

PENUMBRA

"There are things I need of you. Things you may not understand, and may not wish to do, but please, do not make the same mistake I did.

My father, Howard, deserted me before I was born. I could claim the loss of my mother, and the letter I received after her funeral, blinded me to what I had to do. It would be a lie:

Human nature sealed my downfall.

My name is Phillip. If we are lucky, then by the time you receive this, I will be dead.

If fate frowns, we all perish."

The young physicist followed his father's directions to an inhospitable area of northern Greenland, where his only escape from the cold was a hatch leading to the abandoned North-Western iron mine.

Phillip delves deeper into the mines, forced to fight off local fauna mutated by some unknown force. Phillip's only companionship is a madman who miraculously survived alone in these mines for decades. He introduces himself as "Red". He is erratic, temperamental, and his flowery lexicon can make it difficult to parse what little sense he does make, but he is Phillip's best chance at survival.

Phillip makes it through the mines, only to discover it was all a front for an underground laboratory, performing research at the behest of a mysterious and stratified group known as the Archaic. They appear to have been researching a powerful hive-mind entity known as the Tuurngait. As evidenced by the reanimated and heavily mutated corpses stalking the halls, the experiment ended in disaster.

After coming face to face with the Tuurngait hivemind, Phillip is permitted to send the message quoted above to a trusted ally. Of course, this is how events will proceed without your involvement. Somehow or another, you find yourself within the Shelter Research Station Greenland at the time of Phillip's arrival. You receive 1000 Finis Specialis to help you survive.

- Origins -

Choose age and gender freely.

//Visitor: -0FS

Like Phillip Buchanon, you were lured to Shelter Research Station Greenland under mysterious circumstances. You have no direct affiliation to the Archaic or the Tuurngait, at most you have an estranged blood familial relationship with one of the victims of the outbreak. You'll have to get your bearings on the situation on your own, but for better or worse, nobody inside or outside the station is aware of your presence, making you a wildcard. Can be taken as a Drop-In option.

//Survivor: -0FS

Like our good friend Red, you were stranded down in these mines for years, possibly over a decade. Against all odds you managed to [or more likely were forced] to survive in this environment. You may have a screw or twenty loose, missing, or damaged beyond repair, but experience is a fruit that takes its time to rot beyond safe consumption. You have a better grasp of this place than perhaps the Archaic themselves, and only a king among fools would expel your words from their mind.

//Archaic: -0FS

You were sent here under simple but cruel conditions. Try and find anything that could interest the Archaic enough to justify the cost of bringing you back home safely or stay down there and freeze to death. Even if you get out on your own, expect the Archaic to hunt you down if you show any signs of infection. Still, if you can manage to jump through all those hoops, expect a promotion that will let you live in luxury under one of the most powerful secret organizations on Earth.

//Embraced: -100FS

You're no monkey. You are the creation of a higher power, a higher intelligence: the Tuurngait. However... something's wrong. You have your own mind, your own thoughts. You are an independent Tuurngait zombie. You are far tougher than you look, but the Tuurngait is not happy with your existence, so you must take "The Diseased Ones", though you may still receive FS for it.

Alternatively, you are the byproduct of a failed attempt to pull another human into the hivemind. You exist as a voice in their head. Your host is a normal human, and you will die if they die, but their feeble mind hides you from the rest of the Tuurngait. As long as you stay within your host, the Tuurngait will be unable to directly influence you. See Notes for more details.

- General Perks -

Finis Specialis are artifacts of extraterrestrial origin. They serve no practical purpose, but bear collector's value amongst the lower caste of the Archaic. You will not retain any left unspent.

// Call and Response: -0FS or -200FS

The key to negotiating with the Tuurngait is gaining the psychic power to reach out to them in the first place. You can't bend spoons or see through walls. Instead, you are able to make telepathic contact with beings who are already psychically inclined from miles away. Unfortunately, this doesn't work on those without any psychic ability of their own. In addition, you can listen in on any telepathic communication occurring around you, as if they were just saying everything out loud.

If both parties agree, you can initiate a deeper connection with these psychic entities, letting you directly connect your minds. While this allows for more intimate communication, it leaves both of you open to psychic assimilation or contamination, if the other party is capable of such a thing.

This can be obtained for free in-setting, but doing so requires that you allow yourself to be partially infected by the Tuurngait hivemind. Paying provides no such risks and is granted immediately.

// Mental Gymnastics: -0FS for this jump or -400FS to keep

An odd trait of the Tuurngait infection is that the initial assimilation often manifests in the victim's mind as a kind of nightmarish obstacle course. You must think fast to run, crawl, and climb away from a rapidly approaching corruption. If the corruption catches you, the Tuurngait has succeeded in assimilating you. If you get away, then you retain your individuality.

Going forward, you find that you can manifest any attempts to psychically possess, contaminate, infiltrate, or assimilate your mind will manifest as a similar obstacle course or sequence of puzzles. The difficulty of the challenges is proportional to the potency of the attack itself, but they will never be outright impossible. Sufficiently powerful psychic attacks may apply a time limit to complete the challenge. Your full athletic abilities are translated into these trials, but your external supernatural powers are not. Also, you are immobile in the real world during these challenges.

Successfully overcoming a psychic attack in this way will make you significantly more resistant to whoever or whatever psychically assaulted you. Even trying to invade your mind a second time after failing once is practically impossible for all but the strongest psychic entities.

You may keep this for free if you also took "A Party Without a Gift".

- Visitor Perks -

First perk free and others 50% off for Visitor origin.

//Physicist: -100FS

Choose two scientific subjects, such as physics, chemistry, biology, etc. Your knowledge on these topics is about on-par with a college professor of the subject. You can also manifest this expertise in more practical ways, such as physics giving you a better intuitive grasp of trajectory, or biology allowing you to perform emergency surgery on yourself, assuming you had the right tools.

//Light Footed: -200FS

If you want to survive here, you need to be as hard to hear as your foes are to see. You are naturally stealthy and have a good sixth sense for when danger is present, even if you aren't sure what the danger is. You are so light on your feet that you can even pull the standard movie cliché of crawling through ventilation ducts without worrying about them collapsing under your weight.

//Leaking Fluids: -300FS

Your metabolism is something to be envied. You are able to recover from minor injuries or elemental exposure at inhuman speeds. Beneficial drugs also take effect faster than should be possible. You'd feel the effects of an adrenaline shot the instant you inject it. You'll still need medical treatment for anything you couldn't normally heal on your own, and overdosing is still a risk, so be careful.

//Lemons Into Lemonade: -400FS

Whenever you successfully fend off an attempt to invade or corrupt your mind or body, you find a small sliver of the invading force will be left behind within you, often in a form you can use to your advantage. Perhaps the mind reader fails to spy on your memories and gives you a front-row seat to his own instead. Perhaps that hive mind who failed to assimilate you forgot to close your telepathic link they use to communicate with each other, letting you listen in on them, and so on.

//They Won't Let Me Die: -600FS

Paranormal or alien beings with some kind of presence in or influence over your mind or body will find themselves unable or unwilling to take full advantage of it to instantly remove you from the equation. The godlike hivemind will try and mentally exhaust you through a series of illusionary puzzles instead of frying your brain on the spot, just as the parasite in your body might cause you immense pain and suffering but refuses to simply stop your heart and be done with it. See Notes.

- Survivor Perks -

First perk free and others 50% off for Survivor origin.

// Such Good Friends: -100FS

In extreme situations, people become emotionally attached to you unnaturally fast, as long as you make an attempt to help them. Being there for someone during a life-or-death situation would earn you an eternal place in their mind as one of the best friends they ever had. Even if you only knew each other for a few hours, most of which was you screaming nonsense at them over the radio.

// Acquired Taste: -200FS

A picky eater will not last long down here. It's a good thing your digestive and immune systems were unnaturally hardy from the start. You could survive off of rats for years before facing any adverse health effects. Even poisonous creatures will take far longer than normal to do any real harm. This also makes it much easier for you to learn to enjoy the taste of such unsanitary delicacies.

// Labyrinth Of The Mind: -300FS

The compass within your skull will serve you better than any found in your pocket. With a few weeks to explore any location smaller than a football stadium, you'd know every room, shortcut, point of interest, and how sound bounces off the walls by heart. If guiding someone through such a location, you can determine their exact location based solely on ambient sound heard through the radio.

// Backed Up By Time: -400FS

How presumptuous to assume that sanity and wisdom are mutually exclusive. No matter how far your mind falls to madness, it has a negligible impact on your ability to utilize your wisdom or intelligence. The loss of sanity actually makes you more resistant to external forces which seek to corrupt or subsume your mind. A hivemind that can swallow up humanity's brightest in an instant will be at a loss for how a strange rat-eating miner has managed to fend them off for years.

// I Have Been Bad: -600FS

Like Red, any "rules" applied to you by alien or paranormal forces are laughably easy to find loopholes in. If these rules are enforced by an intelligent entity, they'll be oddly ineffective in stopping you from breaking these rules indirectly. Even the parasite in your brain forbids suicide, can luring someone to your location, locking yourself inside a furnace, and putting them in a situation where they can't get the key they need without burning you to ashes really be called "suicide"?

- Archaic Perks -

First perk free and others 50% off for Archaic origin.

//Temporary: -100FS

All those welcomed into the Archaic are expected to disappear off the face of the Earth, and you know how to do just that. You can't erase your past, but you know how to vanish from society without leaving a trail that any normal person, organization, or government could hope to follow. This is all for naught if you later decide to re-enter or interact with society again of your own volition.

//Lower Caste: -200FS

You'll need the full extent of your skills if you want to survive. In addition to a PhD in a subject of your choosing, your effectiveness in any scientific pursuits increases the more dire the circumstances are. A chemist may discover the cure to the zombie virus once they're the last survivor, or an army engineer may manage to get an old tank running once enemy soldiers are at their front door, etc.

//Chief Staff: -300FS

You are important, and everyone can feel it. Your superiors are abnormally tolerant of you, and often recommend you first for promotions or opportunities. Your underlings obey your orders, even once official rankings have lost all meaning. Best of all, this continues to be the case even if you show a complete lack of competence, as long as those above you aren't desperate for a scapegoat.

//Elevated Caste: -400FS

It's somewhat surprising that the Archaic has managed to accumulate so much power when their objective is something as broad and esoteric as the study of xenology. Similarly, you can arrange and manage all the backroom deals it takes to establish a secret organization from scratch. Even if it's unclear how your organization is remotely useful, you'll rarely find yourself lacking prospective members or investors. Building up your organization to the level of the Archaic will take time.

//Central Caste: -600FS

You are privy to the production process of the chemical compound that manipulates DNA to greatly increase a human's physical or mental abilities. With some tweaking, you may even remove the side-effects of transforming them into violent, photophobic monsters. In general, you have acquired the Archaic's talent for transforming your research into paranormal or extraterrestrial phenomena into usable technology. Although, I make no promises that any of it will be safe or functional.

- Embraced Perks -

First perk free and others 50% off for Embraced origin.

//You Silly Billy: -100FS

You know better than most the failings of individuality. By observing someone over an extended period, you can figure out what makes them tick. Whether that be knowing the best taunts to get under their skin, the best trial to judge someone's character, the best word choice to make someone empathize with you, and so on. Your psychological warfare is effective, but far from infallible.

//Against The Rules: -200FS

The Tuirngait require their hosts to continue living if they wish to spread. Like them, you are able to enforce an unbreakable rule on someone that makes it fundamentally impossible for them to commit suicide, no matter how much they want to. You can only enforce this rule on one person at a time, and requires a deep mental connection, whether that link be emotional or outright psychic.

//Are We Truly A We?: -300FS

The Tuirngait do not take kindly to individuality, but you always manage to slip through the cracks. As long as you don't draw attention to yourself, your psychic presence is so slight that even a hivemind with constant access to your consciousness may not notice your free will. If you have the means to do so, taking up residence in another being mind further camouflages your psychic presence.

//You See What I Want You To: -400FS

To the Tuirngait, a brain is like a house that can be reorganized at their leisure. In addition to possessing hyperphantasia, you have an absurd level of control over your own brain. You can view, rearrange, and dispose of memories like books on a shelf, distort your perception with illusions, or even create complex lifelike worlds within your mind. This power only applies to your own mind, but you can extend it to others if you have the means to enter their minds, or to pull them into yours.

//What A Great Body: -600FS

Whenever you experience something that should kill you, there's a brief grace period where you can cheat death by hopping to a new one. They must be unconscious, comatose, or dead but relatively intact, and have some form of psychic link or synergy with you. Anything too decomposed, or missing vital organs are too far gone to resuscitate. As long as you have a body within a few meters that meets all these criteria, there's no limit to how many times you can do this. See Notes.

- Equipment -

You may discount any two items 50% off. Discounted 50FS items are free instead.

// Adequate Preparations: -0FS or -50FS

I assume you didn't just wander into the middle of Southern Greenland without the bare essentials. You arrive with a small flashlight, a backpack, and warm clothes. The clothes will keep you relatively comfortable within the complex, but just a few too many seconds outside could prove fatal. You also made sure to pack a notebook and a pencil that never seems to need sharpening.

For an extra 50FS, this notebook has an odd property. Whenever you come across something that you would find noteworthy, you hear a writing sound in the back of your head and the next time you check the notebook the notes are already there. They're written in your handwriting, and are based on information you would find relevant, but you know you never stopped to write them.

// Lighter: -50FS

A small lighter. You'll need this if you don't know how to start a fire on your own. Somehow never runs out of fuel, despite the actual quantity within being no greater than any other zippo. Also, this lighter isn't indestructible, so be careful with this, and try not to lose it.

// Field Kit: -50FS

A case of medical tools. Mainly for stabilizing wounds, but if things become truly dire, you have all the tools you need to theoretically perform an emergency amputation on yourself. The contents of the case are oddly resistant to contamination and restock themselves weekly [daily post-jump].

// Big Book of Explosives: -100FS

This book is full of recipes for making a variety of different explosives from relatively common chemicals or elements. It was written around 1923, but you'd be surprised how many problems can be solved with TNT. Assumes the reader has the bare minimum knowledge of the periodic table.

// Pickaxe: -100FS

Even if you aren't interested in digging up iron, this will give you the means to defend yourself. The creatures here are both tough and fast. They'll easily dodge such a slow attack if they see it coming, and even if they don't, it'll take multiple direct hits to put them down for good.

//Fortress Walls: -200FS

Perhaps a tad dramatic of a title, but who can blame you for feeling empowered? You have a large assortment of fortifications. While this includes simple defenses like wood or barbed wire, there are a few more elaborate toys, like electric fences or tripwire explosives. These aren't infinite, nor will they restock themselves until after this jump. What you see is what you get.

//Ashes To Ashes: -200FS

A massive industrial furnace located in a single location of your choosing each jump. This never seems to run out of fuel. This will help you avoid freezing to death. With some clever misdirection, you may be able to lure a monster into here to burn alive. While the furnace can reduce a human being to ash in seconds, items you would find important are abnormally resistant to the flames.

//Metal Monster: -300FS

This mining vehicle is the size of a small house and can dig through solid stone while barely slowing down. Once per jump, you can select any space with just enough space to fit the entire machine. As soon as you leave the area and return, the machine will inexplicably be there, in the perfect position to mow down whatever obstacle you want to disappear. There's just one small problem, the gas tank is both massive and empty. Maybe Red will know where you can find some go-go juice.

//The Place Where Things Are Kept: -300FS

Somewhere in the mines, you'll find a storage room that Red somehow overlooked all these years. It contains several flares, glowsticks, painkillers, batteries, beef jerky, some miscellaneous hand tools, and even a few tanks of gasoline. After this world, you may choose whether this room is installed in your Warehouse and gains the ability to restock itself daily or choose to manifest in a location of your choosing in future jumps, acquiring a finite inventory appropriate to wherever you placed it.

- Drawbacks -

No Drawback cap.

//The Holes In Your Mind: +0FS

Despite the potentially apocalyptic ramifications, the events in Greenland are fairly self-contained incidents, but that doesn't mean there aren't similar incidents occurring elsewhere. You may choose whether other Penumbra fan games like Necrologue or Twilight of the Archaic are canon to this Jump. You can even make the entire Amnesia franchise canon to this world.

//A Pox On Both Your Brain Cells: +100FS

Perhaps it's a good thing that you're mostly alone here. What few intelligent beings you interact with are uncharacteristically short-tempered around you. They'll snap at you for the smallest perceived insult. Even if you don't say anything that could be interpreted in such a way, they'll just assume some malicious intent behind your silence. Cooperation is possible only with extensive patience.

//The Scientist Mixing Potions: +100FS

Whether due to psychic influence or some kind of cranial trauma, the entire periodic table has been deleted from your brain. No matter how deep your mastery of other disciplines is, your grasp of chemical properties is below even that of a kindergartner. Even if a recipe is spelled out to you with exact measurements, you can't seem to hold it in your memory for more than a minute.

//Beginning, Middle, and End of the Tunnel: +100FS

Spending so much time underground has taken its toll on your mind and body. Anything brighter than a glow stick will cause you significant distress. Stepping into direct sunlight will make you feel like your skin is burning and your head is about to split open. Fully acclimating back to the light will take weeks, but 48 hours without sunlight will undo all that progress.

//Melt In Your Mouth Mousey Morsels: +100FS

In a moment of necessity, you made a meal of one of the local faunae. Whether a dog, a rat, a giant spider, or even a human carcass. To make matters worse, you loved it. You are addicted to the taste of this particular creature, like an alcoholic to drink. Even if you'll be fine only treating yourself every now and then, over-indulging in this will take its toll on your health, slowly poisoning you.

//Some Things Remain Shrouded: +200FS

Possibly one of the worst conditions to have in the middle of an “abandoned” mineshaft in the middle of nowhere. You suffer from severe nyctophobia, in other words, fear of the dark. In many cases, the darkness will be the only safe space from the creatures wandering these caves, but spending too long without a light source will take its toll on your sanity, and potentially trigger a panic attack. At the very least, the laboratory is better lit than the mines above it, but that isn’t saying all that much.

//May They Rest In Pieces: +200FS

You’ve had your fill of these caverns, and this life. Much like Red, Thanatos has taken up residence in the back of your mind. Suicidal ideation is your default state. Your id desperately craves death, luckily you retain full control over your ego and superego. In addition, some kind of subconscious lock makes it physically impossible for you to personally take your own life. Should you ever lose control over this death drive, it will need to convince someone else to finish the job.

//The Reaper Lives Here: +200FS

The Tuurngait aren’t usually this persistent, but I suppose you’re an unusual variable in your own right. When you fall asleep, there is about a 30% chance of you finding yourself in a kind of psychic obstacle course filled with nightmarish imagery and simple puzzles. They are actually fairly easy once you get used to them, but should you get careless and allow the shadow pursuing you to catch up, you will likely never awake. Even if you do rise, your mind will no longer be your own.

//Man Meat Is So Bland: +200FS

Dear lord! When was the last time you showered? You absolutely reek of pungent meat. Unless you go to great lengths to conceal this scent, animals will be able to smell you from rooms away. Luckily, it would seem that more intelligent species (even those assimilated into the Tuurngait) lack the developed olfactory organs to differentiate this scent from the rot and viscera all around you, so they won’t be any more aware of your presence unless they’re already a foot or two away.

//Catty Curiosity: +200FS

Working for a secret society is a lot less fun than you’d expect. Somehow or another, you’ll be accompanied by an agent of the Archaic solely tasked to report on how you handle yourself in this hazardous environment. They are condescending, stubborn, and will refuse to provide even the most basic assistance. Should they die, it will be as if you died, and if you live but leave them particularly disappointed, they will use their unflattering report of you to mark you as an enemy of the Archaic.

//Squashier Than Most: +300FS

You share two major traits with our lovable Red. You both have a deep appreciation for classical philosophy, and you're both completely insane. There's some method to your madness, and your skills and overall intelligence are surprisingly intact, but your thought process is incomprehensible, making it difficult to actually apply them. You have bizarre poetic speech patterns that make communication with other humans almost impossible, and hallucinations aren't uncommon.

//There Is No Time To Explain!: +300FS

Phillip made his way into the Greenland base around the start of this jump, but something about him is... off. He's constantly jumping, can see in the dark, has no fear response, can use objects to clip through walls, and always knows exactly where to go. Phillip has been replaced with a speedrunner, one determined to kill you. He can't actually respawn, but his pseudo-precognition makes it no less difficult to put him down. You are unable to reproduce any of his techniques.

//Truth Is Relative: +300FS

You have a roommate in your mind. Perhaps a figment of your own madness, or a remnant of the Tuirngait's failed attempt to assimilate you. They are sarcastic, and although they seek to keep you alive for their own sake, they truly loathe you with every neuron composing their being. They can't directly control you, but their unrestricted access to your mind allows them to read and delete your memories or distort your perception with complex hallucinations of their own design. See Notes.

//The Diseased Ones: +300FS

As expected from an existence like you, it did not take the Tuirngait long to become aware of your existence, and they did not like what they saw. The Tuirngait will be far more proactive and strategic in seeking your end. In addition, while the Tuirngait intelligence would ordinarily be unexpectedly reasonable when directly confronted, you will experience no such courtesy. They are wholly unwilling to peacefully negotiate or bargain with you. Your death is the only outcome that will satisfy them.

//A Party Without A Gift: +600FS

The Tuirngait aren't the only powerful extraterrestrials in town, but they're now the most powerful by far. By taking this, you seal away all your outside powers. The only advantage you now hold over every other human now is your wisdom and wealth of experience.

- The End -

Message Sent.

// Go Home -- To the Surface

'Will you do this for me?' it asked, and I said that I would. I promised the hive that I would contact someone I could trust, that I would have them destroy all evidence of this place, just as my father had promised himself. I, however, will not make the same mistakes my father made - you now understand the truth of the events that lead me here, and the immeasurable importance of my words. Armed with this knowledge, you must have the strength to do that which I could not.

// Stay Here -- Safe Haven

The Tuurngait was quite correct - we humans are a dangerous, headless heard, but intelligent individuals. The members of this facility sought to reveal and control the Tuurngait, and the Tuurngait turned to me for salvation. The hive ran its tests on me - and I jumped through its hoops like the monkey it took me for. But I am no monkey. The Tuurngait was right - I am entirely unlike it: I had more in common with Clarence.

// Move On -- Digging Deeper

I promised I would send this email to you. I promised I would ask that you keep all humans from this place - for the sake of the Tuurngait, and for the human race. I lied.

If we are lucky, then by the time you read this, I will be dead.

If fate frowns, we all perish.

The North-Western Mine is located at reference N81.8914, W58.3154.

Kill them.

Kill them all.

- Notes -

Jump by Gene.

If you choose to be a parasitic Tuurngait, then post-jump this becomes an altform. You can't exist outside of another being's mind, nor can you bodyhop without some kind of psychic hivemind or network to exploit, so keep that in mind. If you took "A Party Without A Gift", that doesn't change the fact that you are a purely psychic entity, so you may not be able to manifest the full range of your non-psychic abilities while within your host. But there's no flat restriction on just hopping out of their head, now that you have access to your forms from other jumps, so it's a moot point.

"They Won't Let Me Die" doesn't weaken such forces in general. It just prevents enemies from using their influence over your mind or body as an instant "I win" option. It also doesn't prevent fates that might eventually kill you, as long as they involve some means for you to reasonably fight back.

"What A Great Body" only works on beings who would possess at least human-level intelligence in peak condition. Anything dumber wouldn't be able to contain you.

You get to keep the benefits of "Call and Response" post-jump if you obtained it in-jump. "Truth is Relative" will grant the benefits immediately, otherwise it likely wouldn't manifest until around when you enter the laboratory at the bottom of the mines.

If you "cure" the parasite from "Truth is Relative", you'll only have a couple days of silence before they just pop back into your head with no explanation. Hopefully you will have escaped the research base by the time they wake back up to harass you again. If you want, you can let them stay in your head post-jump. They don't take up a companion slot but cannot be imported. In this case, you have full awareness of any alterations they attempt to make to your mind and can roll back or restrict any changes you don't want. You can also just forcibly put them to sleep for as long as you want.