the distant fires of your fellows for poor company. In time, the Binder will come to treat with Taraka and release him – and you. But he is pursued by Gods – Agni, Yama, Kali and Shiva himself, and moreover you have been ordered to delay them.**

If you are a God however, then after betting and winning your life against spectacular odds, Taraka has seen fit to fan the flames of your *atman* – allowing you to survive the death-of-body as one of the Rakasha. You are still alive however, and have no experience or deep knowledge of the scope of your powers.

But the Rakasha are not the only demons in this world…

Under the oceans, in the depths where sunlight curdles and dies are the Mothers of the Terrible Glow, and their amphibious slaves – the People-of-the-Sea. The Mothers are great and powerful, capable of raising the seas against their foes, and imbuing them with the hideously mutagenic Glow – the means by which they created their slave races and vast organic cities of living technology.

They stand twice as high as a tall man, but do not bear his shape. Adapted to crushing depths and of marvellous variety of appearance due to their ability to shape the forms of their offspring, they are yet still squamous and rugose, betentacled and boneless sea-nymphs with glowing blood and huge lidless eyes.

However, during their war with the Gods many took forms vaguely patterned after the humans, that they might walk on land to bring their crashing waves and claim human slaves. Their threat was such that they and their cities were systematically scoured from the planet and until now, they were thought one of the many native races exterminated by the First.

But you survived, as did your progenitor, Dalissa. She was grievously wounded – rendered sterile by the energies she wielded against armies, and her eggs smashed – and, millennia later, has finally given birth to a daughter to inherit the Glow. You are loved, too beloved to be eaten should you disappoint your Mother, as tradition would dictate. She shaped you carefully, and either rendered you a physically powerful inhuman form, or one that approximates the victorious gods – but is still clearly one of the legendary sea-witches.

The ways of controlling and wielding the life-warping sea-glow and powerful, but clumsy hydrokinesis are the powers of your blood – and the ancient alchemies that created their living palaces and slave-organisms, though they be no more powerful than the bioscience of the Gods, have been drilled mercilessly into you.

In battle, you may raise waves – with time building them to unstoppable force – or throw powerful blows of water. All of which may be supplemented with the Glow – by releasing your blood from pores and special sacs into the water you control, you may add an intensely poisonous radiation and enhance your control and power over the tainted waters.

The effects of the Glow by themselves are chaotic and toxic, but with care and scrutiny you may wield it like a tool to twist life into new forms – though it is a treacherous art, and will never be a science by itself.

You are a child of one of the most feared demons the Gods ever vanquished. How then, will they react to an ancient evil made flesh once more? Some may simply seek your cephalopodan skull, to be placed among the many trophies of the Archives… others, might be willing to treat peacefully – with victory comes magnanimity.

You are carnivorous, dislike the surface heat and dryness and your natural instincts towards most other life is predatory. Your Mother has done little to quell this.

600 (Discount for Petitioners): Master of Karma – Yours is the greatest mortal station. You are one of the Masters of Karma, with powers greater than any temporal king. With your extensive training and conditioning with the use of the psycho-evaluation tools bestowed upon you by Heaven, you may pry into the minds and deeds of those who come forth for reincarnation – laid back upon the gold-and-samite throne of the machine, their memories and nature are yours to peruse. In addition, you have the great clone-banks and gene-crafters that may shape new and beautiful forms for your petitioners.

Judging from their deeds, you may reincarnate their *atman* into animal form, or human – or even Godly perfection, though you lack the knowledge of Aspect and Attribute that would let them acquire such powers. It is among your duties to give gifts of grace and strength, and punishments of blindness or epilepsy. Unlike most of your peers, you understand the construction and operation of these heavenly machines well enough that you could create your own given tools and time.

Reincarnation is not traumatic in itself, though the *atman* takes time to reassert itself – supernatural powers are diminished to near-nothing for some time after rebirth, but always return in full eventually. So long as the brain is alive, reincarnation is almost always successful – brain damage scars the soul, and may prevent successful rebirth.

You have duties and responsibilities, though you may live a princely life, it is at the behest of Heaven that you serve. Never forget your patrons – they do not allow Karma to be the servant of mortal greeds.

After your time upon this world, adjoined to your Warehouse is a lofty vault of marble and gold, within which rests a system of the same powers – a psych-probe throne, eight accelerated-growth clone tanks and life-weaving computer. With artful care, you may even use these machines to imbue greater or stranger shapes upon the life within, but initially they may only create animal, human and godly forms – freely granting Bestial Gifts and Divine Physique.

600 (Free for Gods and Demigods): Aspect Cultivation – If an Attribute is the grasp of power, then the Aspect is a state of being. To wield reflections, and to become Reflection. To summon Strength and to become it. Greater and more subtle than any Attribute. Through genetic predisposition, hypnosis and chemical therapies, your passions come to correspond with those of the Universe.

Raising your Aspect is like removing a mask or standing straight, a mustering of yourself. It takes some energy to maintain, should you wish to be capable of being anything but an avatar, but it is the exertion of being rather than the struggle to become.

This is a power that requires your kindness. What is the nature of the gods who become Fire, undaunted and ferocious? Who become Death, unknowable, all-ending? Who become Divine Drunkenness, invincible in vitality and charisma? Those who look upon you in raised Aspect *know*, instantly and surely that you are divine, that you embody a facet of creation.

Any powers raised in harmony with your raised Aspect are magnified and exalted – they are more than just spells or mutation, they are in service of the very order of the universe. An arrow loosed by the Goddess of the Bow might strike a man's heart from ten miles away, or pin his courage to the wall.

Should the God of Flowers walk in Aspect through a forest, will it blossom and lend him strength? Or does a single rose cut and displayed by his hand speak of days of sun and offer a simple strength to all who behold it?

Demigods, though they have begun along this path are but beginners – they summon weak and feeble Aspects to match their new and uncertain Attributes, and must still undergo a battery of training exercises and therapies to fortify their natures. Mortals who develop this faculty independently are in essence on the same level as Demigods – but lack the aid of Heaven in their development.

Once fully matured, forevermore you will be Water or Marble, the Lute or the Joust.

Equipment

Each background receives fair lodging and such possessions as they have earned in their lives, save for Drop-Ins.

Gods, have for their enjoyment, fine robes and quarters in Heaven. Many jewelled fancies and golden toys delight their senses, and they have no need to worry for food, drink or monies.

Demigods, often still enduring their conditioning and exercises are satisfied with their lesser, but still great, possessions.

Petitioners make do with whatever suits their station – a castle, a merchant's shop, a hovel. No matter their riches, they do not approach that which the humblest god my pass over.

Animals are just that. They own the fur or feathers on their backs, and are lucky that few would strike at such a lowly one – and show their lack of compassion to the Masters.

All artefacts below are perfect copies of the originals, and unless you are a God or Demigod yourself it will be considered extremely strange that you wield them.

You receive a Discount on one artefact that resonates with your nature – even if you are not a God or Demigod, though Animals may have some trouble wielding it, or it may be in the care of an ally. When your chosen armament resonates with your own Attribute, its powers are noticeably stronger – and when opposed, it may resist your use entirely. As such free to change the cosmetic features of any artefact – the Wand of Fire might throw rays of "cold" that negate molecular binding energies with much the same effect.

Discounts do not stack.

If you have an idea for an artefact of your own, price it by how it fits in with the examples.

50: Wealth – Not merely comfortable in your station, you are quite well arrayed with the finer things. Whether this is from your merchant holdings, your mostly symbolic but well rewarded stewardship of one of the important structures of Heaven, or just the bag of gold at your hip – you have enough capital to smooth over some eccentric purchases and a somewhat flamboyant lifestyle.

50: Opulent Warehouse – Do the bare walls and drab concrete styling of your cosmic warehouse offend thine eyes? Did you wish for a shaded bower, gilded conservatory or tawdry bordello? While the total size and features will not be changed, the cosmetic structure and layout is yours to realign – as long as it is opulent. Change your bare metal shelving into a dozen cozy rooms, filled with leather-bound books and the smell of rich mahogany. Make your Portal appear edged with basalt and gold, and Forcefield into an invincible iron gate that parts only for you. Once set, you may change the appearance once per Jump.

100: Worthy Weapon – It does not cast lightning or sing sweetly, it has no great powers of its own. But it is sharp and balanced, near-indestructible and perfectly fitted to your hands. It is a weapon that suits a legendary warrior, who is not defined by the arms that he wields but by the skill with which he wields them. If you possess an Attribute, you may channel it through this weapon – making it truly an extension of yourself.

200: Bright Spear - One and one-half span of silver is this spear, attuned to your brainwaves and taking flight at your will. It strikes faster than any arrow, and vibrates through any shield - shaking clean of gore before its return to your hand. It may also move to intercept arrows and blows, as well as carry you aloft at speeds to outpace the finest horse.

200: The Electrosword – Woe betide whoever cross swords with you and become the path for the lightning contained within this tarnished silver blade, which can extend from a hand-width shortsword into a finger-wide four metre scythe. Should you so desire, the fluid metal of the blade may flicker out as a long lash – harmless by itself, but carrying a deadly current.

200: Fountain Shield – A buckler, made of overlapping orichalcum wings that may expand to a two meter span. Proof against most hand-held kinetic weapons and energy discharges, it has a sophisticated target-acquisition system that sends frozen darts and boiling clouds of cyanide and dimethyl sulfoxide at those who dare raise arms against you – with a gallon of storage at the small of the back.

300: Gehenna Gun – A handgun of demoniac aspect, which clamps around your arm for stability and requires you to wear five palm-sized vibration-dampening units around their body. It operates by fibrillating its target to pieces, creating dangerous resonances across a broad spectrum – using its laser targeting to determine object composition and structural weaknesses. Whilst it does not fire swiftly, against most mortals, it reduces them to so much tender meat and softened bone – their connective tissues completely degraded. Against most tanks, it buckles and shears armour and electronics 'till it screeches to a broken halt. Against most Gods, it will disorient and nauseate instantly, and if they are not swift will kill them in seconds.

300: Bow of Rudra – This recurve longbow, of a grey metal that scatters the light, uses internal gears and sensors that adapt each shot to the environment, maximising its potential range and power. With a draw weight measured in tons, it may send a heat-tracking arrow whistling over a mountain to pierce the heart of your target. Comes with a variety of warheads - armour piercing, incendiary, metallic explosive and heart-seeking.

300: Screaming Prayer-Wheel – The skull-tipped rod of Kali, which spins and screams terror into the stoutest hearts. Its cry flays at the soul, weakening and dismaying all who hear it. The strongest flinch away, and the weakest die outright – unfit to bear witness to your glory.

300: Iron-Flesh Bath – Bestowed by Kali upon her holy assassins, though you may not number amongst them, you have been dipped carefully within a chemical bath that has rendered portions of your skin number but harder than iron. As much of the body may be treated as you prefer, but the numbness is permanent and as such most only treat their chest, back, forearms and neck. You have been entrusted with the secret of its chemical composition, and may choose if you begin the jump in her service.

500: Red Robe of Death – Who would make a spear that could slay him? Not Death. The subtlest of his great creations, the red robes are proof against Fire and Glow, Vibroblade and Attribute. It would be a legendary deed in itself to even mar their regenerative scalar-fibre bundles, and the integrated inertial bleed reduces even the mightiest blows to a gentle rustle of fabric.

500: Thunder Chariot – A mighty steel aircraft, with the shape of a warhammer, propelled by two great jet engines that leave streaks of fire across the sky. Capable of hypersonic speed and with a flight ceiling as high as possible for an air-breathing craft, it has powerful weapons capable of

reducing an army to scattered pieces. It carries twenty and is protected by superalloy plating and force-screen that can for a time resist the fury of the greatest Weapons of the Gods.

500: Wand of the Universal Fire - The Universal Fire strikes and reduces to ashes. This is of two parts - the partial protective bodysuit with powerful optical enhancement, capable of counting the hairs on the back of a fly from ten miles away, that covers head and arm and bears the generator as a smooth hump at the top of the back, and the Wand itself. All constructed of a white-silver plastic that resists these greatest flames - for a time.

With the Wand in hand, one may wield as a scalpel or fury - severing single hairs, rendering buildings or mountaintops as molten slag, or sending a pure beam up to scar the Moons, as the God of Fire, Agni did upon receiving this most worthy tool.

500: Trident of Destruction - where the Wand wields fire, the Trident wields the unmaking of things. As potent, but with a different deadliness, the power of Shiva is the power of chaos. His is the force which separates atom from atom, breaking down the forms of all things upon which he turns it. The effect is extremely precise, and may target the entirety of a thing, or but the structures of its mind, specific elements or other such qualities as offend you. In its duty as a trident, it is near unbreakable and viciously sharp – but it has never been used as such.

800: The City of Heaven - Praise this city, captured in its entirety by the eye of Vishnu the Preserver as he beheld the mountains upon which it would come to rest from the back of the Garuda Bird. With mighty force-dome that sheds all assault as it sheds rain, perfect climate and lovely sweep of street and structure. Fountains and parks where perfumes and song linger, shady bowers where poets recite, grand houses of art and wisdom.

It was said by Yama, Death-god: *"If everyone in it were to die at this moment, it would still be perfect ten thousand years from now. The flowers would still bloom and the music would play and the fountains would ripple the length of the spectrum. Warm meals would still be laid within the garden pavilions. The City itself is immortal."*

Unto you is granted the means to make Heaven blossom forth in whichever world you may tread. An airy disc of ivory, ten metres wide, lighter than the air but moving only with your touch. It has many rituals that might make it flower, but you know firstly of these two:

Apotheosis: When placed at the spiritual centre of a city and praised by its inhabitants, the airy disc issues forth a great transformation that uplifts every aspect of its surroundings to the splendours of the mighty. Food and music in abundance for all, disease and poverty banished like shadows by the dawn.

Olympus: Render a mountaintop flat and plant the disc. From it will blossom the Celestial City in all its glories. But no inhabitants will it bring – the streets are empty and there is no one to hear the delicate chimes of silver and gold. You have the right to choose those who might become the new Gods of new worlds… regardless of your wisdom.

Drawbacks:

+100: Unique Neurology – While this confers upon you immunity to the psychic probes of the Masters, this also renders your *atman* incapable of transferral to, or possession of, another form. You may not reincarnate into another body, nor may you take Quickened Fires or change your karmic rank.

+100: Deformed – some persistent defect follows all of your incarnations. If a God or Demigod, this is a consequence of your Aspect. Kubera the Fat is such a god, of mighty power, but given to lose his godly physique within months. You might be a mighty god or powerful lord, but they will still call you "Hunchback".

+200: Amnesia – You forget your past and the origins of your powers. Where they are in line with any abilities you bought this jump, you have some idea of their existence. All your companions are similarly affected, and accessing the Warehouse could be tricky.

+200: Kali Ma – Kali, Goddess of Destruction knows your true nature and is delighted. She craves war and bloody fire, and with this drawback she is both enamoured with drawing you out as enemy of all mankind and empowered. Her screaming prayer-wheel sickens and stuns through any shield, her minions are swift and fast enough to catch your sword and her allies are similarly strengthened so long as they oppose you – and for each that you might slay her own powers grow. Should she be killed, her *atman* will flee to a remote reincarnation facility and she will spring forth again, regaining her powers almost immediately.

+200: Epilepsy – However you did it, you angered one of the Masters of Karma, who arranged for your current body to have a dangerous neurological defect. Inconsistently and without warning, when exposed to strong stimuli – be it flashing lights, battle-lust or rousing poetry – you may suffer from uncontrollable and extremely taxing fits.

+300: Mandate of Heaven – All Heaven's spears are raised against you, all Heaven's steeds are girded for war, all Heaven's Aspects are raised in defiance and all Heaven's Attributes readied for the hunt. Every God and Goddess in Heaven knows your location, approximate powers and how their own might best hurt you. They are all convinced that your defeat is the only way for mankind to survive – you are a new and most terrible demon-king for them to defeat.

+300: Demon-Haunted – Your body is not your own. A mighty Rakasha, near-equal to Taraka, has claimed it for his own. You are possessed by a demon with no conscience or morals, nor even the capacity to understand them. When not torturing your mind, he may let you indulge as he does – feasting on human flesh, using your own powers to amuse himself with the suffering of others, and other horrors that only the immortal Rakasha could invent. Perhaps your companions can save you. Perhaps the Binder will exorcise your demon. Or, perhaps you will sit on a throne of living skulls at the end of your time here, feeling the demon's pleasure at your pain.

On the plus side, after ten years, the demon will have begun to feel a strange reluctance about certain deeds. Boredom? Fear? The possessor is still a part of the possessed, and in claiming your body, long exposure to your mind may have stained its pure soul with the rudiments of guilt and mercy. It might even be possible to persuade it to release you, or join you as a Companion - but try to think little of what, if any, of the demon may have bled into you…

+600: The Star of India – Millennia ago, the colonists of the Star arrived at this verdant world to make a new home. Only, it was already inhabited. Their survival was a fight for every inch, with sword and gun, with strange and potent mutations, against creatures of nuclear fire and mercurial form, against natural disasters wielded by hateful minds that dwelt in the blackest dark of the oceans…

You are one of these colonists, awakening in your cramped quarters one week before planetfall. All your powers are sealed for the first year, but those from this jump exist as potential and may be practiced and earned – restoring to their normal starting level by the end of first five years at the latest. After five years your other powers begin to return. If you are mighty, it is likely you will become the spear-tip of the colony – expected to defeat the greatest of foes.

Humanity must establish a place for themselves on this world, until they do so the jump will not end for you. If they are wiped out, or stable civilisation is rendered impossible, you have failed.

Many perks are changed by this, though their fundamentals remain the same. Yama has not yet been born, but the Chief Scientist of the colony may be a worthy replacement. Any artefacts you buy are not with you at the start – they represent promising technological leads that the colonists may pursue to give them an edge against the natives, and will need construction and testing before their use is safe. Expect to wait at least one year for every 100 CP of cost, before discounts before their prototypes are ready.

"Godhood is more than a name. It is a condition of being. One does not achieve it merely by being immortal, for even the lowliest laborer in the fields may achieve continuity of existence. Is it then the conditioning of an Aspect? No. Any competent hypnotist can play games with the self-image. Is it the raising up of an Attribute? Of course not. I can design machines more powerful and more accurate than any faculty a man may cultivate. Being a god is the quality of being able to be yourself to such an extent that your passions correspond with the forces of the universe, so that those who look upon you know this without hearing your name spoken. Some ancient poet said that the world is full of echoes and correspondences. Another wrote a long poem of an inferno, wherein each man suffered a torture which coincided in nature with those forces which had ruled his life. Being a god is being able to recognize within one's self these things that are important, and then to strike the single note that brings them into alignment with everything else that exists. Then, beyond morals or logic or esthetics, one is wind or fire, the sea, the mountains, rain, the sun or the stars, the flight of an arrow, the end of a day, the clasp of love. One rules through one's ruling passions. Those who look upon gods then say, without even knowing their names, 'He is Fire. She is Dance. He is Destruction. She is Love.' So, to reply to your statement, they do not call themselves gods. Everyone else does, though, everyone who beholds them."

- *Yama, God of Death*