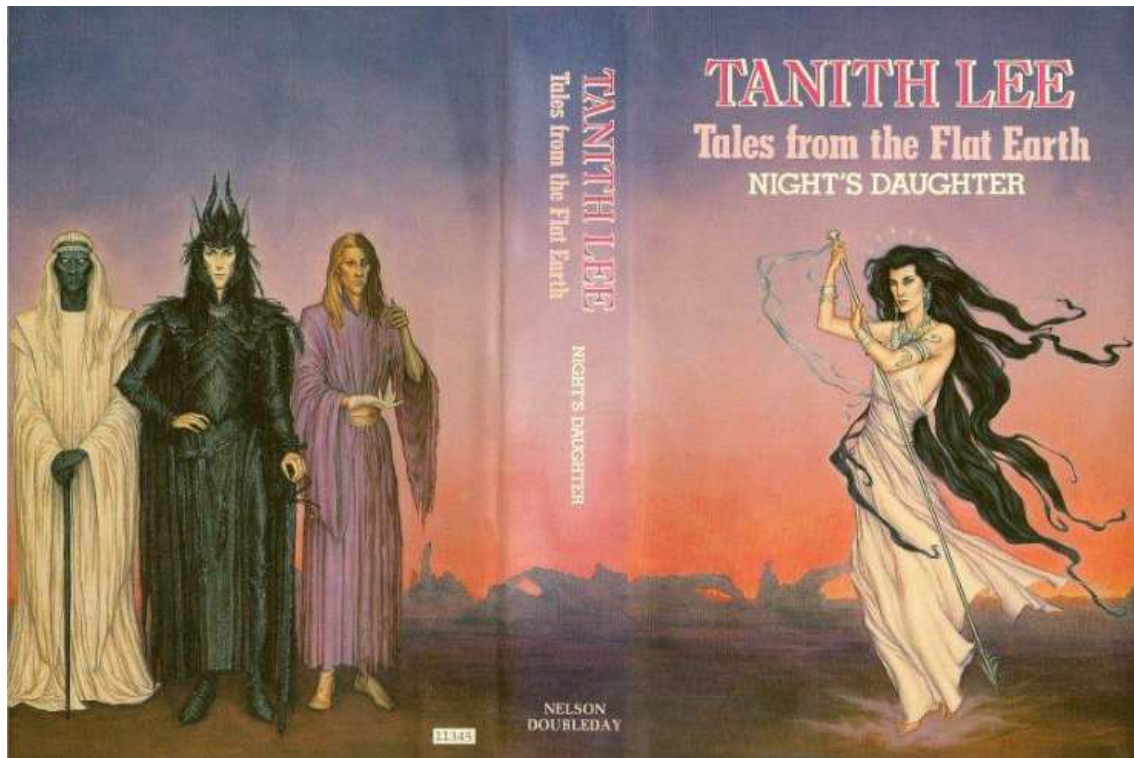




There is a world, farther away than the farthest star and nearer than your most lucid dreams. Where miracles can fall from the tears of lovers, and evil spirits seep from the corpses of the furious dead. Where love can save or damn men, and women can be queens, beggars, killers and saints across their many lives.

It is called the Flat Earth, by those who dwell on it.

Here there are deserts, and jungles, and forests, but never poles. Here the sun rises in the east from the Ocean of Chaos that froths at the world's edges, and descends back in the west. Here, both sun and moon have kingdoms, and betimes the most ambitious of sorcerers strive to pluck them from the sky.

Here there be Lords of Darkness. Immortal concepts given flesh by human fear.

Azhrarn, Night's Master. The beautiful and cruel Prince of Demons.

Uhlume, Death's Master. The solemn and aloof Lord of Death.

Chuz, Delusion's Master. Who wanders freely, as whim takes him.

Kheshmet. The unyielding, inevitable king of destiny itself.

Each a shadow of dread cast over humanity. And each entranced by it, though none may ever truly touch mortality, like two stars in eternal orbit.

Take 1000 CP as you walk amidst immortals and mysteries.

Starting Date/Location

The lives of immortals are long beyond reckoning, civilisation rising and calamities falling upon the world like the changing of seasons even as they and they alone remain absolute. The tales of this series are epic moments in their lives, but great gulfs in time separate most of them.

Thus, it matters not which kingdom or land you are born into. Even mountains, eventually, are worn down by rivers. Even *magic* slowly ages and fades, if not well cared for. Only three realms of existence are truly unending:

Upperearth, the realm of the gods. A sterile, pristine place where the creators and despoilers of the world sit in immaculate stagnancy, contemplating their own self-decreed perfection and when to abandon their doomed creation. The roads and walls and roofs of the gods are little more than unfiltered radiance that blends with the untouchable sky, for which even the sun is a mere reflection of the gods' own glory. The Waters of Life overflow in abundance, but in cruel jest not one drop is worth anything to those that were immutable even before all Lords of Darkness but Azhrarn (who was always the Prince of all Demons) were born from mortal nightmares.

Underearth, the realm of demons. A place of twisting shadows, impossible plants, and surreal beasts. Three gates of agate, blue steel and black fire bar the way to it from the surface. It's capital is Druhim Vanashta, a metropolis built from glittering jewels and minerals that shines only from its' own light. Around its borders, the River of Sleep winds its' way around trees of silver wire and bone. And everywhere, the demons pass eternity by amusing themselves with mortalkind-whether by screwing sorcery into them, or hunting the souls of the mad and dying upon phantom steeds.

And **Innerearth**, where Uhlume brings the dead. Though it too is rich in gems, it is also devoid of colour, passion and all that makes life worth living. A desert bathed in perpetual grey twilight, where mortal ghosts serve Uhlume for a thousand years before they may leave to some even greater mystery to be reborn that Uhlume knows nothing of. His own capital is a monolith of glass, ebony and white bone. There is no music. There is no warmth. There is only Uhlume's own weariness at the duty that is his existence.

Choose instead the tale during which your journey begins, where you may show up near any significant location be it the House of the Blue Dog that the witch

Lylas plies her trade at, or Narasen's kingdom, or even Uhlume's lonely house in Innerearth itself.

Night's Master: It is what will be remembered as the early days of the world, though the Lords of Darkness have long since seen civilisation leave its infancy. The Prince of Demons falls in love with the lovely boy Sivesh, who he raises as both father and eventually lover. His failure to comprehend or appreciate Sivesh's yearning for the land of his birth results in the Prince tricking him to his death. Azhrarn dallies with music great enough to move even him with the truth of his shallow existence, a vengeful disfigured princess who becomes his lover as well as impossibly beautiful by his hand the most feared sorceress the world has ever known, and a rival in love he transforms into a beast while splitting the soul of his child. Driven mad by countless betrayals, the rival's spirit escapes his lifeless body as the spirit Hate and threatens to drive mankind to murder itself. Yet moved by both his lost love and music, Azhrarn sacrifices himself in sunlight so that the ashes might sear away Hate with his love-and is reborn in the Underearth.

Death's Master: A few generations later, the mighty queen Narasen is humiliated by a curse that barrens her kingdom along with her womb. She makes an ill-fated pact with Death through his witch Lylas to sleep with the dead youth who can break it, passing onto the afterlife with much wrath and regret. Her child, Simmu, is raised by demons and priests, and comes to yearn for the pious Zhirem: A son of a king and his concubine made immortal from immersion in primordial flame. Theirs is a destructive romance driven by Simmu's fear of death, Zhirem's self-hatred, and the unholy yearning each bears for the other. Simmu steals the water of immortality from the gods, charms a young maiden, and founds a city of wonderous immortals that stagnates at the height of its perfection-provoking Uhlume with the threat of his existence losing all meaning. Meanwhile, Zhirem steals the magic of the sea peoples-and renaming himself Zhirek. He becomes the most fearsome and alluring sorcerer in all the world, yet this brings him no joy. Eventually, Uhlume promises him a merciful end to his existence if he but brings death to Simmu's city. This he does with a demonstration and with rhetoric, along with waves to know down its walls, and tombs of coral to seal the immortals. In the end, he casts an utterly broken and terrified Simmu into the same primordial flame he once gained immortality from.

And so, with nothing left to live for, Zhirek consigns himself to petrification in guilt and loathing.

In light of all this, Uhlume eventually decides he doesn't like being Death much at all. Deciding to unceremoniously abandon his realm for the arms of a very enthusiastic handmaiden that lost faith in Simmu the moment his passion was snuffed out by ennui.

Delusion's Master: Centuries, perhaps even millennia after the dread Queen Naras has been known and feared as the dread ruler of the dead, and a stray brush with the sun's celestial energies enchants a girl called Dunizel with immaculate holiness. Azhrarn is drawn to seduce her, but in doing so comes to understand something he has never truly understood: Love. Alas, the attention of his fellow Lord of Darkness provokes Prince Chuz into rallying mortalkind against her. Their romance ends in bitterness from Azhrarn, Dunizel dying at the hands of mortalkind with no regrets, and the birth of their daughter Azhriaz.

Delirium's Mistress: A century or two after Dunizel's death, Azhriaz and Azhrarn languish in each other's company. For as a demon, Azhrarn cannot help but see her as his possession-a weapon to answer the outrage of humanity forgetting his sacrifice and believing it was the indifferent gods that saved them from Hate. And for her part, Azhriaz yearns to be loved rather than controlled. It is Prince Chuz who liberates her, at first in malice against his lord but quickly falling in true love upon sight of her, and it is Prince Chuz who breaks her heart a second time by consigning himself to his own madness in atonement for his sins against Dunizel at Azhrarn's behest.

So does Azhriaz throw herself into being her father's weapon, a cold but professional respect growing between them. A third of the world falls under her sorcerous might and learns to renounce the gods. She likewise learns to enjoy mortal cruelty and reverence, and nothing in the mortal world is beyond her grasp-save the affection of Dathanja, who is Zhirek reborn into a kindly penitent, which she yearns for without reciprocation. This at last provokes a fraction of their attention, manifest as three angels that destroy all she has wrought and makes her flee-first below the waves, where bereft of the ocean's magic she is taken hostage by the Sea People. Then, across the world to the edges of chaos, her mind shatters.

One angel duels Azhrarn, seems to prevail, and loses its will to act on the world. Bereft of purpose, it slumbers forever, still gripping its sword. Forever immobile on a platform high above the world yet far from Upperearth. Another is driven mad by contact with Chaos, and falls to the sea like a second sun, destroying the Sea People's cities before roaming beneath it without purpose. A third finds Azhriaz rechristened as Sovez, raised into kindness by Dathanja as father figure rather than lover, the two of them wandering the world as humble healers. Armed with newfound virtue and resolve, Sovez duels the angel first with force that can be seen from leagues away, then words. Until after several thunderous clashes, the angel does what its siblings cannot: Grow beyond its purpose, and return to Upperearth as a person, not a law. Sovez, enlightened to the endless cycle of grief, lust, ignorance, wrath, and compounding sorrow that all mortal souls are doomed to, resolves to go among them and redeem herself by bettering the world she once conquered. And perhaps Dathanja, parting from her with pride, finds a measure of solace over his hated, beloved and much-missed Simmu for tempting him from righteousness.

Thus, after many wanderings Azhriaz reunites joyfully with Chuz, only to announce she wishes to embark on a new journey: Mortality. And though grieving at first, such is Chuz's devotion that he vows to follow her through each and every incarnation.

Night's Sorceries: The events of these stories by and large take place concurrently with the rise and fall of Azhriaz, recounting among other things the foolish prince Jyresh's encounter with some philosophical boars and their god-soul, and of the reconciliation of the thrones in the Sun and Moon. But there is one more tale to be told, lasting not much longer than a decade after the end of Azhriaz's now-mortal life. It has a sad beginning. Azhriaz chooses, of her own will, to be born stunted and into squalor, tormented by the lowly. But it has a happy ending. For she is marked for greatness, reunited with her mad lover, and filled with resolve to share her wisdom with all mankind.

Choose this era, and you may be present right as the happy immortal couple start their first true foray into mortality.

Origins and Age

Life has a way of ensuring anyone of actual consequence seldom ends up where they began without going on a long journey to get there. Oh, there are cooks and merchants and peddlers who never leave their winding roads. Kings that rest easy on their thrones, sorcerers happily crafting spells in their sanctums and seekers of forbidden knowledge that are mercifully frustrated in anything other than the ordinary. You may have the skill of a seasoned warrior, a patient fisherman, a cruel criminal or a wise doctor depending on your life-but most never gain more than those.

These people are *not* the stuff of folklore. Those the tales of this world revolve around *are*.

Mortal (Free): There are men and women of every make on Earth, and more. Some are tanned like the desert sands, and some are pale of flesh and hair. Some are towering guards, some are grovelling beggars. All must age. Almost none understand the truth of this world. Some dwell on distant realms upon celestial spheres, not quite in Upperearth but far from the Flat. None fully understand the world they live in.

As a human, you can be anywhere from 13 to 65 year old.

Speaking Beast (100 CP): You are an ordinary animal, like any that can be found in the natural world. A bluebird, a serpent, a boar, an elephant. Less than mankind in every way that matters normally, some great force touched you and made you wise as man. Or perhaps, opened man's ears to hear your words as you yourself would. Or you may simply be a beast of a strange realm, like the giant spiders from the Underreath that are the favoured mating partners of the Drin. Or a unique beast, like a dragon: With neither fiery breath nor any particular wish to hoard, these serene serpentine reptiles are living works of art for which there is no just purpose to slay. Or perhaps, a tendril of something far greater than any beast-something that is in a sense *all* beasts-has made you its host and touched you with a greater soul than any other. You may be noticeably larger than normal if you wish, such that a serpent could swallow a man.

Beasts touched by such magic can live to any of the ages of man, or indefinitely.

Drin (100 CP): You are of the lowest caste of demons, still immortal but small, grotesque in nature and worst of all *ugly*. But your magic has one great virtue even Azhrarn respects: They can make all manner of wonders with hammer, tongues and forge. From cups and keys that kings would kill over, to clockwork silver birds, to a mansion of gold-or a city rivalling the demons' own capital, given enough of them working together. And while small and petty, they *are* still demons-their magic, though small and petty as them, beyond the ken of mortal magicians. One of their pettiest and crueller powers is a perverse trade in which by screwing a mortal, they siphon years of their life "in exchange" for passing on their evil nature as an potent compulsion onto them.

As a demon, the Drin are immortal and age is of little consequence. Like all demons, they burn in sunlight but nothing of the Underreath can truly die, and quickly reconstitute from ash that blows back there; in future worlds you will revive in a similarly deep, dark place. Or somewhere merely dark if a friend bears your ashes into somewhere as dark as night before they must blow and scatter away.

People of the Sea (200 CP): The people of the sea are many things, all of them adapted to a life below the waves after the gods tried to punish them with a flood. Some have green skin, others blue. Some have flowing seawater from their head, others blue-green hair. All have gills, and webbing, and the endurance to live far below the waves. All are also, as a people, trained magicians. All have grown languid in their dominance and cruelty over the depths, breeding men with deep sea fish and serpents and whales and sharks to produce strange sea-maids; *as a nation*, even Azhrarn holds no power over them. For the laws of sea magic are different of those from the Innerearth. Their lords hoard the greatest power amongst themselves, and also thus pass on the greatest cruelty between each other.

The Sea People mature, age after a fashion, but slower than the rest of men. How much less is unknown, but their kings do not truly die-joining their cities as living coral.

Eshva (200 CP): Pallid, lovely, and beautiful as nothing mortal can be, the Eshva are dark haired, dark eyed, and pale of skin. Innocent and cruel in equal measure, like the dolphin they roam from fleeting amusement to fleeting cruelty with equal enthusiasm. They are swifter and more agile than nature allows, and their magic blurs the line between reality and the dream they treat it as mostly

anyhow-mostly wondrous glammers, making the odd lasting enchantment all the more splendid. It was the presence and sharing and nurturing of the Eshva, who are Azhrarn's handmaidens and the courtesans of demonkind, that made Simmu so much other than mortal.

Ghoul (200 CP): There is a race that dwells below the earth by habit, drinking human blood and eating human flesh or marrow and requiring human seed to replenish its numbers. It is said they were distantly related to mankind once, but grew awry for them-burning to ash in the sun in exchange for the strength of a giant, predatory speed and the power to sublime into fog. They can adopt a fair countenance, but turn bestial when moved to rage or other passion. They have one other weakness: Their shadow is more vital than their beating heart, and if solidified by light then slashed up and bottled the ghoul will waste away and die in a few days.

The ghouls are immortal and thus can be any age, for what little good it will do them. You may, optionally, be of a younger generation with human blood that protects you from the sun. Ultimately, it matters little among the greater powers of this world.

Elemental (300 CP): There are beings that dwell in the basement of Upperearth, in the ceiling of Innerearth, and perhaps the open waters above the Sea People's cities. Most known is one whose nature is air, his flawless statue-like form beautiful even in the way violet veins stand out on him, and a blue cloak that seems to grow out from his shoulders. Magicians are known to summon or banish them betimes, but their true gift is freedom. Flight swifter and more precise than the fastest arrow, or perhaps swift and seamless passage through the waves or the earth for those of other natures. They have strange magics of their own, presumably mostly over their own domain, though air elementals are known to pass on their nature to a child by kissing the mother.

Elementals are, as far as anyone knows, ageless.

Vazdru (400 CP): Highest among the echelons of the demons, the Vazdru are as beautiful as the Eshvu-but far more splendid, glorious, revelling in the hunting of mortals. Though their magic is greater than the darkest dreams of mortals, in the name of their pride they express it foremost to flaunt their superiority and pride in a way any mortal wise enough to comprehend would know to respect: Shapeshifting, taking the form of the hawk then the wolf then a gorgeous black lion with consummate ease. The Vazdru are the only demons

who might have the courage and prowess to duel Azhrarn for a short while. That he would crush their finest efforts only proves to them that he is everything they love and yearn for.

The Vazdru are, of course, immortal. Azhrarn himself is their kin, and while the Vazdru do not worship they adore him as the exemplar of their people.

God-Beast (600 CP): There is one choice among the animal-kind you may not select for so petty a price, for it goes far beyond even demonkind and rivals the greatest of magicians. Most animals do not possess an individual spirit...for the filament of each of their souls extends into some unseen plane as an enormous transcendental heart-brain, experiencing the lives and deaths and joys and hungers of its species mating, and reproducing, and eating all at once. Once in a while, a spool of that spiritual power vests itself in an animal. And it becomes a philosopher, or artisan, or sorcerer as you would have it-dressing and comporting itself like the wisest of men, whether you wish to manifest as a great white wolf or seven synchronised owls. There is one of these beast-gods for every feline, every boar and swine, every bird or fish of a certain make. And they seldom use their powers, for they do not extend far beyond the scope of their mortal kin. But when one is roused to wrath, it can remotely project such spiritual pressure that it seems capable of filling the world to mortals.

Animals are mortal. The beast-gods are eternal as long as one lives. In future worlds, you may choose between either becoming the god-soul of a loose category of animals corresponding to the ones you are patron to here, or for manifesting an equal population of animals from this world in the other as your many hands and feet and mouths.

Lord of Darkness (800 CP): They arise from the dreams and nightmares of fevered minds. From among the greatest of demonkind, perhaps made all the greater for the fear they inspire. And perhaps, because the gods say they must.

Madness with all its fury and strange insight. Night, full of both sin and temptation. Death, inexorable but negotiable if it suits the one who rules it. And destiny, which arrives when it is time, knowing the shape of things to come.

The Lords of Darkness are not omnipresent but they may as well be, either sensing and flitting at will to their domains with but a thought. They are not all-knowing but they seem as such to mortals, having seen countless ages of civilisation, ruling over things beyond mortal ken, and casually making wonders

that conjoin sorcery and artifice or manifesting spells that stave off mortality and fundamentally reshape the mortal to immortal as a human might aimlessly fold paper. All that even the greatest magicians can do is a shadow of Azhrarn's own power. And though they are far from all-powerful, to mortals the distinction is almost meaningless. Even if Azhrarn is little more than an ill wind merely worthy of conversation to the gods, were he to fight in earnest he would flicker across the sky like a thunderbolt. Each blow wiping villages off the map. The flash of his sword faster than thought, let alone sight. And beyond taking the form of a hawk, or a wolf, or a charming yet terrifying man with utmost ease, Azhrarn in battle would be akin to a loving hurricane of utmost destruction. Even if, in vanity, he returns to the prime of the Vazdru shape by default.

As for Ulhume, little more need be said other than he is responsible for the death of all that is inherently mortal. Of Chuz and Kheshmet, little more is known. Other than Chuz can slink through the Innerearth and change shape with as much ease as any demon, and all mankind is enthralled by his madness when it pleases him. While Keshmet, as has been said, knows the shape of things to come and is never later than he wishes to be.

They can be touched, even slapped if they choose to manifest in person. Even Azhrarn shares in the sunlight weakness of his subjects, though does little more than delay his revival-though perhaps a more direct application of solar power would delay that revival further than even he knows. Ulhume can bleed and lessen if death loses meaning, if only perhaps because men think he should.

Such is the measure of you now. You may not be one of them, for their form and nature is known. But you may be of comparable scope: A being of roughly human make, obviously marked by greater forces, and tied to mankind's experience of a facet of reality it fears in perpetuity.

Thus, should you be Destruction you would be the destruction that mankind knows. And should you be War or Corruption, your nature would not be defined by that of demonkind. For by nature and inclination, the Lords of Darkness do not overstep on each other's domains (save for Chuz, whose nature is to test all limits).

And you will never end as long as humanity persists in a state where your purview matters. Perhaps beyond even that, should you have lived before them. You will haunt them as much as they haunt you.

Malukhim (1200 CP): Your skin is like blazing metal. Your eyes, like precious gems. Your hair, flame made substance. For once, a god gathered air and spoke it into an ethereal shard of power that collided with the sun-gaining its nature and radiance. Now you may hurtle faster than thought, all lesser dross burning before the glory of your essence. You require neither spell (though it seems you too can take any form you please) nor authority nor a kingdom of lesser things, for you are not a person-you are a rebuke to all beneath the gods. Your burnished breastplate and your flesh alike is proof to all force short of a Lord of Darkness, and while such beings are perhaps a *shade* greater than you, you lack *any* weakness they may have. By radiance, by the torrents of solar flame you emit at a thought, or by the swords of solar fury you manifest at will, destruction comes to anything on the Flat Earth in all directions for many miles. Diving into the ocean, your magic far trumps what the ocean muster and your flames remain undimmed by its darkest depths. The cities of the Sea People would be little more than kindling for the flames of your fury.

You can incinerate all mankind in a blur of destruction. You can cross the span of the world faster than anything, only evaded by your brilliant gaze being distracted by the greatest of magics. Nothing short of a brush with the chaos beyond the world (which would dissolve your mind and form back into a ceaselessly raging comet) has been proven to harm you in any meaningful way, with even the Lord of Night and his daughter merely able to stalemate your kin in battle. You are ceaseless. Radiant. A merciless crucible for all other life to be tested by. You do not even have a *soul* because you do not need one, the commandment embodying you granting if not magic then something superseding it utterly.

But even that, might change.

Perks

One perk from each price tier is discounted by 50%. You may discount 1 other 100 CP perk to 50 CP as well as another which becomes free.

A Magician's Soul (Free): There is a thing that lives in each and every soul that dares to recognise itself, a breath of the divine that sees passion in flame and death in cold. And in grasping these subtle, ethereal qualities defies all natural limit for them. Every human is, intrinsically, a magician. Even if for most, the talent slumbers from unfamiliarity. The demons, and the Lords of Darkness of course, have far greater mastery of such splendour. But it is a thing all with a soul can wield someday, even if it takes many lifetimes.

It is a thing of focus, will and spiritual alignment. Some spells, especially those drawing on the qualities of a thing already near the sorcerer that they are familiar or preferably comfortable with, can be cast again and again. Others are impossible without certain sacrifices-blood, rare herbs, artifacts, ambient moods, appropriate angles astrological alignments, emotional catharsis. Some can be fuelled by the sorcerer's hate or love, others operate through pacts made with powers immanent in the world or from otherworldly places. As a general rule, the more complex and powerful the spell, the more it demands-and if the cost is not paid with some reagent or other, it always takes a toll on the mind and spirit that can leave feckless sorcerers mad or bereft of vitality. Those a sorcerer pacts with can too extract their own tolls, or more directly turn on the sorcerer. And sorcerers with great power, those closer to the nature of magic itself like demons, dragons and Lords of Darkness, can do things mortals can scarcely dream of with a thought.

Even if you are a snail or a snake raised to awareness, you share it-that basic grasp of magic in this world, that can weave carpets that fly from the moon to the sun. Or transform a bonfire into flaming birds that pursue your foes forever until their flame is exhausted. Or summon and bind a creature that knows not the limits of death or matter. Or use myth and grandiose illusion to make a place synchronous with Upperearth's purity, and thus adopt some of its spiritual properties. Or many other strange, wondrous workings cast with a chant, with a musical instrument, with scribbles on the ground, or at the highest mastery with mere mental focus. For magic is never a science, only an art through which your soul expresses *that which must be, even if the world must break.*

Flower Born (100 CP): A long time ago, a Lord of Darkness planted a seed to make a point: You. You are the point. You are beautiful like freshly ripe fruit, like the first shoots in spring, like youth and vitality itself, a masterpiece of art by the standard of demonkind. You weep jewels for tears (this doesn't hurt) that can be made into potent reagents for magic. And when you die by mundane means, a magnificent tree with a single lovely flower grows rapidly from your corpse-returning you to life from the fruit. It may still be possible to truly kill you with magic. You are merely a construct after all-albeit one that has already awakened a soul, not a natural born immortal. Or perhaps, love could bring you further into mortality.

Hero (100 CP): A term understood differently in this world. A bringer of confusion and upheaval, one who dares strive against the way of things. When you set out to make change, you'll be sure to find it-strangeness, adventure, opportunity. This may bring both great chaos and strife into your life, but you'll never be locked into a social or metaphysical status quo. And heroes always have their admirers, despite the havoc they bring.

Kindly Caretaker (100 CP): Not everyone needs a hero. Some, just a parent to watch over them, a lover to lay their weary head upon. You are one such person, sensitive to the needs and concerns of others, intuiting what to say to slough off sorrow and spite so that kindness or at least its possibility can bloom in their souls. If this humble miracle grants no particular hold over their soul, know that even demons could learn to be more than monsters with this.

A Tale From Long Ago (100 CP): Do you perhaps have an interest in being a monk, historian or bard? In narrating oral histories, in recounting what has come to pass and in educating others, you have a sagely wisdom young minds would benefit greatly from. You know much of both the legends and histories of this world (nothing as practical as sorcery, but enough to know all the folklore about demonkind), and in future worlds will take to learning theirs like a duck to water. Less benignly, you could use your gifts to foment zealous faiths and whip up crowds into a fanatical mob.

Born of World and Flesh (100 CP): You are beautiful, the beauty of the natural world in all its untameable, unknowable wildness. Your eyes shift hues, like jewels, like the setting or rising sun, like the flow of waves or the play of sunlight amidst leaves. You have a fierce rugged allure, the savage grace of an elegant gazelle. For one of your parents was an elemental, be they of air or fire

or stone. Or something else. This grants you a favourable relationship with their facet of the natural world, not true elemental magic perhaps but a supernaturally enforced sort of small scale protection and assistance-the maiden Kassafeh able to cross a scorching desert due to the cool breeze aiding her, for example. Most prominently, your heritage lets you see through the enchantments and illusions of even centuries-old witches. Your mind is as wild and free as the elements, and it would take greater power than most mortal sorcerers to pull the wool over your eyes, let alone dampen your indefatigable will and spirit.

Protean Tempter, Formless Temptress (200 CP): You were born by the union of two so fair that whether your mother was a sultry temptress, a rippling sculpture of chiselled womanhood or even touched by a Lord of Darkness-she was unquestionably a vision of beauty. Your father was so ethereally splendid in form that he left the mouths of men and women dry, whether with androgynous svelteness or a masculine frame with abs like fine bronze. You have the best of both their features, and as they cannot help but dote on all beautiful things the Eshva adopted you, raised you on the milk of wild animals, and some of their magic seems to have rubbed off on your sultry self. Now you can be male or female (and indeed, your natural state can be true androgyny if you wish) as you please, and are fluid in mind and body. You have agility shaming that of cats, bounding effortlessly over stone and brick and roof or passing through branches like a flitting sparrow. And as is often the case, this swiftness is matched by your mind. You can talk rings around mortals older and wiser than you, sell sand to a desert nomad and whisper tantalising temptations into a boy trained for monkhood. Likewise, you can speak with animals from birds to wolves and even insects in their natural tongue as if you were one of them.

Be aware that not only is your fluidity in both mind and form semantic, but bestowed by a way of being associated with otherworldly being such as demons and the state of wildness natural to animals. To deviate both in mind or habit from those things, to become more civilised or defined by a lack of boldness, is to have them diminish-the shifting of gender becoming more painful and slower. You will never truly lose your touch of otherworldliness, but it may shrivel to a vestigial relic over time if you don't live freely in spirit and body regularly-especially if you grow fixated on the trappings of mortal society and stagnant discontent. As with many things in this world it is possible a moment of emotional catharsis or deep meditation on the nature of your being could change this.

Orphic Blindness (200 CP): From a young age one of your senses was cleft from you-if not your eyes cut out, then perhaps your sense of touch numbed by strange oils. But as if traded in grim amusement by the gods, your others have sharpened beyond mortal measure. If blind you could learn the history of a valley by walking through it, and know a rock or leaf's by brushing against it. So too could you see into the hearts of others clearly, be they beasts or men. Best of all there is an art, craft or other skill you have perfected to what most mortals can only dream of-weaving, pottery, artifice rivalling that of the Drin-or being a genius among them, should you already be one. A musician with this could with his talent and insight woo the creations of the Lord of Darkness from his ordained role for them, inspire such passion they obtain true life, and even humble Azhrarn himself by laying bare his own depth of feeling for humanity.

Solar Purity (200 CP): At the moment of your birth, a celestial alignment infused the sun's sacrosanct light-itself a flaming fragment of Upperearth-into your flesh, your mind, your very soul. If not a passing comet, then perhaps the union of sun and moon, or something else equally spectacular that both your hauntingly entrancing form and tranquil personality embody. Now you are beautiful, the sun's own radiance tempered by immersion in flesh not unlike how the moon reflects its beauty. So breathtaking as to make crowds gasp in awe, and even charm the Lord of Night with a glimpse of the light he is denied by the nature of his existence. This beauty is not merely physical but inner, stilling your worries and steeling your resolve against any doubt even if the whole world should call you a whore, a demon, and a demon whore. In both speech and bearing, you are a brush of the divine amidst the dross of mortality.

The Rule of 3 (200 CP): Things have a tendency here to go wrong once to show the folly of hubris, then again to show the hubris of folly. It is on the third time that everything goes smoothly, for a better tale. This principle now applies to you. If you are the third to try something, fail twice at the same task or choose 3 places to look for a magical artifact not knowing where it truly is, things go *really* right on the third try. Circumstances align with miraculous convenience or fortune, and your efforts are as focused as possible while past ones may turn out to have laid the groundwork for your success. You must still avoid utterly invalidating the goal with (and preferably survive) your first two tries, but with the third you could break an enchanted slumber or draw a sword lodged in a stone.

A Dream of Heroism (200 CP): Heroism is not a thing to be hoarded. It is a banner of hungry burning ambition that must be fed on the admiration of others! Your wisdom is far-reaching and long-sighted. Where others must count on the whims of great powers to build their cities, you are wise enough to start planning the conquest of a kingdom even as a child. Once you have constructed that goal, you have the charisma and gift of rhetoric to convince the greatest among mortals to rally around you. Architects, sages, champions and even kings alike could be made loyal by your glorious promises not just to you-but the dream you champion. And of course, your form is heroically imposing and well-cleft, fit to bedazzle young maidens or make young men blush.

Semantic Serendipity (400 CP): Perhaps the root of all magic is the intersection between the form and essence of a thing. To open a crack in Upperearth, defile the maidens guarding a sanctuary in a holy place emulating it. From love burdened by madness and true devotion springs beauty. To resemble the demon-goddess is to have your life touched by her strangeness. Your interdimensional nature now allows you to exploit that strangeness. You can accomplish both mundane and supernatural processes using substitute behaviours, reagents and phenomena that have strong symbolic resonance. Sounds abstract? Have some examples: Passing through a magical ward against all men by transforming into or casting a sufficiently convincing illusion of being a woman, using the first dollar bill you ever used as a substitute for a credit card, gaining legal ownership of a company by wearing the founder's suit and carving the moon's image into a blade so it cuts through sorcery as though it were made as translucent as moonlight. There is a limit to how much you can substitute for what and a tendency for things to go unexpectedly awry if the substitution is insufficiently resonant, but the more powerful you are the more leeway you'll have. Perhaps someday, you can paint the ocean so realistically it grounds out magic not from it like the seawater of this world does, or create a false identity for yourself that can trick a demon into selling you *his* soul.

Scholastics of Sorcery (400 CP): To arrange amulets, and circles of chalk, and work such magic as to change one cursed into an immortal yet wretched form by a Lord of Night back to human form. To count the circles of flying birds, know which reed from which pool and how many times to polish glass, so that the wards against curse and misfortune around your house are sustained. You know all this, having become learned in much of the rite and mysticism about sorcery, such that you could make of it a career and leave most men trembling in their boots from facing you. While there are sorcerers older and more talented than the likes of you, your academic education in the occult ensures you are well-versed in minutiae about the supernatural that can prevail where expensive reagents and great power cannot. Your on the fly spells are mere trifles like withering snakes to cloth, or turning a scrap of cloth plus some wood into a little ship, and casting a thunderbolt or an iron-hard lance of sharpened air fit to slay a man-unless he too were a sorcerer capable of parrying it, compared to the more absolute curses and immortal horrors certain great powers can invoke. But your refinement in and knowledge over thaumaturgy allows you greater control of your world than a more impulsive sorcerer, such as warding your hovel from curses that cause rains of frogs, tornados, illusions of lust-provoking women or plagues of insects to pursue you given the time to prepare. Or countering all of the above with your own will and knowledge.

Ineffable Bargain (400 CP): It was a chance encounter that gave Lylas the opportunity to strike a bargain with Lord Uhlume, becoming Death's own handmaiden. But it was surely her wit and occult knowledge that sealed it. Like her, there is something about you that anthropomorphic personifications and deific beings find appealing-not necessarily *love*, but find interesting enough to entrust you with power and privilege for what you can offer them. By her pact Lylas could divine great insight into magic concerning it, retain her youth by regularly drinking powdered bone, and beckon him with a rhythmic drumming. Even in worlds without anthropomorphic personifications, as long as you have something notionally valuable or fittingly symbolic, you can bargain with the waves, or the forest, or the stone, or the setting sun. Or any other major facet of reality. Your blessings may be lesser than those granted by forces as all-pervasive as madness or destiny. But you could still do things like geas a rock from falling on you *or* hurting you if you fell on it, convince snow to cover up your tracks for a bit of sherry sprinkled upon it, or bid flame burn cuts and bruises from your flesh. As those examples show, these pacts are not limited to merely physically aspects.

You may have entered into one such bargain with a Lord of Darkness or comparable power as part of your origin, extending your lifespan and enhancing your knowledge of the occult at the cost of potential consequences for disappointing your patron.

Miasma of Human Horror (400 CP): There is a great force in you, a spiritual rot that should normally be only able to escape a human corpse after death. Somehow, the spirit has become bound to you in life like a sentient shadow, a presence as untouchable as wind that nevertheless seethes and hungers for a specific carnal extreme. It might call for men to kill each other, drown others in despair or seek to satisfy other appetites. With such power, it is trivial to bend minds so long as you do not mind your thralls being driven by intense feeling. But as it is bound to you like your shadow, ultimately you remain its master in all things. Though it tempts you not with deception, but truth: That if you indulged it, and let it feed and infect wildly, it could engulf the whole world-then hand you its strings. Such is the strength of this curse that any magic you imbue it with will be far more effective, whether to forge a ring that drives men mad with pride or a blight of gluttony that changes townsfolk into monsters not unlike ghouls.

The Curse, Returned (400 CP): Cursed, violated, driven to lie with the dead, burdened by pregnancy and finally poisoned by a witch's spite, Narasen's furious spirit found the means to return vengeance upon her kingdom. There is something about your spirit that too can cast off malediction, hexes and baneful supernatural effects in general back to their senders. It imbues you with a particular resistance against Narasen's dark fate, greatly mitigating transformations to your form and power such that a spell to make you a frog would merely turn you into a frog-like man. Moreover, should you physically arrive at the approximate place where the spell was cast and make an appropriately symbolic gesture (planting a flag, accusing your murderer, writing your name in burning oil) the curse can be redirected either back onto one or more perpetrators, or into the general vicinity. Its power will always be the curses's own multiplied several times over, with Narasen unleashing the same yellow dust-like pestilence that rots crops and sterilises livestock and slays fruit and withers land, now worsened so it slays all that live with a rotting, blueish plague, over her whole city. But one milder than the curse that bound the fate of her womb to her kingdom would be dispersed over a target so wide, a mere

transformation into a frog perhaps only giving all living things slimy green skin and an enjoyment of ponds.

Alternatively and with more time (shortened by your vitality), you can choose to *absorb* the baneful effect and make it your own power. This is far harder to do since you would need some means of surviving it in the first place. But if you pull it off, like Azhrarn when he rose from being smote by an angel, you could make even things inimical to your being enhance it. Just as Azhrarn rose from his own ashes with golden lustre embodying the sun-power imbued into him alongside his sable majesty.

Half-Lord (600 CP): There is now immortal blood in your veins, that makes you greater than the greatest among the Vazdru in both magic and beauty. Of what kind, depends on your parent (whose mate was surely extraordinary as well to have drawn the attention of so powerful a being, though less so). That parent wasn't necessarily a Lord of Darkness himself, but it was at least a comparable power-perhaps an equivalent for the strange world of the ichorous *thing* Lylas conjured up, a strange union of angel and mortal dictated by the gods, or even a perverse union of flesh and Chaos. Azhriaz for example has both the sun-kissed splendour and luminosity of her mother, as well as the imposing yet darkly tempting look of her father. Others may be worshipped as god-touched for their beauty, but you are now unquestionably a god made flesh in appearance. This also grants you magic enough to vanquish cities with a gesture, and conjure wondrous artifacts that can change the course of history or potentially make changes as profound as tampering with the stasis of immortality given the right reagents. Though it seems Azhriaz does not have quite so close a hold on darkness itself as her father, the freedom more than compensates-and certainly, mystical and spiritual workings drawing on your parent's domain will be greatly empowered.

Power Born of Tears and Blood (600 CP): There is a strength in embracing cruelty, *revelling* in the screams of your fellow man and the nursing of grudges spread between generations. Through dreams of a shattered legacy you have obtained a phenomenal talent-no, *dominance* over all matters of sorcery from illusions to curses precise enough to make a king's feast sit up and waddle around in a semblance of life at him from many miles away, kill men with a sweep of your hand, cloth yourself with elegantly silvered black iron armour in the blink of an eye, summon hordes of demons in their place before they've fallen and shrink your foes into lizards. 16 kingdoms could not hope to contend

with your mastery of magic, the sun and moon darken with your wrath and even the art of shapeshifting-normally dangerous for any mortal sorcerer-is within your grasp. Even in your youth, you could even conjure deceptions over the Lords of Darkness themselves. There is nothing mankind has that can cow you. Except, perhaps, your own ego and ennui should you one day find there are things like love and companionship that even magic cannot easily conjure.

Pyre of Immortality (600 CP): At your birth or creation, someone loved you enough to have all that was mortal burned from you in the flames of an ancient force that predates the norms of the world. It made your flesh, blood and bones utterly invulnerable to all mortal woes. From the crushing depths of the sea to the march of time and entropy, from every spell the Sea People could cast at you to the most accursed weapon forged by the most hateful demons in Underearth. Even the Lords of Darkness cannot slay you, with *Death himself's* touch being little more than a relaxing chill. It may be possible to trap you, chain you up, *maybe* levitate you and cast you off the edge of the world if there was a sorcerer mighty enough. But you know neither harm nor pain, for all the days of your life.

The only known way to weaken this magic is the holder's own deep yearning to abandon all they are, centuries if not millennia of self-inflicted magical petrification, and Ulhume's own blessing in granting a dreamless sort of torpor. All even that accomplishes is the *option* to die after around a century's more time when next the holder awakens.

Herald of Finality (600 CP): Nothing lasts forever. Kingdoms fall, passion chills, curses break...and even that which is immortal, ends. Ironically, even death takes on a life of its' own in this world, and its king will not lightly brook that which renders his domain pointless. There is now an air of finality about you, ensuring that others are gripped by an unnatural fear that transcends species or language when you are angered. It is warranted. For your touch, your design, even abstracts like your love or your heart can now bring death to the immortal-and hasten it for the living, more swiftly the more intense your desire to bring mortality is. Even the living dead like ghosts or animate things that are neither living nor dead can be ushered into dissolution. It matters not whether you achieve this through spell, might or passion. Though as Zhirek conjured an insect simply to crush it within Simmurad to reintroduce mortality into the immortal city, shaping a mythopoetically suitable death for your target (be it a man, city or even god) greatly lessens any defence against it. Death will come

swifter and more surely the more powerful you are. Perhaps one day, your own funeral pyre will stain Upperearth with mortality.

Breaker of Chains (600 CP): This suffering cannot continue. This senseless violence across reincarnations, the misery it perpetuates and the cycle of ambition leading inevitably to unfulfilling emptiness and lovers becoming hated enemies. Sorrow should not have to survive death, and *must not* precede birth. From that self-evident truth, you've reached a tentative sort of enlightenment. There is now nothing you cannot redeem. No one who is beyond changing for the better, no horror however otherworldly, that cannot be taught to ape compassion-and in a moment of true warmth, have the real thing kindled with them. You need only reach out your hand. And show mercy. And debate the otherworldly, or show mercy to a wounded monster.

In the end, you can only open the door and given the capacity for compassion it is the wicked sorceress, the murderer, the monster who must choose to change for the better. **Grace is won, not forced on others.** But it will always be possible, and with your encouragement it will be almost inevitable as long as they have an abiding reason to be other than they once were. And the world will *always* be better for it as a result-their actions rippling outwards to protect smiles, inspire greatness and kindness in equal measure, and answering calamities that many may not even be aware of. Those touched by goodness (including yourself, if you too take great efforts to better the lot of those around you) also undergo miraculous spiritual growth, in accordance to their own values. A wounded immortal who had to flee the wrath of an angel might gain the power to stand and fight one to a standstill to defend those she protects, while a cursed immortal could be granted a true end to his eternal suffering.

This perk **does not scale with your overall level of power.** Instead, it scales with your capacity for kindness and empathy, as well as your understanding of the suffering others experience and inflict on each other, allowing you to reach and redeem others with.

It does, however, make you look good. Not breathtaking. Not a shattering handsomeness or beauty like a dream come to life. Just...*good*. Well-kept. Unbothered. Flourishing, even should you be an elderly mortal.

One day, a redeemed old woman who has lived out her mortal life bringing succour to others in kindness and in health, could move the Lord of Night to see past the hate all demons have for their flawed creations. Glimpse the oneness of love in all its forms. And then, even the Prince of Demons may cry the tears he is damned to be unable to shed, through his words.

And *maybe, even if it's a longshot*, one day after millennia of love and loss and learning wears him down as rivers wear down mountains, Azhrarn will become the closest thing humanity has to a truly loving god.

Items

One item from each price tier is discounted by 50%. You may discount 1 100 CP item to 50 CP as well as another which becomes free.

Red Pomegranate, Blue Seeds, Subtle Poison (100 CP): How innocent these trees look, a grove as unassuming as any maiden's place of respite. But the fruit and its seeds possess a terrible poison. One that can be utterly traceless, teased to take effect as the poisoner wills, and swiftly dissolves after doing its work. Apart from ownership of this grove of trees, you also have the recipe for the poison. Do with it what you will.

The Wealth of the World (100 CP): A mortal palace has been recently abandoned by quite a greedy ruler. Its storehouses are filled with bars of gold, precious jewels or some other choice resource. Its cellars of wine are exquisite, its stores of food rich enough to satisfy any king, its throne room decorated with device wrought from all manner of artifice, and so many other wonders of mortal wealth decorate it. Why is it so cheap? Because like mortals themselves, it won't last forever.

...

...if you hadn't bought it with CP that is, since mysterious teams of Eshva bring in more of what has been spent, and Drin repair anything used up without consuming it, every week or so.

Can be repurchased, at 50 CP if discounted.

Sorcerer's Folly (100 CP): It is a necklace made of tears shed as gems. A mirror that makes one's reflection irresistibly alluring. It has a powerful curse on it designed to do two things: Make the mighty love it more than themselves, and then destroy themselves using it. This, it accomplishes with such power that the passions it unleash can even transform others physically in the image of their desires.

Demonic Stable (100 CP): This stable is as magnificent yet eerie as anything in Underneath. Its horses are woven from mist, shadow and flame. Only as solid as they need to be, they can gallop up steep cliffs, on thin air, and even through solid stone effortlessly. Never tiring, requiring no sustenance, leaving no tracks, obedient to their riders and faster than any mortal steed.

Why the price? Because these horses can only exist in the hours of night between dawn and dusk, dissolving like mist in sunlight. At least they reconstitute in their stable once night falls again.

Golden Grove (200 CP): The lustre of this fruit seems almost poetically tempting, though it would be a cruel master who taunted their thrall with this grove of trees (far finer and more wondrous than that other grove). Cracking open the gold fruit does not reveal flesh, but rather a puff of incense with one great attribute: It grants self-knowledge, cleansing all mental woes. Trauma, the weight of eons and bewitchment alike all fall apart, allowing a mind to function in top form. A curio for a sorcerer, a panacea for a broken man.

Sorcerous Cords (200 CP): These straps were made by those with cause to restrain a sorcerer, hopefully sealing off their spells and escape by rapidly wrapping around their limbs like vipers. They strike and relax at their master's will, that being you. And they are extremely potent and tough...which is to say a daughter of Azhrarn might take the length of a long monologue to undo them again. Hey, there's probably no mortal magician who could do that!

A Glimpse Into Beyond (200 CP): In Ulhume's study lies a vaguely telescopic device that defies all mortal comprehension. By glancing through it, a ghost can see into anywhere into the land of the living with some adjustment, and project their visage and even a shadow of their touch across vast distances. Someone has thoughtfully built you this replica. They've even been thoughtful enough to adjust the knobs so you can see across other realms of existence and liminal spaces than just the gulf between life and death.

Elemental Regalia (400 CP): Through the weaving of wind, and bargains with great powers in the world, you have created a symbol of authority wrought in mineral and more abstract things. A sceptre alight with flame, a ring that drips with seawater forever, or somesuch. The price paid was valuable indeed, for instead of remembering to chuck a gem in the water you can indefinitely command two natural elements and all magical forces that must pass through them as if dozens of magicians laboured to control them in your name. With a gesture of this regalia, you could prevent all magic and ships from coming in and out of a small island against a rival of comparable skill and power.

Well of Immortality (200 CP): Even the *cistern*, vast enough to fill a swimming pool, is beautiful. The water itself, purer and clearer than any on Earth-somehow *better* than transparent. For by craft similar to Simmu's, somehow a breach into Upperearth has allowed the Water of Immortality to accumulate here indefinitely, anything lost replenished as though the bottom were still connected to it. The water has one simple trait: It makes mortals immortal and halt their aging, though not invulnerable. Bones may break, meat cleft apart, but the minds and souls animating whoever drinks this will remain secure no matter what. It would take truly traumatic damage from far greater magic (such as the flame later in this section) to actually end the life of a drinker by scouring them down to a crumpled ruin.

A Most Wondrous Transport (200 CP): The Drin must have studied the great fish of the oceans, or a whale, to build this seamless mechanical wonder. Abroad it is outfitted with sumptuous repasts, musical entertainment and everything else one would need to keep a lord of Underreath happy. It can dive below the waves or sail upon them, in either case moving so fast it could outrun a distracted angel. Comes with a team of Drin naval enthusiasts, for those who can't simply summon genies to crew it.

Sorcerous Sanctum (400 CP): There is the skull of another sorcerer happy to speak about his great knowledge of the magical craft. There is a tiny, lovely woman in a crystal jar whose hair is like forest leaves and who dances seductively when the jar is tapped. There are strangely-angled pipes, glass floors, herds of lions that eat only grass, and other strange instruments that only a sorcerer would find useful. For that is the purpose of this place: To perform sorcery, to study it, develop new spells and perform workings with great efficiency. Its contents would meet the approval of any professional wizard or scheming witch. Anything used up is restocked by an otherworldly physics-ignoring horror in a week. Be nice to it, it's on contract.

By default, it's a sprawling mansion and the grounds around it. Can be repurchased for other sorts of sorcerous abode, like the famous House of the Blue Dog and the titular Blue Dog automaton who tends to it.

The Amulet of Zorashad (400 CP): Dark yet glittering on its chain, this gem is a great amplifier to all sorcerous practice. Tenfold? A hundredfold? None glimpsed the tyrant who once used this to conquer more than a dozen kingdoms and lived to bring back an accurate recollection, for he enjoyed cultivating a feared reputation. But it will serve any magician well as a tool of conquest, a means of study, or simply a really convenient way of conjuring cheese for breakfast. Just keep it out of reach from being shattered by a Lord of Night.

Verdigris Legacy (600 CP): Behold, all the wisdom of the Sea Peoples' magic, in a man-sized statue of red metal coated with green rust that can open wide enough and shut again to envelope a man who would learn what it has to teach. Within is all the wisdom of a thousand mighty magicians of the Sea Peoples: Sewed on parchment, chiselled in marble, scribed as runes in the sand and calculated as the mathematics of destiny. Art, and science, and above all else magic: Thaumaturgy, necromancy, glamour, bane, fascination, incantation, summoning and far more besides. To shatter great beasts into pieces with a gesture, darken cities, crush the conjured flaxen or brass of any one king among them while lashing out with curses that can kill their soldiers in the hundreds, and feed villages with sea fish conjured in the land's river. This magic is that of the sea, and due to partaking of its' isolating nature has different rules and qualities. Whereas most magic (even that of Azhrarn's bloodline) in this world is dampened and drowned by the sea, isolated by its elemental vastness and shut out by its unfeeling vastness, yours flies through it freely without inhibition-and it may be possible to invoke such qualities through ritual. After all, such power can conjure waves great enough to drown cities. With such power, the world of men is yours for the taking. You need only stretch out your hand, and break its neck.

Shards of Bitter Blood (600 CP): In some terrible battle or calamitous event, one of the Lords of Darkness or else something as powerful as them shed blood. This blood was then alloyed in something inimical to the Lord as gold is to demonkind-Ulhume's blood clotting in the Water of Immortality perhaps, or Chuz's falling upon a golden fruit of self-knowledge. The result is a compound you now own, just enough to hold in your hand.

It is the most precious, and terrible, substances in the world.

For it can make the immortal, mortal. Not merely killable, but redefine their nature to take on the *essence* of the mortal they emulate in *form*. By such a power, Azhriaz learned to die. What would it do to her pureblooded father?

In future worlds, this will continue to be a powerful bane against the immortal, restocked once a week by some representative of Ulhume or his substitute. Do note to the extent it matters it only kills *once*. As Azhriaz knew when she consumed it, it stops nothing to stop a soul from reincarnating indefinitely-even keeping their knowledge if it is possible.

Perhaps this was ultimately more a tool of liberation than destruction.

Primordial Flame (600 CP): It is a simple well, surrounded by trees of strange scent, in which burns a faint dull orange glow. Below there is a flame that was kindled when the world was even younger and wilder than this. It burns fiercely when exposed to knowledge and wickedness-a most torturous fate. But for an innocent child, it will sear away all mortal weakness. No weapon and no ailment can damage what has once endured the fire. Only age and natural death can take, and then they come slowly. One who rises from this fire may live two hundred years, or longer...and that's if they never learn sorcery, never harness the subtle and esoteric forces of this world that can stave off death in countless ways.

Some say it also sears away all mortal joy and fortune. Others, that men who live too long make their own sorrow and bad luck by their own poor decisions.

Otherworldly Kingdom (600 CP): In Druhim Vanashta, there is no lasting sorrow. The Drin in their legion amuse themselves with their crafts. The Eshva are content serving the Vazdru, whose passion-play lives and hunts and shows of prowess are all one great game. But would you rule *another* kingdom of demons, or something far different? Perhaps a wondrous elemental court where fire, wind and earth compete for your favour. Or one from a foreign plane of reality, where crimson ichorous men with sunken eyes and vaporous forms brood over tasks no mortal has fathomed and contemplate the occasional sorcerous summoning. Whatever this place is, two things are certain: Wonders are possible due to its liminal state and/or your fanatically reverent subjects, be they artifacts beyond the making of any mortal magician or congress with spirits of the dead. And the forces you could unleash from here, be they curses hoarded from dead souls or an army of demons on shadow steeds, are more than sufficient to conquer the Flat Earth, just...petty, in the extreme.

Companions

Where Heaven Brushes Hell (50/200 CP): Each chance encounter can be no more than two ships passing in the night, or a fulcrum for fate's tapestry to unravel. Whichever is the case, for 50 CP apiece you may create or import a character with 1000 CP to spend on whatever they want, except more companions. For 200 CP you may create or import a set of 8 at a discount.

A Destined Meeting (Free/50 CP): Is there someone here who calls to you by visage alone? Whose very being haunts you like the moon haunts the tide? Go to them. Ask them to become a companion. And should they accept, they shall be.

Seed-Born Sage (50 CP): Once, a Lord of Darkness looked upon a potato and saw that it was good. He planted the potato, which grew into a sage who was wise and wizened (but strapping fit, as how age turns some tough men to teak) from birth. Not being created as a companion, he set himself to learning all the things of the world, charting its mysteries and studying its secrets. His conclusion is that while many things change, human kindness persists past every attempt to squash it. He would be delighted to have another intellectual to debate or a student to tutor in his civilisation-spanning knowledge. He'd also appreciate a good barber that can trim his beard of silver filament.

Otherworldly Interloper (50 CP): It came from a world beyond mortal imagining, looking like something from Madness' own domain. A lion with twisting tendrils and wings dripping with acid, a faceless man that can flit between shadows. And then...it got stranded, the sorcerer who meant to conjure this otherworldly horror abandoning the spell for some reason. It is now lost and alone, a stranger in a strange land. It has become attached to you in the hopes you can offer it some semblance of guidance. Increasingly it is becoming fascinated with humanity, both its good and its wickedness.

Son and Daughter of Two Worlds (50 CP): With hair the shade of wheat and eyes that undress you with a lazy smile, this sexually ambiguous youth has doted on you as a cat does its owner since their childhood. Raised by otherworldly forces after a truly strange mortal union, their ways are not those of man and they partake of a far freer nature. Unlike a certain death-haunted orphan, this one was raised by loving parents in a happy environment and wants nothing more than to live freely, as its nature dictates. Also to turn into whatever

gender you prefer (or switch between the two, if that pleases you) and screw right here, on the ground.

Grovelling Witch (50 CP): Not long after your arrival a desperate girl tried to sell her body, soul and service to you for magical powers, ranting about a broken home and becoming the wicked sorceress her hateful neighbours accused her of being. To possibly both your surprise, even if you are no being of great power *it appears to have worked* however you ended up defining the terms of that agreement. She is now entirely convinced you are a grand and sensual being of great supernatural power that has made her your handmaiden, having gained great magic surpassing many sorcerers her age and experience vaguely themed after you even if you are just a turnip farmer. Deep down, she just wants a hug and a shoulder to cry on but thinks all the cool sorceresses have to do impossibly depraved things to appease their patrons. She is genuinely looking forward putting on a leash, going on all fours while naked, and even filthier displays of submission. But only if it's you, specifically.

Bride of the Stars (50 CP): While the sun and moon's kingdoms are destined to have their rulers wed, they are not the only celestial structures. This bride's stark, ethereal beauty is poetry in motion for the comet, the big dipper, the Oort Cloud or some other significant celestial structure. Clothed in naught but cold, shimmering vapours of the upper ether, she is remarkably ruthless to most impeding her witness and has a coldly regal manner-as well as filled with great spiritual power attuned to her origin, though she has no sorcerous training yet. However, as she is destined to marry *you*, her crystalline heart rapidly warms in your presence.

Even in future worlds, somehow she will be able to visit the celestial courtiers, kingdom and lands that in some vague sense embody that celestial structure through some sort of surreal means like dramatically going up the stairs and opening a door to the Court of Venus. Scientists will be baffled by this, and she will be equally baffled by everyone else's inability to find her court. Which she and she alone, specifically, can bring out to do celestial court things.

Child of Darkness (50 CP): The thread of destiny unravels as lo and behold, it seems there are *more* children of the Lords of Night than just Azhriaz. Perhaps Dunizel gave birth to twins, one a brooding boy with hair as pale as his sister's is dark and a Drin-forged sword that sups on souls. Maybe Chuz has a daughter of his own, and despite an erratic but perhaps less decayed appearance than her

father has decided to go become an accountant as an act of youthful rebellion (he will be highly supportive of this). Or maybe Destiny's child is running around everywhere, being forever late or early, and constantly frustrated about this. You did something so deeply moving for them early on, it was comparable to Chuz's liberation of Azhriaz and the genuine love they shared. They will now happily follow you around as your godlike consort for the rest of their days if you allow it.

Drawbacks

A Waltz Across The Ages (+ 0 CP): Ten years is a window into a mortal lifespan, and less than a blink to an immortal. Why not dawdle here a little longer? Take this, and you may extend your state out by up to a few millennia-long enough to see the end of this series from its beginning, and potentially even further should you start sooner.

Incompatible (+ 100 CP): There is something you would greatly prefer not to do. Lay with a hundred men. Sell ten children to devils and sorcerers. Decry the gods wherever you go. Something deeply offensive and a black mark on your public image, but neither illegal nor immediately lethal to you. A curse has been laid upon you such that all around you for the breadth of a city will rot and fall to ruin unless you do this unwanted thing at least once a season. You and anything with sentience will be spared, but all else shall be as desolate as Death's domain. If there is a way to break this curse, surely only the wisest witches of this world know of it...

Demonic Lust (+ 100 CP): The worst thing about selling your body to sorcerers or devils for power isn't the vile, sickening filth they pump into you, or slather on your flesh, or make you swallow and swirl around your mouth while you're sore and torn. No, it's the way that perverse lust lingers on your spirit, remaking you in your abuser's image. You may not necessarily have suffered this thing-perhaps a demon has merely cast a grand enchantment on you through your dreams, or perhaps you touched a relic carved from the bones of a cursed sinner. But there is now some terrible carnal emotion that drives you, if not a rapist's lust then a glutton's greed or the gnawing envy of a grand vizier. To satisfy this you would risk a queen's wrath if she were lovely to your gaze. If there is a way to break this curse, surely only the celestial purity that sheds from Upperearth down on the gods' realm, the sun and a rare few beings can cleanse it...

Holding Out For A Hero (+ 100 CP): Even the greatest of men are fallible. Even the grandest of villains have moments of weakness. You cannot accept this. There is a blazing ideal you are obsessed with-to court the most heroic of men, to serve a Lord of Darkness, that this world will constantly deny you. Either through your candidates letting you down one way or another, or your would-be idol denying you their presence. There is no way to avoid this, nor the crushing disappointment, unfaithfulness and sorrow this brings. But perhaps, if

you have great will, you can find purpose in becoming the ideal you failed to see in others...

Sassy Slattern (+ 100 CP): Some witches, nobles and priests all share not one great vice, but a petty grab bag of many small ones that add up. You find it difficult to stay true to allies, always looking for advantages over them. You're petty over slights, and quick to reach for the knife if your affection or meal ticket is threatened. You've a tendency to overreact to minor things, and be slow on the draw when death is at your doorstep. And above all else, you're quick to grovel and beg for the easy way out whenever possible.

Desolate Existence (+ 200 CP): What is the point of immortality if there's nothing to enjoy in it? Fine food only reminds you that you've lost something of true value. Women (or men) are bitter disappointments. The thrones of the world are empty baubles. Ennui haunts you as it does those immortals who do not have company they can abide, and this has festered into a simmering self-hatred, a death impulse you are not even consciously aware of. You're not *quite* so gone as to actively seek your own death, but the emotional burden you bear weighs like an anchor on your heart. Only forces as absolute as the Lords of Darkness can move you, or perhaps great catharsis.

Star-Crossed Crisis (+ 200 CP): The stars aligned, perhaps even Upperearth shone down on your union, when you met someone from this world of ordinary means but supernatural beauty (and few other gifts, if any). Yours is a romance that makes existence feel like a fairytale, your partner being like nothing you'd expect but everything you've ever needed. Alas, one way or another your lover has terrible misfortune, drawing angry mobs and the occasional storm and similar calamities towards you every few months. Expect to do great things to keep the two of you together. Should your lover survive it all (even if by being resurrected somehow), you may take the lover as a companion.

A Celestial Quest (+ 200 CP): There is something you have great need of that can only be found in the farthest realms. On the shores of the Chaos, or on the tail of a comet, or even in the strange realms of the so-called afreet. There are means to get there, mainly sorcerous but sometimes mechanical-or some combination thereof. They won't be easy, or cheap. There you will find something rare and precious-a jewel, a blade, perhaps a dragon's bones. *Why* you must undertake this quest is open to interpretation, but if you cannot finish it in a year you will suffer a punishment on par with what the Lords of Darkness

may level upon each other, such as how Prince Chuz was made subject to his own domain, becoming a helpless madman barely capable of interacting with the world bar *a few* moments of lucidity. Or perhaps, transcendental mastery of it.

Mortal Terror (+ 200 CP): Something in your life gave you a profound fear of death that haunts you every waking moment of your life, even when you don't consciously realise it. Not Uhlume specifically (though his approach would surely be horrifying to you), not even violence, but the thought of cessation. The knowledge you must one day lay down in the grave. You would do anything to escape that, but your fear clouds your judgement. You yearn to live recklessly and passionately as birds yearn to migrate, even when it gets you in trouble- especially even, for you would brand yourself a criminal to feel alive. Whatever great works you do are hounded by an urge to tear down great works, commit blasphemies, do ANYTHING to stave off your mortality in ways practical or symbolic.

And in a cruel twist of irony, if you should *actually* become or be immortal you will instead slip into a listless, frustrating ennui in which you are reluctant to do anything yet are vaguely humiliated by the fact that you know you're accomplishing less than you could.

Immortal Rivalry (+ 300 CP): There is someone out there in the world that you have wronged dearly. Someone who by pacts with Lords of Darkness, diligent study or sheer seething rage has attained power comparable to your build here but uniquely suited to counter it. They may have the rage and deathly aura of Narasen returned from the grave, or the sorcerous power and invincibility of Zhirek. Whoever they are, they want you dead or worse like a rabid dog wants to bite-and would sell their very soul to make you bleed.

Enemy of Mortal Nations (+ 300 CP): The nations of the world are loosely defined, one having scheming merchants, another preening nobles. Generally they are decadent, wicked and forgetful as a whole. But now, they have cause to rally: You. By bow, by cavalry, by blade, by trebuchet but generally not by sorcery, you are to be slain. Every mortal nation's ruler has declared war on you, and their mortal soldiery has been ordered to see you dead. But a mortal king only has so much leverage, and you need not necessarily slaughter every man, woman and child-just make the crown itself kneel, and most of the kingdom will back away from a losing fight with you.

A Friend of Destiny (+ 300 CP): Not long into your stay, you met a shaven man who was somehow simultaneously dressed as king and beggar with an ineffable sense of *wooden* colour around him. Precise and exacting, he made polite conversation with you and forewarned you about an incoming calamity. You see, you have come across Kheshmet: Destiny, in whose nature it is to bring the mighty low and the low mighty. You know not if that refers to you or another. But it seems you are entangled in his designs. Expect every few seasons to stand at the epicentre of an event as great as an empire rising or falling, the sea or earth threatening to swallow up the city you're in, or the arrival of a force great enough to destroy an immortal's physical form. Kheshmet means you no harm and indeed for the pleasure of unusually frequent conversation will try to warn you, destiny ruins on its own and it is simply his duty to see it through. Though were he somehow to be killed, your calamities would certainly cease.

Radiant Judgement (+ 300 CP): In a moment of divine discontent, three shards of ineffable divine power are cast into the sun and reborn as avengers. Each is an angel: A towering, vaguely humanoid furnace of divine light and hallowed will. Each flies like living lightning, and is tireless enough to track foes anywhere on the Flat Earth. Each bears such might as to fight a Lord of Darkness as a peer, and end civilisations simply by incinerating them with their presence. And none can be hurt by lesser force than said Lords of Darkness, such battles themselves risking the death of hundreds of thousands. The best sorcery can do is, perhaps, conceal you from eyes *merely* capable of tracking you from the sun's orbit. They are unwavering in their task to punish you. *Punish.* Not destroy, strictly speaking. The angels are diligent, but not machines. A sufficient show of piety, virtue or the abandonment of whatever the gods may find displeasing may convince them there is no meaning to slaying you. Otherwise, no force short of chaos' immersion or *perhaps* a Lord of Darkness that has somehow found additional source of mystical power can even hope to harm such a being.

MORTAL? YOU DARE?! (+ 800 CP):

Ah. Now you've done it. Done what? The only true sin against the gods. *Offending them.*

How? **How** could you have done what Azhrarn's gaze could not, beyond shrivel the edges of their crystalline garments?

How frail they look. How golden their hair, how pale their flesh such that their faintly violet ichors swirl here and there, and their mirror-like eyes stare unto eternity. When excitement at some divine revelation or another grips them, butterflies flutter from their robes. A Lord of Darkness, themselves cast in mankind's make, may see eye to eye with one.

The angels themselves are mere flecks of their power cast and reforged, commandments spoken into action. Mortals, merely a mistake they made, cast in their likeness. Even the Lords of Darkness themselves are thus either byproducts of those mistakes, or in Azhrarn's case perhaps vermin glutted on their dreams, or in Ulhume's case perhaps a construct of some kind.

Now they will trample the earth into quaking ruin and set the sky ablaze and boil the seas, and pillage and murder as they did in ancient times before ascending to their current ascetism. Your only mercy is that they will be foretold. *Oh*, you will hear them coming. Calcified by their endless contemplations upon their own perfection, it will take time for them to rouse their full power. To walk at more than a lurching gait, focus their power on something less all-encompassing than the horizon and retrain their minds on a span of time lesser than an eon. Above all else, they will wish to proclaim your blasphemy far and wide. For four seasons, you need "merely" fear the occasional flight of angels sent to hound you, the occasional falling star melting mountain ranges, or city-enveloping miracles that bend the world and heart to utmost devotion as they lurch from Upperearth to the Flat.

Once four seasons have past, they will have shaken off the rust enough to rampage like the savages they once were.

To make them forsake the transcendence they have trained their minds on up to this point is to expect no mercy, from the fury of a deity offended enough to forsake its own tranquillity.

To challenge them at all is to declare your own claim of godhood above and beyond all others on their world.

There is one faint hope, however slim: The gods *can* die. Not easily, nor for obvious reasons, perhaps not even forever.

But it is un-written in the gaps between prophecy: One day, Uhlume may have cause to pass into their realm.

Ending Options

An End to Eternity (Go home): As each great swell of wonder, and each ebb of tragedy, brings more and more weariness to your soul. Perhaps you begin to feel the anguish of mortals, and the pain of immortals. Which is harsher: The oblivion of forgetting all that you will ever accomplish in death, or having nothing other than the ephemeral to give your existence meaning? Enough. Enough of these passion plays. You will return to your world, with all that belongs to you. And the Earth will no longer be flat, and snakes will merely be snakes, and jewels will not sparkle with Hell's curses, and everything will make *sense* again.

The Month of the Exaltation (Stay): If souls are doomed to repeat their mistakes generation after generation, era after era, is it the will of the gods that that likes of Zhirek and Zorayas continue to haunt this world as they once trampled it underfoot? Joyless even in their majesty? Or can Azhriaz, who has lived as an immortal god-queen and will live as an all-too mortal wretch in atonement, truly break this cycle with all she has learned about the futility of hubris? You will remain. You will bear witness. You will stay in this world, with all you have a claim on.

The future of this world hinges on the dance between the mortal and the immortal. If in *any* sense you brought death to immortality, or immortality to the mortal, during your stay here. You receive 1000 CP, as it begins to dance to a different tune.

One of the Immortals (Move on): What is any of this to us? Time is endless and ours. Love and death are only the games we play in it. *You* are immortal in every way that matters, guaranteed a new lease on life every ten years or so in many a world, and better preserved from destruction the more mortal you are. Perhaps that is your nature: Jumper, Travel's Master or Mistress, Prince or Princess of the road that winds ever-onwards. Go then, to a world beyond even the telling of this one. To a whole new story.

Notes

BIG thanks to that one anon with the initial Tales From The Flat Earth WIP, even if this jump ended up being very different from that one it was helpful to have references and a starting point.

Just like in every good myth, magic plays *very* fast and loose with both its own rules and everything else's. Fanwank responsibly. Everyone is a magician in theory, in practice there's a *wide* gulf between the peddler on the street and Zorayas at the height of her power who can blanket a courtyard in a false night even the Lord of Darkness cannot differentiate with a careful ritual, change men to beasts with a thought, and burn such obsession with her into the minds of men that they would kill and die for her. And an even wider gulf still between her and Sovaz-Azhriaz, who can twist a forest into an enchanted playground where other spells invert and beasts can speak to men, animate beautiful chimeras and living statues to obey her whim, drive civilisations into religious rapture, crystalize reality itself into a dome over a mountain from which there can be no escape, and even grant mortals the power to reach into the sky taking the sun and moon into their grasp.

Per the above, due to being so hard to quantify and semantically associated with each other, any perk with a flowery description of either beauty or magic is assumed to add to both. Yes, **the beauty perks are also magic perks**, because true beauty is also evidence of a potent spirit. Or something. It's vibes all the way down. Beauty is not 1:1 a font of magic the same way actual fonts of magic are, so assume a beauty perk's contribution to magic is roughly equivocal to the overall value of the other perks in its' CP tier (a 100 CP perk being a minor touch of sorcery, a 600 CP perk being grandiose power fit to topple kingdoms and conjure storms).

Some perks mention unique lineage. If you take multiple ones, *don't worry about it*. Magic happened. There was some kind of supernatural orgy with demons and elementals and hateful corpses and potatoes. *This can actually happen in the setting*.