



JRPG 裏切り者 CYOA: A JUMPCHAIN CYOA 変換

TL note: 裏切り者 means traitor

And 変換 means conversion

The sun rises over the world, but all is not right. An **Overlord** has lifted their head, and their power is spreading over the land, bringing doom to its eight corners. But the world need not fear, for the six Auspices have chosen a Hero and the companions that will help them save this cherished world. You are one of these blessed few, and yet something is quite wrong...

For you see, *there is a **traitor** in the Hero's party!*

Not that the traitor is *necessarily* you. You're just here to make a life for yourself in this whimsical world of faith, steel and sorcery! In a world where civilisation stands triumphant over every calamity thrown at it, an adventurer can get far with the right skills and the grit to use them well.

Pay no attention to the ominous tendency for long-dead gods' remnants to have something to say about this state of affairs. *Surely* all will be well?

In the name of the Auspices, take 1000 CP.

Locations

You may start at any of these places for free.

The Heroes' starting point: Ah, how fortuitous! You show up with the heroes right as they're beginning to set off. It might be at a campfire somewhere in the wilds, at a game of cards and dice (alas, *mortal* dice cannot cast Chance and Fate in your favour...), in a kingdom where you are seen off with great pomp if one of the Heroes is connected with the ruling party. Or even in the halls of Sabii should you decide the Heroes are diligently trying to seize every advantage they can learn before setting out. Or in one of the Heroes' houses, should you have a history together.

If you're here and part of the Heroes' party (including the Traitor, who everyone *starts off* assuming is just a lucky blessing from the Auspices sent to aid them in their time of need), you'll be welcomed with open arms. If not, expect a few awkward looks and questions-although in times this dire, it's unlikely the Heroes would reject willing aid.

Sidith: The theological heart and soul of humanity, Sidith is the city where (allegedly) the One Prophet, Yazata, discovered the light of the Auspices and shared their grace with humanity. It is (allegedly) a paean to the (allegedly) everlasting glory and beauty of humanity, being a bastion of hope for both papal states and the common faithful alike. So deep is Sidith's devotion that it naturally translates to discrimination against the savage beastmen tribes, and the untrustworthy elves. It is not uncommon for the Hero's party to assemble at the One Temple, for it is only natural for them

Rayanes: Founded with the conquest of the Skaric kings' bloodline, the Kingdom of Rayanes takes great pride in its chivalry and knightly prowess. But just as eerie woods divide its realm, beneath a shining veneer Rayanes is corrupt to the core-and wealth is extremely rare to those who are not part of the nobility. Its eldest princess Adelina is as perfect on the battlefield, in courtly affairs and with what spells she sets out to master as she is more ruthless than *any* Overlord. Its middle princess Aurea fled to become a "fearsome bandit queen" after years of sexual abuse from her elder sister, though she gives away most of her spoils to the poor and downtrodden. And its youngest princess Stella is a sheltered wallflower who has little to her name other than the contempt of her father's court, the burden of her family's dark secrets and a plucky young dragon. *All* of them are strong candidates to be *the* Hero.

Small wonder that King Adal's right hand knight Saffron Drausus, a master swordswoman and wielder of Vitriol, had little trouble orchestrating the coup that nearly ended his life until Adelina singlehandedly ended it with flame, spell and blade. As she allows the blame to die with her co-conspirators and plots her next move, despite her unquenchable ambition even she might be wondering who the *real* monster in this equation might be after seeing her cohorts butchered. Surely a certain Traitor might be her natural ally for plotting her next move...

Alkia: Crowns are often won with blood, and the rise of Emperor Augustus in a bloody coup against his brothers will haunt even some of the Royal Knights that helped him get there with the sheer ruthlessness needed to win. But the emperor's outrage against the harm brought by the Overlords against the world is real, and so out of the twelve at least the foppish Albano Audamar (a candidate for becoming the current Wanderer) remains loyal to him despite his hedonistic façade. Whatever black deeds got him there, Augustus' commitment to justice and prosperity are undeniable. Alkia casts a great shadow over its neighbours, as feared for its ambitious as its capital is lauded for the progress it sets in motion. He would die fighting before seeing a subject harmed, and his beautiful but deadly empress would slay armies before seeing him die.

Sabii: So famed for being the location of the most prestigious institution for magical learning, the so-called Black Mage vocation is actually named for the attire of the Sabii academy's faculty, from the scholarly Ministers to the nigh-inhuman Magisters-who some whisper are related to the Visionary, a notorious Overlord. Quite a few potentially charming-if often eccentric or arrogant-members of the Heroes' party could come from luminaries of Sabii. Less publicly, Sabii's thirst for magical knowledge and power (they are one and the same in their minds) has led to dire acts that must be kept out of the public eye. Spirits forced into unfavourable pacts. Adoptive children turned into petri dishes for arcane forces. Secrets forbidden from the Auspices' official history and spells of devastating power hidden in its' vaults. For all its eloquence and airs, Sabii is ultimately only loyal to control and knowledge-in that order.

Yamasia: Beyond the Sanno mountain range where monks and martial artists alike train lies a nation steeped in mystery and heresy. Its nobility levies even harsher expectations on heirs to be both honourable and underhanded to seize power, and when a throne there topples there is so little mercy for the survivors that exile is almost an inevitability. In the not-so-distant past, a mad priest of the old gods broke free of his seals and was repelled at great cost-the chaos left in his wake being in large part responsible for the current rebellions wracking the realm. There are strangely seductive breeds of beastmen, as well as rambunctious and eccentric demons that often take a much more casual approach to bothering the other races. It is a land of strict social expectations, curved blades and iron-sharp honour. Watch yourself here.

The Outskirts: What care have you for the trappings of civilisation? You are perfectly happy as part of a nomadic tribe in the desert, or in a witch's hut in the forest, or as part of a sleepy little village with a tighter bound community than any city. Sometimes, a little peace and quiet is worth fighting for more than any amount of ever-shifting ideals or allegiances. Hell, start in the middle of the ocean or on the very edge of existence if you want.

The Overlord's lair: AH, but where could be more exciting than on the very doorstep of evil itself? A fortress built straight into the face of a volcanic slope! A city carved into the earth by demons from an ancient era! A...wait, is *that* Overlord devoid of even a roof over her head?! As you'll soon learn, nothing is as simple as it seems in this world. Nowhere could that be more obvious than the fact that an Overlord's abode (or whichever street she's sleeping in on any given day) can say a lot about just how far their personalities vary.

It should go without saying you'd be well advised to signal your loyalty to the "evil" in residence soon. Well, in *most* cases.

The Overlord Unveiled!

(Skip this section if you are the Overlord, or if you just don't care about what's going on here)

One small matter before your grand adventure begins: Who *is* the one branded by DEATH? There are eight possibilities, each of which will be discussed below.

One and one alone is the Overlord. They neither grant nor require CP, each bringing both great danger and opportunity with their coming.

Overlords not chosen here are narratively irrelevant for the purpose of the Hero's party and their quest. They may be dormant, not have revived, not come into existence or simply be functional members of society due to not acting out of the tragedy or desperation that would otherwise fuel their actions. Whatever the reason, they are simply not threats to the world as the branded Overlord is-if only because the Auspices have not anointed them so.

Drusilla Amanitore, Empress Regent began her life with a fairytale romance, born from a fallen line of bodyguards only to fall in love with the young emperor Augustus of Alkia on first sight. They overcame hazards, slew dragons, and seized the crown on a long journey that the bards recount in song. Alas, a year ago the emperor died at the hands of one among many sea horrors born from the Corpse Wave-giving his life so his subjects could escape. Now she rules over Lucasta, the capital of Alkia, once a bustling city said to be the centre of the world. But with her branding, it has become as much of a husk of itself as its Empress.

Mad with grief, Drusilla now knows how to express nothing except the loss and pain she is wracked by. Her own people are now being tortured, and her neighbours warred upon, as she seems to care little how she ends up in the midst of it all. The Empress of Alkia neither laughs nor weeps, cares little for the Heroes or the Auspices branding her as Overlord, and her solemn facade breaks only when someone tries to comfort her-which brings out her true wrath.

Were a champion to somehow to come into her service in spite of all this and prove their mettle, Drusilla would desire **the eternal love of her lost emperor**. One more word, the sound of his laughter, the warmth of his touch-and she would grant *all* the desires of the one to reunite her with Augustus. It is said the One Temple of Sidith has a door to the heaven where the Auspices keep the

souls of the faithful in its santasanctorum, but these are mere rumours after all. *No one, however wise or mighty*, has ever found where the souls of the dead go nor recalled them with magic.

As if they simply ceased to exist.

Revysia is nothing more than a young girl with crimson eyes and ashen flesh. She would be of no consequence were it not for the roiling tide of pitch-black beasts that share her eye colour which appeared without warning around her. In a wave of chomps and swipes, they tore apart both monsters and men, ripped apart the lands and even gnawed the very horizon itself to shreds. Those who sought the source of the beasts found only her, but were eaten alive before she could be accused of anything more than sharing their red eyes. No man can pass through the beasts as they spread and spread, so she has been branded Overlord in the hopes that the Heroes may kill her.

Revysia's brash, loud manner is nothing more than a growing young girl lashing out at people she has known nothing but violence from-and a deep discontent with her isolation. Becoming her ally would be as simple as talking to her peacefully, which would grant little more than safe passage through the black beasts. She has no grand designs, no wicked schemes, *seemingly* nothing to earn the title of Overlord other than her reality-eating army of furry friends, who dote over her like their collective cub.

She truly just wants a friend. Although if she found one, it *would* be nice to investigate the **jade cocoon**, or rather egg she hatched from. There's a place sequestered by the black beasts where they are especially merciless towards intruders, where that egg remains hovering after her emergence. Could it contain something more?

At the places where the black beasts have eaten everything, there is a sea. Its sapphire waters reflect stars and planets that do not exist, and titanic structures from futures never meant to be sprout from them.

*As if this world is but a dream, and **from Beyond The Waters** the beasts are building a new world for a lonely new dreamer.*

Harosa, the Empty Preacher is many things to many people. A beautiful demon and a pitiless witch to those faithful to the Auspices-though all attempts to assassinate or butcher her and burn her soul have been temporary. She inevitably appears, unharmed, as if regurgitated from *nothingness itself*. All she does is wander naked from place to place, preaching for all men to love neither life, nor knowledge, nor self, nor the words of the Auspices-who to hear her tell it are merely machine-slaves powerful enough to have written falsehood and make it real. For she has travelled to the rim of the world, beheld THE END of the gods before the world's very Beginning, and it has returned her to herald the end of an age. So it is engraved in Aradec's old temple, that was once for all gods. So it is written in the Dosa Oracles, the oldest text of mankind.

Vaguely elven of form save for red nails and strange tear-like markings to interrupt her pallid flesh under a curtain of tangled hair, Harosa offers only a love as cold as winter to those who curse or bless her. There is only one way to earn something like approval for her: Show you understand her words.

To one who sees the futility that the Auspices have hidden like she does, she would offer them a chance to ignore them by making a **pilgrimage to Radorana** in the Desert of Water. Even were the world to be a sphere, Radorana would be its rim. Walk in her footsteps, pass a deserted city that no longer welcomes merchants, cross seven deserts where there are no tracks that go back, and past sand, dust and stones, you will find water. Your last destination. And peering beyond it, things that are neither god nor beast.

Then, you will be made to know THE END. And be made to return as not a student, but a fellow herald of it.

President Prospero Malgold is unquestionably the wealthiest, and debatably the most powerful, man in the world. Once a young mage disgruntled by the dwindling monster population cutting short his prospects in the Adventurer's Guild, he set off on a quest to master the art of the deal instead-and the rest is history. People eat the food he ships, live in the houses he built, uses the tools he develops, and work for the businesses he owns. The Marigold name carries more weight than any noble or clergyman other than the One Prophet herself, and no army could compare to the one his funds could raise.

Malgold has always been disdainful of his underlings' wellbeing, and contemptuous for gods and monsters ever since a curse from the Auspices ravaged him with a pox that deformed his face and rotted his flesh for his

impiety. He takes being branded Overlord in stride, assuming it is just another attempt at ousting him from the power he has sacrificed everything for. Halting all trade to holy Sidith, hiring beastmen reavers and using *all but one* of his own children as bait is only the start of what Malgold's economic empire can bring to bear against both the nations of the world and the Heroes chosen to stop him

For all his riches, Malgold is disgusted by the fact that he is surrounded by sycophants, useless children and flunkies he could buy and sell like canned tomatoes. Prove resourceful and ambitious enough to remind Malgold of himself, and you might just end up on his board of directors even before the Heroes have found him! To such a valued employee (the highest form of praise his shrivelled heart can muster), Malgold would like to entrust the completion of an **unfinished matter**. There is a beautiful place in the hinterlands, where the mountains are like sails and a white dragon dutifully guards a woman's grave.

He wants you to kill the dragon and smash that grave.

Malgold wasn't always the kind of man who would work women to the bone to chase higher profits, or have a man's throat slit before he becomes a rival to his own company. He doesn't care about your story, and he assumes you don't care about the regrets behind that grave. What he does want to do is *kill the last shred of goodness inside of him*, whether so he can fully focus on fighting back with all he's got with no distractions-or simply as an act of spite against a world he feels has denied him any lasting happiness.

Whatever the case, he will name you his successor after this single petty deed.

Mazdayasna, the Alfqueen was the First Overlord, and is now the seventh. A thousand years ago she was the matriarch of the elves, ally of the old gods, and one of the few elves to survive Sorcerer-King's Ahriman's horrific eugenic experiments in Sidith. Nine in ten of her Mana-rich people were cut down in droves to birth the Auspices, and more than half of the thousand that remained died escaping Sidith. She swore vengeance. Mastering the element of Dark along with all the classical ones, making multiple pacts with the Archons of distant worlds to become one of the greatest summoners in history, allying with beastmen tribes, and seeking the aid of western demihumans.

But it was all for naught. After everything, the First Overlord was defeated by Yazata, the First Prophet. Ever since then, humans have used her rebellion to ensure elves have only *dubious* independence from human governments.

Only for her long-lost brethren to enact a plan ending with their children's sacrifices, so she would be brought back from the dead.

All the fire and righteous anger that once drove Mazdayasna is long guttered, the broken woman driven only to honour her long dead friends and end a reckoning that started a millennia ago. Her auburn hair and antiquated dress are maintained solely out of relentless routine. While a relentless enemy, to extend her the hand of friendship could give her one more precious reason to go on living so that the One Prophet may be destroyed. And perhaps, a coach to explain the much-changed world to her.

The Alfqueen has just one indulgence she wants from perhaps her last living ally: To recover the mementos of her dead comrades from the One Temple of Sidith, and lay them to rest in Druj-Demana (called Cinvat by her), the Crystal Forest. Long ago, her kin swore to rest together in these woods where the first tree elves ever bent to their will still grows.

They are more than their relics. But it would mean the world to Mazdayasna, who has nothing else to remember them by.

Alis Branford, the "Gamer" or so she's said to call herself sometimes is by far the most *excited* to be branded THE Overlord! Screeching about coming from a faraway reality after being gifted power by a dreamy god one strange day, she recklessly wandered into the desert Uramag and in two months defeated all the monstrous beings there, crushed their rulers' remains into a crown for herself, and started leading them in conquest. As her power grows in great bursts to become an unmatched warrior and mage, her subjects (some admiringly, others sorrowfully) say there won't be any living thing stronger than her in the world at this rate. She, Alis, will knock them all down!

Like any overly dramatic Evil Overlord, Alis would normally appear when the Hero is ready to face her in a climactic battle. If you somehow make an alliance with her (shouting that you're a "Heavenly King" in search of a glorious overlord, describing your previous work experience as "grand vizier" or claiming that you have "the weakest support class" as your cheat skill is highly recommended) you'll see the private side of the Overlord of Costa: A spastic, ditzy girl who keeps calling beastmen "furries" and teasing about lewd things she will blush and flee from if ever responded positively to.

Whoever earns the position of Alis' GLORIOUS top enforcer will be tasked with **resolving dereliction**. Simply put, Alis is as terrible at logistics and bureaucracy as she is great at ruling the battlefield. Her council of advisors is already struggling with missing war supplies and loss of morale and many, many other things that haven't been properly signed off on or double checked.

Fix Alis' accounting mistakes and you'll have almost total control of her empire's finances, as well as her complete trust.

She will still insist you wear all black "because that's what Sephiroth did for Jenova"

Whatever that means.

Beliya'al, the self-declared Demon King was once nothing more than another warlord. Then he found Nakbé, the legendary first city of demonkind, causing an unprecedented rallying of demons under his banner. Since his childhood, Beliya'al has believed stories of a golden age for demons cleft from them by humanity, and has set forth on a quest to regain what he believes was stolen from the race: Divinity, immortality, and the world. He has recently rebuilt the city, started waging war on the beastmen clans, and just begun to attack human civilisation.

This has made demons very unwelcome in lands warring against him.

Ostensibly effeminate and overdramatic, the Demon King hides his tactical genius and combat prowess behind his immense prowess at demagoguery and sophistry-preferring to turn his enemies against each other before a single blow is struck his way. Though very cold to all non-demons, his backing could be won over by one that earnestly believes in his dream. Especially someone in a position of leverage to be useful to him. And of course, if you are a demon *and* part of the Hero's party, he is guaranteed to offer a public invitation to abandon the Auspices' cruel machinations for a position of glorious revolution at his side.

Amicable and surprisingly informal once he is confident in your loyalty, Beliya'al will someday ask his most capable agent to **recover the Vendidad**. Supposedly the first book in existence, gifted by great gods to the first king of demons, it is said to trace every demon's bloodline to their divine progenitors. If recovered, it would make Beliya'al's claim ironclad and raise the morale of all who stand with him to unimaginable heights.

It has been located in an entrapped, monster-infested ruin bare enough that nobody has ever deemed it worth conquering. So great is the importance of this task that the Demon King will grant any request to secure the book, within reason.

Athanas, Epoch's End, is an unpleasant surprise for the whole world. Appearing out of nowhere, he swiftly destroyed the One Temple and slew the One Prophet in a blast of law-giving sunlight. *No other Overlord in history* has ever shown such power. His namesake is the mythical first king of the demons: Born out of a sun the gods changed into an egg, before creating and enforcing both justice and laws. Bringing a golden age for demonkind that ended in betrayal and murder by his own son. If Athanas himself is to be believed, he has witnessed what lies beyond death and has come to cast away both the yoke of the old gods and the lies of prophets. For he is **Athanas, The Sun Returned**.

With two horns swept behind his smouldering gaze and great leathery wings surrounding his rippling frame, for how intimidating Athanas can be in person he is true to his mission of erasing both the Auspices and old gods from this world. He sets out to leave hours of warning for the faithful to flee before *solely* attacking holy sites, is utterly uninterested in the Heroes, and would gladly accept any sincere aid in his mission. There is little he can offer in Caer Lleon, a fortress he built far from civilisation in the image of his fondest recollections, save the protection of its mighty vortex.

Should you be willing to aid him even so, he has only one task for you. He yet lacks his full power, and you must recover **The Sun's Heart** if he is to fight at full strength. Buried under the fruit trees in Ynys Afallach along with his fallen body, the protectors of the island would not allow him to retake it-and he fears his conviction would fail him if he faced them alone.

If his light-bringer, his heart, is regained, by Athanas' reckoning the old gods are lost in thought while the new are panicking as their worship is culled. With an ally as capable as yourself, he seems confident the two of you can defeat the gods together.

The fact that none of the Auspices seemed capable of stopping him from invading their most sacred city in the first place lends credence to his claims.

Tagus, the Beast of Slid is known by many names. The Corpse Wave, Fisherwoman's Lament, Mariner's Terror. It disdains all who live upon land, but is an aloof but protective father to all marine life. And once, this forgotten ancestor demigod for the seafaring beastmen was content to be lulled to sleep by the currents rocking its bones, until one day *something* made it roar thrice around the world. Now the seas rise, swallowing coast and cities. Now gilled sailors on ships of bone sing the chaunt of Tagus as they claim land for the sea. Now, the Beast of Slid roars, the tides breaking the world by his command. Until there is only Sky and Sea. Until the things of flesh and death remember Slid, the god whose soul once rested in the sea.

Tagus is neither a kind king nor a cruel one to those he regards as subjects rather than prey. Skull-faced, translucent and shaped like a muscular torpedo, he lends his favour to those that bear proper worship and offer tribute-ensuring they join the depths by growing gills should they fall overboard and drown. To the things of the land that swear fealty and impress it with their prowess, Tagus will arrange a ship and crew to ransack the cities and temples of the hated Auspices- as well as safe passage among all sea beasts and tempests. But nothing more.

There is one exception. Tagus hates Sidith, where the altars and relics of the old gods were dragged to and shattered, more than all else. Break Sidith, smash it enough to be sunk beneath the waves, and something...similar, to joy will fill the Corpse Wave. It will pay whoever accomplishes this with the waters of its' heart, transforming the drinker into one of the Yun: A prince of all depths, resplendent with the biology of deep sea beasts, and ruling over both the dark waters as well as the things living within them.

There is one more candidate, who is neither the strongest, nor the mightiest, nor the strangest among the Overlords. But **Yazata, the One Prophet** is unquestionably the most dangerous, and ambitious, Overlord for all that the pale-harried, blue-eyed maiden is also renowned as mankind's first and greatest hero-the one who held back the night, and brought forth the Auspices' light to all.

It is all a lie.

Sidith was built not on faith, but rebellion. Against mortality, the nothingness that follows it, and the monsters outside its walls. Above all else, rebellion against Highest Pegana, and the gods that laughed at all beneath them after making the world for mankind to suffer within.

With the other five Sorcerer-Kings, Yazata shattered the limits of science and sorcery, creating the Auspices as their living weapons. By the end of their rebellion Yazata was the only survivor among her comrades, the Auspices proclaimed their will from a manmade Heaven, and the gods did not walk the Earth.

For over a thousand years, Yazata has questioned the merit of her actions while watching over, protecting and guiding mankind. She has stood as prophet only to honour her sacrifice, but after being branded, enough is enough. To her mind, the spell-robots known as the Auspices are malfunctioning, escaping their constraints, and must be replaced. Her natural ally in this regard is the Traitor, who upon accepting her offer of being told the truth of this world (to her own relief) would be conferred authority superseding that of kings and resources kept only by her temple.

Sidith, Mankind's Light, is a physical proclamation of mankind's everlasting prosperity, and more importantly proclaims that *humanity does not exist without purpose*. It is also very literally the final resting place of human souls, protecting them from dissipation into nothingness *that the gods designed them to meet*. Yazata's task for you is to access **The Seventh Auspice**: Mahasidi, the vacuous Auspice of Nothing. The absolute unreality and opposite to divinity, necessary to create false gods. And a weapon of unimaginable destruction.

Held in a dimensional fold below Sidith in the Kadmon facility, it is surrounded by defences strong enough to keep out the agents of the old gods. This, Yazata claims, is necessary to activate if Auspices 1-6 are to be replaced. But she cannot pilot it due to existing failsafes. Although the Traitor, *somehow*, can.

To complete Yazata's mission as an "Overlord" is not to conquer this world. It is to completely redefine what it means to save it. When the Auspices have been vanquished to the River of Silence without even the dignity of golden ships or perhaps been as annihilated as anything born of human blood, and there stands irrefutable proof the gods of mankind are dead, what then will the two of you do? Will you raise up new thrones to seat yourself upon, and accept the grovelling of the meek as they realise they have no one else to protect them from a world that was never meant for mankind? Or will you embrace an age of unparalleled freedom, without any gods at all to dictate the future?

A note on Origins

Due to the patterns laid down by the Auspices on *what was here before* and the sheer variety of walks of life you can come from, *not all of which are necessarily bound by this world*, Origins function a little differently.

Select **one choice** under each of the following **Origin headers**:

Racial Origins

These are the origins which determine what kind of blood flows in your veins, and the baseline strength of your arm. You can be any age and gender that makes sense for your origin, just as long as you have the bare minimum physical prowess to hold your own in an adventuring party, even as a child.

Human: The most widespread race in this world, found on the chilliest mountaintops and the most barren deserts. First to spread the glory of the Auspices, humans have been blessed so their blood will triumph over all others-explaining why all hybrids with humanity resemble the human more than their other progenitor, regardless of their strength.

Humans have a reputation for being both anarchic terrorists and deceptive turncoats, as well as clever tacticians and wise in theology. Generally depending on who's asking. Many agree that the human nations are, first and foremost, looking out for humans alone though.

...you do know what a human looks like, right? It is written in scrolls found long ago in a temple of slumbering monks that you, the person reading this, were once human, even if you no longer are.

Elf: A reclusive folk generally found in mystically domesticated forests or cities protected by great barriers, the elves are the most long lived race as a rule-usually dying of old age in around three hundred years. Alas, they have great difficulties in conceiving children.

Elven culture prioritises intellectual pursuits and social refinement-often to the detriment of rougher elves trying to break the stereotype. Many of the greatest mages in history came from elven stock. Alas, they are also commonly regarded as the most fragile of the races-and despite frequent denials, the most lewd.

Beastmen: There are a folk who, despite possessing fingers and *usually* legs, resemble humanoid exaggerations of fox and whale and eagle and serpent-the resemblance obeying unknown rules regardless of the parent's appearance, but always breeding true among themselves. They worshipped their unimaginably mighty ancestors and nature spirits until recently, making them unwelcome in more devout parts of society.

Still, they are undeniably superb warriors-far stronger by nature than most humans could ever hope to be. This is offset by their magical traditions being very unrefined compared to the heights that humans and elves have attained.

Demihuman: There is a monster-like folk beyond the desert Uramag and in the distant continents past the northern seas, who in both physical prowess and form are so unusual that even the beastmen regard them as the stuff of folklore. The harpy, the centaur, the siren and the manticore are all numbered among such creatures. Few demihumans have cause to abandon the wilderness they are at home in for civilisation. Those that do are often bewildered by the trappings of civilisation, and most of all by how *weak and slow* most of those within it are, like young children.

Demon: It is hard to describe a demon, beyond the fact that they consistently look different from any other race in a way that lacks even the uniform animality of the beastmen or the chimeric traits of the demihuman, and they *often* but not *always* have horns. Some are towering terrors with steel-like flesh, others have child-like weak forms with mental and magical powers, that makes elves look like beastmen by comparison. Some have little more lifespan than a human, while others are old enough to know the world before the coming of the Auspices. Some view all other life as more precious than their own-though it's fair to say *many* are drawn to violent callings due to their prowess and frequent thirst for power of some kind.

Demons as a rule do not like to coexist, it practically being a miracle to see more than three together. Which are probably blood-related family.

Hybrid (200 CP): Life has often taken many strange turns when it interbreeds. Human-beastmen hybrids with human wisdom and animalistic physical prowess, as well as sometimes lives complicated by their animalistic physiology or instincts. Crossbreeds of elf and human who are often shunned by the elven parent, who if they survive their 20th birthday are often renowned for exceptional wisdom. No tales are told of demihumans breeding with elves, humans or beastmen...*yet*. As for demon hybrids with any race, in the rare circumstances where such beings do not die from their body parts rejecting each other, the healthy specimens from such unions have such horrifying power that the Third Overlord (a demon-beastman hybrid) was reputed to be nearly unkillable in pitched battle.

For 200 CP, you may be a hybrid of any of the two races discussed above. **This grants you access to all the race perks under their relevant headers in their sections below.**

Branding Origins

What a turn of events! It seems you've been branded by the Auspices to be one of their champions, doubtless for some feat of greatness in your extraordinary life! *Right?!* Which Auspice branded you denotes the role you'll be chosen to carry out in order to save the world and defeat the Overlord. *Not necessarily in that order.*

Though you'll have great leeway in *how* you carry out that role. There is absolutely nothing stopping a Mage from specialising in close-quarters combat spells, a Wanderer wielding spells of Dark and Necromancy, or a Hero from being an absolute cunt.

Hero: How fortuitous, to be chosen by the Auspice ETERNITY! You are a leader straight out of myth ordained to maintain the eternal rule of the Auspices themselves, given authority over the rest of the party and often *but not always* the charisma needed to bring them to heel. Those chosen for this have a balanced fighting style equally gifted in close combat, mysticism and wit. It's not clear why the Auspices favour a style of combat that can only arise from wide experience, but surely this is all part of their plan?

Healer: Chosen by the Auspice LIFE, you are the one who holds the rest of the party's lives in your hands! You've been chosen from a life that makes you capable of healing wounds, spirits and both. Letting the rest of the party fight on your behalf against more direct threats. Of course, whatever the past that got you chosen for this, no one said you *couldn't* possess great powers of combat or annihilation, only that you *do* have the means to heal them. Even if as indirectly as by using your power to erase localised things from existence to erase wounds and disease...

Fighter: The team warrior, chosen by the Auspice GLORY! You are charged with keeping foes at bay and serving as the party's vanguard while everyone else thinks of something cleverer to solve the problems before them. No real nonsense here, it's a straightforward role for straightforward folk. Although it's worth noting that those dedicated to fighting in this world end up able to throw blows that can dent armor, shatter bone and keep going when others have long since collapsed in exhaustion. A back full of arrows is literally a flesh wound to those that have lived the kind of life this calls for.

Mage: The wiseman, witch, sage, scholar or other know-it-all of the party! Chosen by the Auspice FATE, your abilities can often make or break battles-and just as often need time and protection for maximum effectiveness. Many are the magical arts of this world, from focused disciplines that wield the elements of magic with precision and devastating force, to less civilised styles that shed blood to enhance magic or use chants and dances to perform spells with chants or dances with effects more exotic than those recorded in academic texts.

Wanderer: Those chosen by the Auspice BEAUTY, feckless wayfarers picked from the road less travelled! There really is little commonality from these heroes, save that one way or another they're often set up to provide *the* Hero with assistance most of polite society cannot. From a disciplined shinobi, to a fearless gunslinger, to animal-taming archers, to practitioners of magic so exotic it blurs the line between spell and life (surely something that should be forbidden in the eyes of the Auspices)...

Overlord (200 CP): **Alas! Doom has come to this benighted world! Yours is a shadow that falls over its future, and threatens to wipe every smile from the faces of the innocent! Not all Overlords are alike. This origin grants no great power by itself. An Overlord could be a heartless man of wealth and means, or a queen gone mad with grief. Armies and political clout can bring as much devastation as a beast of the old gods, or a demon burning as brightly as the sun itself. It matters only that you have been branded by the Aspect DEATH, as the doom of all.**

At least, that is what the Auspices denote you as by branding you as such.

The individual motivations of any given Overlord can often have a certain amount of...nuance to them.

Traitor (Drop-In): **Heh.** This is just perfect. When an anomalous slot in the Hero and their party opened up, you just happened to show up with an applicable skillset. A versatile spellblade trained in both rapier and blinding burst of Mana, a Spirit Talker who can form pacts with beings from distant planes, a dashing bard who can ennoble or enfeeble with his songs, or even a strange mirror of the Hero's own versatile skills! It matters not what kind of life you lived beforehand. Only that you have potential rivalling *any* of the party, including the Hero, and now also the means to make use of it for your ulterior motives.

Yes. With no precedent for an anomaly like you in the Auspices' system, you can stab the heroes in the back whenever the moment is right.

Unless, of course, you decide to betray even your own betrayal.

Aptitude Origins

This origin represents the aptitudes and capabilities you have an affinity for. Choose for **one** among the following to be your greatest strength, even if your skills are otherwise versatile:

The secret techniques of master warriors, the truths that gods imbued the world with, and the simple might of a superior body. **Strength (STR)**

Mastery over the elements, from destructive beams and explosions to more intricate manipulations of Mana: The magical energy underlying all reality.

Wisdom (WIS)

And control of the Strange Elements, fluids vital in moderation and catastrophic in excess to life, unusual magic tricks, the summoning of spirits, and just a few random skills that don't really fit anywhere else. **Wit (WIT)**

Perks

Perks under their respective origins headers (except racial perks) are discounted by 50%. One discounted 100 CP perk of your choice becomes free, while the other costs 50 CP.

Racial perks are exclusive to their specific races, unless you are a **hybrid** allowing you to buy perks from both your parents' races.

Normally, there would be a more granular selection process but someone rigged the dice of Chance and Fate and now, it seems you need only seek greater strength of any kind to reach the higher heights of this world.

Remember that **all** the Aptitude perk options, **advanced and basic**, described below are **always discounted** for your **chosen Aptitude: STR, WIS or WIT**. **Three purchases of 50 CP perks in total become free and optional**, the rest cost the normal price

Typically, the Auspices select for greatness those who are already great through unique legacies, heritages or life circumstances. As such, if you accepted a Brand, take 600 CP which may be split any way you like between Aptitude, Branding and Racial perks. Both the Overlord and Traitor count as being branded. The Overlord gets 1100 CP. But if you'd rather **opt out** of the whole mess, you can forsake being branded at all. You won't have any discounts in the subsequent **Branding perks** section, but you'll also have less responsibility for what's to come and be less expected by society as a whole to confront the Overlord. **This too can optionally be considered a Drop-In origin.**

Racial Perks:

Human

Smiling Cynic (100 CP): A dim view of humans holds that one will smile, and laugh, and call you brother before stabbing you in the back with the arm thrown around your shoulder. That they destroy community bonds and destabilise governments like second nature. You live up to this stereotype, being a conniving little shit with some gift for skullduggery and a lot of cunning making you a great conman, bandit, terrorist or politician. These categories are not necessarily distinct.

Wisdom of Sidith (100 CP): A kinder view of humans suggests that as those most graced by the Auspices, their generosity is tempered by their insight. You are gifted with seeing through a bad deal, using what you've got to make the best of a bad situation and improvising to adapt to changing circumstances. Above all else, you're clever at being kind without being nice, giving people what they need to need without overtaxing your own resources.

Blessing of the Auspices (200 CP): The uniformity that the Auspices would see fall over the world takes root in you, allowing you to selectively apply it in future worlds. Should you wish, any child with another race-however alien-will breed true and look primarily human while any detrimental effects resulting because of this are minimised. Impregnating a centaur will result in a two-legged child with their mother's strength and stamina but without any complications worse than estrus, for example.

Truth of Love (200 CP): It is said in texts written before the founding of Sidith that there are things man was never meant to know reserved for the gods. But this one thing at least is forever beyond the ken of divine beings whose gaze reaches past the stars and can count the steps until a creature dies: Love, kindness and compassion. There is nothing beyond your ability to empathise with, no viewpoint too alien nor wrong too great to be forgiven. And when you extend the hand of friendship, courtship or camaraderie to another, it ignites an irrational spark to reciprocate it-a yearning for warmth like a moth's to a flame that can share love to those that have never known it. Even a god might weep were they to be loved, rather than worshipped.

Blessing of Excellence (300 CP): Once, humans were the favourite creations of the gods, as well as their last. The blessing they rewarded humanity with is especially strong in you: When you confront your equals in power, intelligence or skill, the blessings of the gods tip the scales in your favour so that you'll hit harder, be just a hair more devious and respond with JUST enough flair to seize victory from the teeth of defeat. It often makes for some quite spectacular displays of prowess, much like a JRPG character hitting his Limit Break, and naturally this flow state is great for learning about how to make the most of your abilities.

Truth of Defiance (300 CP): Once, the prophet Yun stood against the eternal, immutable gods and asked them to recognise the men arrayed against them. When you stand against that which should be your superior in might or wisdom, or even against a cosmic law that should supersede your own existence, you *might* still prevail. That rock on the ground may be touched by the power of a god, and thus be able to pierce invincible mage-forged armour. The foresight of an all-knowing mage could be blinded if your music charmed a spirit from a realm of existence he didn't focus enough on. And of course, the cruel gods of this world were defeated by the ones that humans made to bring them the prosperity they were denied. These longshots become more plausible the closer you are in power to your adversity, and then, well...that's where the Blessing of Excellence comes in.

Final Form: Kadmon (400 CP): The first humans looked upon the world as the gods did, as giants who loomed tall enough to use the mountains as houses and trees as toothpicks. Feared and beloved by all that dwelled upon every world and plane, their might far exceeded even their immense frames-letting them perform mythic feats like nailing a cloud to the sky with a thrown sycamore, or tearing upon the earth with their bare hands and stitching it up with the roots of a forest. With their magic, they could shape into being citadels of ambrosia, universal solvent or fruit of eternal life with a fingersnap-then strip the life from entire rainforests to feed their gluttony and conceit. And such was their charm that the art of summoning is a pale reflection of how they once caused mass exiles from the courts of Archons so their subjects (and sometimes, a whelmed Archon themselves) would caper and perform for their entertainment.

Your actions have so endeared you to the great gods, that they have cleansed you of your kind's sins and given back all the blessings that make up your terrifying yet beautiful true form.

Sorcerer-King (400 CP): Once and perhaps never again, learned men and women rebelled against the conceit that it was humanity's lot to remain ignorant and finite. They sought to learn all there was about the nature of the gods, the power within humanity, and the fundamental structure of reality itself. They became conquerors and rulers of humanity, with the wisdom to tamper with the bedrock of existence itself. They reshaped some humans into the stunted creatures that became the first elves, losing all hope of greatness to become the richest fodder for sacrifice. They quantified the parameters of nothingness, made eternal records of spellwork to save humanity from the nonexistence that awaited them all and created the systems as well as the foundational theories that support all dominant civilisations in this day. But after their war against the gods of Pegana, only two survived: Yazata, and yourself.

As a sorcerer-king, you have a millennia's worth of magical learning that far dwarfs almost any other living mortal's. Solving the problem of mortality without becoming unrecognisable as a human being with magic alone is the least of your abilities. While Yazata took on the burden of being the One Prophet, depending on what you've been doing all this time you may also have centuries' worth of experience with leadership, inspiration and ruling nations.

Elf

Eloquence Enfleshed (100 CP): There are *certain expectations* that elven society foists on its scions, be they of noble birth or common stock. To be graceful and dignified in all social situations, with a tongue as sharp and fast as a rapier. To be refined, patient, well-read in all mundane disciplines and dedicated to all academic ones. To be splendid of form and to move like poetry in motion, the beauty of an elf being as self-referential as the greenery of a forest. And to be justifiably smug about all this. You fulfil these criteria.

Token Tomboy Waifubait (100 CP): There are, it must be said, elves who break from the mould above and think it's a complete waste of time. You may be one of them if you want, having trained diligently and augmented yourself magically to overcome natural elven fragility-training in martial excellence, mastering a few unique performance-boosting spells and holding the respect of other rough and tumble types after drinking them under the table. In future worlds you'll continue to be mildly gifted at all that is gritty and grizzled, finding it easier to earn both a tough reputation and train yourself to overcome weakness.

Blessing of Purpose (200 CP): Even knowing they were created as fuel for the instrument of their destruction, the gods so pitied the elves for existing only to go extinct that they bestowed this blessing upon some of them. When you put your mind to a goal, your resolve will *never* waver even as your bones crack apart and your flesh tears at the seams. You will continue fighting with all that you can give until you take your dying breath, and endure oceans of sorrow to make right what's wrong.

Truth of Agony (200 CP): Another thing the great gods had never felt, until perhaps they saw their peers cleft apart and banished by the onslaught of that which was remembered as the Auspices: Suffering. It is the very impetus for change, and thus growth. By understanding this, you will find some small recompense in every suffering inflicted on you, and learn to do better or hone your strengths further in response for it. The recompense will always be dwarfed by the suffering inflicted, but even should a sword be thrust through your guts you may collapse out of sight before more soldiers arrive-and someday learn a technique to evade such blows or a spell to bless your vital organs so they're reliably missed.

Arboreal Conductor (300 CP): The legacy of elven magic is written on the trunks and branches they bent to build their first cities. You're particularly gifted in magic concerning Life, and among that magic for shaping and reshaping trees. You could master things about healing and mutation in weeks what it would take most mages a year to pick up, and reshape trees so thoroughly they could serve as buildings or military hardware. A certain grove where even to this day, crystals grow like wood and leaf is testament to this legacy.

Truth of Sacrifice (300 CP): The horror behind all the jokes about elven lewdness and the grim truth of why they are barren is laid bare before you, *for all that you are was never meant to carry life on her own, only give it to another*. But there is power in that self-knowledge. You will always earn as much as you lose, specifically in terms of the injury inflicted upon your flesh, soul, mind and any other extensions of your existence. Lose an arm and you will smack bullets from the air while sending dozens of peers flying with each strike using the weapon clutched in the other. Lose an eye and you might well see your foes' weaknesses laid bare. Sacrifice everything you are to fuel a god's birth...and you might be reborn as a defining principle of its way of being. A ghost clothed in divinity it may someday be inspired to recreate.

Perfected Offering (400 CP): *Ah*, this is it then. The purpose of your existence, the dissolution that your sorcerer-kings decreed for you. And you, you're something *special*. Everything from your flesh to your soul is a catalyst of immense value for mystical purposes, with even a single drop of your blood being a precious catalyst for powerful artifacts and specialised mystical processes. You need not give your life to birth an Auspice-merely a literal arm and a leg. Not only does this let you accelerate or supercharge all manner of mystical processes, but also unlock ones that *only* your unique state of being can enable. From your sacrifice, *something* greater than the Auspices could be created. Alas, as is the lot of elves, it seems these parts of you must be sacrificed to have these properties used.

...though nobody ever said you couldn't sacrifice yourself, to yourself or your great works.

Thousand Year Blood Elf (400 CP): There are those who loved you enough to emulate the crime that gave rise to you, so that this world can continue to be blessed by your tread. So complex was the ritual they performed that it can be repeated even in other worlds. If you should ever die, your chain will not end so long as before the end of your stay 100 members of the same species as yourself give their lives in your name-and so long as you acted earnestly in their benefit, they will intuitively understand how to perform the simple ritual from dreams and omens prioritising those with spiritual sensitivity. Success will not just resurrect you, but return any equipment and weapons you had to their pristine state. This can be shortened with the dearest sacrifices of all: The children of those close to you, or your own, each of them being worth 10 normal sacrifices.

Beastmen

Raging Rapids (100 CP): Many beastmen pursue the path of a warrior, valuing strength and hoping to emulate their ancestors. Whether or not you are formally trained as one, a very rough and tumble life has given you both the fighting instincts and toughness to excel at it. Your blows can dent armor and shatter bone, strikes that would gravely wound most men roll off you like rain, and you can keep fighting when most fighters have slumped over in exhaustion.

Ancestral Reverence (100 CP): While the Auspices are distantly removed from both humans and elves, some of the divine beings that the beastmen revere are merely considered elder relatives or spirits of nature that once walked alongside them. You'll find that when you pay homage to both your senior blood relatives or beings so closely entwined with nature, they're much more receptive to lending you their aid and patronage than most others. Furthermore, your own descendants are more genetically inclined to be loyal to you as well.

Meaningless Zeal (200 CP): In The End, when the gods are gods of nothing, the Beastmen shall still swim through the River of Silence after their galleons of gold to console them, and even then, the once-gods will deny them the slightest spark of love. But there is a beautiful strength unlike any other in this world exemplified by the fact that the beastmen, who were once spawn of silence, clothed themselves in flesh out of adoration for that which could not reciprocate it. Like those unborn generations, you will still be able to find joy and solace no matter how grim the odds and how harsh the struggle you find yourself in. Each blow will only embolden you, each insult or lie slung your way only temper your spirit from the sheer impossibility of what you're doing.

Truth of Chance (200 CP): Here is a secret only you know-at the beginning of this world, Chance won, and Fate lost. Every golden thread sewn through Time by the gods is frayed at the edges. Every action you take in defiance of the gods' guiding hands, against the machinations of mortal manipulators, against what the laws of the world say should be inevitable, is greatly bolstered. Lotteries won and heroic roles rejected aside, it's far harder than it should be to bring you back under the careful predictability of such systems.

Howl of Imrana (300 CP): Imrana, the River of Silence, has a howl. A silence as deafening as thunder, returning all Mana it reaches to the bed of her waters. You have somehow borrowed this power from your mother, allowing you to release an annihilation even the gods dread in a localised area around you merely through an unearthly scream. This scales with your overall level with power, with even a normal beastman being able to rend a dozen of his martial peers from existence as long as he can let fly this unheard bellow.

Truth of Silence (300 CP): Your nature is the waters that are not waters, and the Silence that flows. It takes concentration and mindfulness, but you can evoke the way of being that Silence takes the form of to bring most mortal spells to rightful stillness. While this scales with your overall level of power and there are certain advanced or indirect arts even in this world which could overcome this, an ordinary beastman has little to fear from a bolt of lightning or flame conjured at him with this-just a normal boulder levitated by wind, or the ground caving in beneath him from the water magic that destabilised it.

Deny Nothingness (400 CP): When the first beastmen became enamoured with the music of the gods which freed them from Imrana's liquid womb, they wormed into the worlds with an ancient howl that shaped flesh and bone for them. It resounds in your chest to this day, and you can free it as a mighty ward against anything that would change your nature. Mind control, curses, Strange Elements or even the passive embrace of Silence must greatly outmatch your overall capabilities to overcome this howl's resilience.

Final Form: Musahn (400 CP): Only one of the River of Silence's children didn't abandon her: Her Beast, Musanh, the unborn eldest of his kind. *When* he is someday born (and it is inevitable), the sound of his birth cry will make his mother overflow in a flood of Silence that will return all to nothing. You can become an anticipation of your eldest brother, though the effort of communion seldom lasts for more than a few minutes for most beastmen. In this state not only does your form become more birdlike, but also durable enough to withstand Silence indefinitely, swift and strong enough to contest even divine beings, and nearly impossible to affect with the conventional spells of humanity against your will. Most of all, you can unleash screams of Silence that wipe cities from the map and darken the horizon permanently; even more damage can be dealt with Truth of Silence. As you grow in power and spiritual communion with your mother and eldest brother, your ability to sustain this state will increase.

Demihuman

Wild-Crowned (100 CP): The desert, the mountain range and the sea often seem desolate to city-dwelling races. Not so to you, for living in one of these (or an environmental category as broad as any of them) is much like living in a house for most city folk. You know where to catch food, how to find shelter and what you shouldn't poke like the back of your hand. This has also given you a raw athleticism that puts to shame the majority of beastmen, at the cost of far less refinement in close combat with a peer. Not that you need much when you can rip through stone like cardboard.

City-Honed (100 CP): A few demihumans do go out of their way to adapt to civilisation, a process that for many is much like a caveman learning to use a TV. You don't have to worry about that, because ironically you have natural instincts that are very useful for picking up the tools and learnings of civilisation. A bow, a pottery's kiln, an accountant's book-anything less complex than spellcraft is something you have a savant-like gift for. As if life were adapting to human society as one more calamity to navigate.

Truth of Adaptability (200 CP): The gods enjoy letting the things Life spawns find their own ruin, driving them to change, lest they perish from the uncaring cruelty of the universe. This truth drives you in thought and action, helping you easily adapt to any challenges in your life-be they learning to brawl when criminals break into your house, or just accepting you should ignore the cutting remarks at a social gala. As demihumans have an inherent sort of reactive evolution, this also makes yours work noticeably faster.

Change Self (200 CP): Typically passive and slow, you've somehow managed to harness the demihuman ability to adapt to your own will-and accelerate it to change your flesh in seconds. Enjoy switching up your hair colour, growing claws and hooves and functional wings, or simply becoming a snarling blob to intimidate then reforming into a more civil form. This does not let you boost traits like strength, intelligence or toughness due to the lack of experience with your new body, but something like venom sacks, a covering of quills or continuously hardening scales is well within reach.

Overcome Hardship (300 CP): Your resilience is exceptional among the demihumans, letting you easily walk off being eviscerated with a sword-and adapting to become resistant to it in days. No matter how terrible the wound dealt you is, as long as it's survivable your body will evolve and overcome it within that timeframe. Face enough types of harm, and you may become nigh-impervious to most damage.

Resurrection of Flesh (300 CP): Are you, perhaps, chosen for greatness by Life itself? No, not the Auspice. *The old god of Life*. You could be pulped and shredded to a steak with no organs, bones or muscles. Then cast into a void with no Mana. And after eons, you would still regain all you have lost. In most battles your regeneration is more immediate and terrifying, instantly restoring flesh blown away in seconds and drinking poison like wine. Only forces directly invoking Death, Silence and the like that are meant to end the products of Life inherently can bypass this fleshly immortality.

Apex Predator (400 CP): Even the princes of Yun, the blood and adoptive children of the Corpse Wave, avoid the Siren of the Erythran Sea-who is sometimes speculated to be an extremely atavistic demihuman. She has the might and magic to sink a thousand ships, through a combination of a mind-warping spawn that extends for many leagues and the power to rip anything from whales to frigates asunder with her bare hands. You too are simply powerful in a way that blends undying flesh and crude yet mighty magic into more than the sum of its parts, being to a mere spellblade what a mountain is to a molehill.

Apotheosis: Perfect Lifeform (400 CP): It is speculated by those that have devoted themselves to the worship of Life for a thousand years that there is an endpoint for all lifeforms. A point of perfection where a mortal can stand amongst the gods. By vastly accelerating the mutation within you, you can touch such a pinnacle for a while before exhaustion forces your body to return to normal. In this state, you are every adaptation possible in nature made supernal enough to claw up Pegana's slopes, a god over your own flesh, blood and bone: Your wings crossing the horizon in a few wingbeats while leaving contrails of feathered flame, a litre of your venom making whole rivers kill all life in a league of their passing, your claws and hooves and horns whirling in a blizzard of drilling as they punch clean holes through mountain ranges.

Exhausting as it is, your body adapts to each use of it. Letting you maintain this state longer and longer, until someday it will be your natural one.

Demon

Unlikely Savior (100 CP): Towering with great claws and horns, and sometimes unlike any other living being in this world, it's easy to write off demons as monsters and villains. That has not stopped some from overcoming all prejudices. At least one potential Hero is a beloved caretaker for an orphanage in Lucasta...and a towering demon with steel-like hide. No more will your outward appearance obfuscate your sincere compassion and civility for those around you. You may still be prejudiced against based on commonly held assumptions about your race, culture, or similarly broad categories but on a personal level you'll find it much easier to build connections and overcome those prejudices by demonstrating you're a person who cares for the people around you.

Uncanny Demon Rampage (100 CP): It must be said though that many demons *do* however end up using their often gifted physiologies to get whatever they want, whenever you want it. You can lean into that stereotype by having a veteran's combat experience and even greater speed and strength than whatever your build suggests-which combine together into a fighting style many find unpredictable. A five foot tall oni might have a deceptively swift but crude fighting style with an enormous club, a nine foot tall demoness might use her tail to knock down houses. And a savage lizardman-like demon fencing and dancing fast enough to leave arcs of artful red in his wake.

Divine Truth (200 CP): Gods. Spirits. Archons. Their nature is one and the same, even if how it is exercised may differ: To be of Mana yet beyond Mana, blessed and doomed to behold all that is from beginning to end. You have reclaimed the slightest fraction of this eternal nature. For now, eons of self-improvement and recovery remain until the throne of godhood is returned to you, but one thing you *are* capable of is comprehension of facets of reality that most mortals would find fundamentally unknowable: The quality of existence before Time, the colour of nonbeing, the progress of mortality and the emotional aspects of Mana. Seldom useful for anything as direct as combat and rapid fire spellcraft, but foundational in determining how to interact with the true nature of reality on a more fundamental level than a fireball or blade to the face.

Divine Gaze (200 CP): A man curses a god. His impiety is known instantly, the punishment doled out at the god's leisure. You have regained the fragment of divinity that senses when and where your name escapes someone's lips. With this alone, you can do nothing more *for now* but someday your very name could become a conduit for spells, allow you to reply to those who dare speak it or be used for other esoteric functions.

Divine Domain (300 CP): There was an aspect of the world teased from Mana at the beginning, that many demons forsook to escape the fury of the gods of Pegana. Now that time has passed and Pegana has far fewer dwellers upon it, there is a facet of reality you have reclaimed that responds to you like an extension of your being, can be infused with mythopoeic wonder by the force of your soul-and is so fundamental to the operation of the world that it bypasses effects that can merely disrupt crude and fragile constructs like most mortal spells. It is a tiny thing compared to the absolute Life, Time and Death: The border where the mountains kiss the sky perhaps, or the hearth and all cooked by it, or that which borders rivers. But to a once-mortal demon, it is a prize beyond compare.

Divine Right (300 CP): Even if you have not won back your domain and gaze, the great gods have been satisfied that you deserve a chance to play the games of Worlds and Men *once*. Perhaps they viewed your former incarnation's crimes as more sympathetic than your peers, or else even they view levying your ancestor's crimes against their Nth-removed descendant unjust. Regardless, you can choose an event roughly as significant and defined as "the Heroes defeat the Overlord, but the Traitor gets away" or "An Archon arrives on this plane to grant a wish to whoever recovers something valuable it lent while the gods were still young and kind" to be guaranteed to come to pass. It must be in the future and it is far harder to exert meaningful consequences on divine beings like the gods of this world, but other than that logic and causality will trip over themselves to make it happen.

In future worlds, you'll continue to be lent a free throw of the dice to guarantee a similar chance to preordain Fate which only extraordinary efforts will be able to defy. Over time, your divine sense of Fate's weave will also give you more insights into control of forces like fate and causality.

Lawgiver (400 CP): There is an ancient legacy that flows in your veins, that shines like the long-lost kindness of gods. Some quirk of the power within you allows you to navigate a potent medium between Light's fleeting nature and Fire's all-consuming blaze to manifest the Sun of law-an intrinsic affinity for this element surpassing merely recreating it through spells, such that it is as much a part of you as blood and bone. This allows you to unleash extraordinarily enduring and devastating yet purifying power. A novice who had never learned a single spell in her life could cleave the tops off mountains and melt citadels to slag with a torrent of light from her sword. Who knows what else a more experienced wielder could be capable of? Even the Auspices might struggle to exert control over one with such a power cleansing them of all interference, and even Death might struggle to hold the Sun down into the grave.

Divinity Regained (400 CP): Let the cities of mankind tremble and the

mountains applaud, for your degeneration into a stunted "demon" has finally begun to reverse itself-and your mortal nature is eroding. Already you grow towards divinity every day, almost imperceptibly but enough that your mastery of magic, charisma and athleticism alike is no longer bound by physical limits. At the cost of setting back your true apotheosis by centuries, you can return to your true divine form temporarily: A state in which you can reflexively make the signs of power over facets of reality that can do all the magic of this world can *with no limits on the effects applied* and every facet of your being interacts with the world as more mythical allegory than physical being. There are still rare and unique beings that can contest even the rank and file god you once were, but generally that requires power *at least* equaling the greatest Overlords.

Certain perks may justify an accelerated recover of your power, such that you may well be invited right back to Pegana by the great gods shortly after showing up here. Fanwank within reason.

By taking this perk, the perks Divine Gaze, Divine Truth, Divine Domain and Divine Right are retroactively discounted to represent you having long since mastered them-refunding them to represent how intrinsic they are to you compared to what other demons have been shorn from. If you purchase those perks anyway, centuries are shaved off the eons until you are allowed to return to the highest place.

Branding Perks:

Hero

King of Altitude (100 CP): Even the three great gods pity those who know true loneliness. For though even they who have known and lost more than the other gods have had each other since the Beginning, there are certain heroes who walk such a lonely path that they have no companion like Time has Life and Death. As long as you have no family, friends or allies of any sort your abilities are boosted threefold by the kindness of they who seldom have cause to indulge in any.

The People's Queen (100 CP): You are the spitting image of what the Auspices' faithful think the Hero *should* be-a charismatic, outwardly confident and uplifting fellow to be around! Exactly how this manifests is up to you: You could be a courtly dignitary with a smoothly professional demeanour, a stately princess with a formal but humble bearing, a winsome village girl whose cheeriness rubs off on everyone, or a kindly father figure whose integrity is beyond reproach. The result is the same: In the heat of battle, your orders take priority, and your hopes lift up all others.

The Wages of Duty (200 CP): Your sheer duty to saving the world or...whatever drives you makes your skills improve five times as quickly as an average professional in them. This is as much because of sudden breakthroughs in how to use your powers and weapons as it is your focused methodology for honing what you don't know into what you do. As such, you're also a great coach for things you've already mastered.

Punctuated Attack (200 CP): In the eastern lands, the act of giving out a mighty shout is known to provably enhance any blow. Sages debate whether this is because it pleases the gods or because the breath of man has some inherent power of its own, but the result is the same. Your cries are particularly resonant, letting a knockout blow smash through a wall or send an ox cart flying. In fact, with a little creativity you could apply this to things other than fighting, like dramatically improving your musical performance or a public debate with a spirited KIAI.

Nine Faces, Three Hearts (400 CP): Some Heroes are left flailing when a beloved compatriot turns tailcoat. It's unlikely you will be, however. As cruel as it is to say, you're a natural diplomatic and politician. You build almost undecipherable webs of lies while adroitly presenting people with what you want them to think about yourself, and are an excellent tactician that has studied much of the stratagems used by the heroes that came before you. Whether as a battlefield commander or a courtier, you're great at wielding truth as your shield, deception as your sword, and seeing the kind of bullshit a loathsome traitor might pull from a mile away.

Elemental Medley (400 CP): Why do the Auspices choose as their foremost champions those with a variety of skills? Do they find such champions equitable in representing the Auspices' own majesty, or is surprise the greatest weapon of all in their view? Whatever the reason, you've developed a number of competencies at above average-but more importantly, the skill to use them as a combined fighting style. You might sling flame and water with discipline to blind and scorch your enemies with steam before striking whip-fast with your enchanted blade, for example. In general, you're very talented at combining your abilities into fighting styles or other methodologies that are more than the sum of their parts, and at teaching others these unique skills.

Destined to Prevail (600 CP): It's been a Hero's destiny to defeat evil, following the One Prophet's shining example in repeating the First Overlord's downfall every time another has risen to threaten the order of the world. When you challenge a similar individual or faction, Chance or Fate step aside and roll in your favour as long as you strive to bring them down. Things like destiny, luck and even plot armor evaporate like morning dew, while your power advances by leaps and bounds as million to one chances to strike at your foe's weakness or thwart their plans appear. Due to the loose definition of what an "Overlord" is, this is not limited to an objectively evil or even malevolent individual. Either a disruptive force that is shaking up the status quo *or* someone that has been perpetuating great harms as an authority within it could count; an Overlord can often be a matter of perspective. If Lightning had this while she fought Bhunivelze, he might well have tripped on his robe mid-fight and cut himself open with the Double Deity.

The Real Treasure (600 CP): Is, as any good fairytale prince or princess will tell you, inside of your heart and also the friends you made along the way! You, and those you form meaningful bonds with as close as sworn comrades in battle or family, unlock miraculous, sometimes seemingly retroactive, powers as long as you're working towards a common goal for more than a week. Exactly what form these shapeless deus ex machinas take is always shaped to give you a not quite absolute, but immense advantage for whatever you're trying to accomplish. A beloved pet might turn out to be a mighty Archon, while your own heritage might end up recreating the prowess of a being powerful enough to rival the gods themselves.

Healer

Nurturing Soul (100 CP): The demeanour of a doctor can matter as much as his skills to an anxious patient. Whether through optimistic serenity, a motherly instinct for nurturing others or something else, you have the kind of personality that provides succour and comfort even to someone who's bleeding out or been hit with a life-sapping curse. Your talent for keeping someone calm and stable even while being eaten alive is something that can't be easily taught.

End of Innocence (100 CP): Healers are, sometimes, unfairly stereotyped as blind to the greatest woes of the world. You are quick to overcome this sort of thinking, not just picking up on practical skills faster than most but having the empathy to know when sometimes a sterner word will do more than all the simpering in the world. In fact, your knack for knowing how to tell someone to shut the fuck up and drink their goddamn medicine is great for defusing conflicts of all kinds. Nobody wants to fuck with the white mage after dealing with your disappointed glare.

Lucent Light (200 CP): While Light is one of the most favoured elements for healing due to being able to restore the body to a pristine state, there are ways to maximise the restorative effects of any. To brew longer lasting potions with water, disinfect with fire and so on. You are not just well-read but insightful in all the more well-studied methods of healing in this world, enough to be a professional healer instead of just someone chosen to go on a quest. This also gives you insight into a great many techniques and recipes for enhancing rather than repairing the body, like a potion to give someone more stamina.

Soothing Dark (200 CP): However, though it is seldom practiced in earnest, even forces as reviled as Dark can be used to preserve life well past the point of death. Henceforth every ability you have, no matter how destructive, can be used to heal and mend. In fact, the more powerful the ability is, the better suited it is for healing. If you can erase reality, why-what are wounds, really, if not an aspect of reality we're all better off without?

Im(Pious) Purity (400 CP): There is something you have faith in which makes you good at healing the spirit, as well as the body, and also at taking care of yourself along with others. It might be a religious discipline, or just the world-weary wisdom of someone who's lived freely on the road for longer than a responsible man should. It might give you strange and unique arts such as making your skin harden like armor and turning pain into pleasure with chanted sutras, or bestowing such gifts on others. Or maybe you just hum so well it enervates the bodies of those around you into ignoring their limits. Either way, you're also very good at talking to people to get to the heart of a matter, sorting out what troubles their minds and finding some insight into something simple and practical that can be done to make things better.

Healer's Got Hands (400 CP): The Auspices must be crazy, with *some* of their Healer candidates...not really having much in the way of formal medical training by this world's standard. It seems you might be one of those candidates, at least partially. Now the more knowledgeable and capable you are in healing others, the better you are at fighting. It is open to interpretation if this is a logical understanding of the vitals of your foes being exploited, or some sort of total nonsense where you turn your healing spells into personal steroids like some sort of muscle cleric. All that matters is that if you are a legendary healer, you are also a legendary warrior.

This does not stack indefinitely with Soothing Dark.

Last Second Wind (600 CP): So picture this-the heroes are on Mung's doorstep, the Overlord's about to strike a final blow, when suddenly someone a short distance from the party starts glowing and everyone gets up fresh as a daisy! The direr things get and the more danger you and everyone around you is in, the more Fate and Chance swing in favour of you providing that last minute fix to save everyone's lives. Although this can encompass finding the right password or plot relevant artifact, finishing the cure for an impossible to heal disease in the nick of time or other more loosely defined acts, it also means that in gravest

danger your powers of both healing and defence get supercharged. This is the sort of thing Aerith would do when Sephiroth is about to fire Meteor, and only the White Materia could stop him.

Slumbering Priest (600 CP): Wait. *You're not actually a healer at all.* By the gods, you're one of *them*. There is a reclusive order of priests who against all wisdom and good sense engage in deepest slumber to better understand the mind of MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI. This lets them go for weeks without sleep, rest, food or drink, as well as effortlessly destroy any wound and eradicate any ailment, as if they were made to not exist anymore. **That is because they do not.** This *also* grants them the ability to annihilate foes and objects with their blows, although this tends to require greater concentration-and risks forsaking part of yourself to the oblivion that awaits all that is less than divine from this world in some distant eon. Still, as long as you have the mental and spiritual fortitude to pay the potential costs, ironically there is very little that is more destructive than you on a localised scale-and it may be possible to destroy more remotely with meditation, chanting, dance or other focused spiritual practices. Above all else, your discipline gives you great practical understanding of the true nature of causality and existence.

As if the very world was a script you could read ahead of time, even if the thoughts and specifics of characters in it might require some interrogation.

Fighter

DEBILITATE/DUEL (100 CP): Fighting is a solitary goal for many, but you understand its social dynamic. You can shatter morale with a wicked smile, a monstrous roar or some other threatening display. Likewise, some combination of how you fight and your demeanour can draw enemies into battling you instead of their other enemies. This gives you talent for similar acts of chicanery, although it goes without saying they're much less effective on those without a proper mind or one sharpened by intense focus.

Unbowed Trance (100 CP): Warriors often burden themselves with regrets and encumbrances and preconceptions that prove costly in the heat of battle. You have achieved the crucial emptiness, the divine void of thought that is necessary to kill without ever drawing your sword. With but a short period of meditation you can make the truth of your martially inclined soul surge-greatly amplifying your attacks, whether by parrying and blocking without thought or cutting down a circle of men with a single, contemptuously quick and fluid motion. This

serenity, or a determination not unlike it, also helps your body hold onto life even with shattered bones or pulped organs, and let you lose control in order to fight beyond what common men can reach.

Group Fighting Tactics (200 CP): A warrior fights without regard for tomorrow, a soldier fights so his comrades will see it. You are trained to fight well with a group, practiced in both giving and receiving orders. Thus, your grasp of tactics helps you make much better use of the abilities of those around you, enough that you could make a bunch of peasants defeat a hardened band of goblins.

Friend of Steel (200 CP): From your birth, you've known metal like an old friend. You can sense where to find it, how to extract, refine and shape it. The weird comfort it exudes for you both lets you shape it into the finest metalwork in the land, and guides your blows towards the chinks in your enemies' armor. You can go further: A weapon you have bonded with deeply can be awakened with a soul, allowing it to use all your powers and grow as you do. This is a process more intimate than most lovers' courtship that must be done with care and respect, mind you.

Everpresent Armory (400 CP): Even if you are otherwise magically inept, you've somehow emulated one of the abilities that let Sidith rise to power: The ability to summon and return inanimate objects from a personal storage dimension. *Where* that is exactly is a question for scholars and milksops, but suffice to say it's irrelevant for the battlefield. Near-instantaneous and highly efficient, you can dump all the swords you want in whatever position you desire through the portals of this technique. If this still sounds underwhelming, consider it is also the foundation of the methodology that the sorcerer-kings used to create pocket dimensions that could be well-hidden in even the most public of locations...

Endless Rivalry (400 CP): The dream of those who live for the battlefield is now your reality-to aspire for ever-higher heights indefinitely. So long as you seek challenge and self-mastery, Fate and Chance will create warriors powerful enough to challenge you and test your martial prowess to the limits-even crush you with foot, fist and blade should you grow arrogant. They will always primarily fight as a warrior does, even with the fast and loose definitions of such here. Nonetheless, even if you are immortal you may fight those who can punch death into you, or as a shapeless spirit spar with a spirited fencer that can cut the horizon itself.

While the morality and ontology of these opponents may vary, *all* will be as excited and deeply fulfilled to find a true challenge as you likely are.

Five Ring Samurai (600 CP): There are veterans of war. There are Sword Saints. And then there are those whose gift for violence transcends all logical sense. Since before you've been able to speak, you've been able to swing a sword. With your current level of mastery, even with an ordinary stick you can slash a spell in half or smack around an immortal spirit that *should* be immune to physical harm until it dissipates into shapeless Mana. You can even split metal, brick and bone with your bare hand without a weapon in it at all, and your combat prowess bestows a resilience that can't be explained by biology alone- letting you roll back spilled organs and regrow limbs in seconds. This is the prowess you would have as an ordinary village bumpkin, by the way. Your reality-breaking talent for killing people, machine-like precision with your body or weapons and to a lesser extent your supernatural strength, speed and regeneration will always scale above your overall power. Until feats like Sabin suplexing the Doom Train are a distant memory of what you could do when you first went off to war, as you run down the hound called Time with a literal spear in hand.

Simultaneous Techniques (600 CP): True masters of the battlefield master an almost unheard of technique: The concentration and skill to perform more than a single martial technique of great power simultaneously. While they can be done in rapid succession by "ordinary" masters, the fact that you can unleash three *simultaneously* marks you as a master warrior of rare calibre in this world. In future worlds, this grants a similar level of versatility to abilities such as hand seals or Limit Breaks where the primary result is conventionally attacking someone with concentrated spiritual, physical or mystical energy. It also lets you perform things as complex as spells or more exotic knacks like releasing Strange Elements while performing the kind of blow that let a man fell a dragon.

Mage

Mystical Rigour (100 CP): The typical mage who gets into Sabii's doors completes their training in a decade. You managed it in four years. As a result, your mastery when it comes to developing magic *at a purely theoretical level* is like little else this world has ever seen. From quantifying Mana dynamics, to rattling off interplanar interactions or obscure element confluxes, to understanding what actually goes on when a powerful spirit grants a wish, your knowledge lets you view the world in a way few can even imagine. Alas, this comes with no talent at all for actually *casting* magic even if it lets you reinvent things like free travel between a world and a plane.

Rustic Mage (100 CP): Magic was not always passed down in the way that the boffins known as the Sabii have quantified it as. You were trained instead in traditions passed down by spirits to shamans: Your magic moving with a mind of its own, unerringly homing in at whatever you will to be affected, and lasting long after the Mana dynamics calculations say it should. There may also be a way for you to supercharge it at a cost, such as the demonic traditions letting you shed your blood in order to dye your spells the same shade then launching them with devastating power. The catch to all this is that your spells generally need more preparation and windup time, whether because of a chant or dance or some other ritualistic casting method, making your practices generally more dependent on the rest of the party to buy time for in heated combat.

If taken with Mystical Rigour, somehow you can reconcile both theoretical foundations and can make your magic more of one or the other to exploit both their benefits.

Elemental Intensity (200 CP): Some mages take to an element like a fish to water, finding more uses to it than any other and advancing by leaps and bounds in wielding it as if they were destined to be together. A fanatic of fire who is as skilled at creating hundreds of burning bolts as he is at summoning fire spirits or enchanting blades with mystical flame. A wind mage who can go anywhere on a broomstick, but also has the uncommon gift of turning air currents into armour. There is one such element that sings to you so, making you a virtuoso at inventing and using magical effects related to it. It need not be one of the more common elements, and can be something as exotic as the rare Sleep.

Combat Mage (200 CP): There is a different set of skills for mages who regularly troubleshoot (as in, shoot trouble) on behalf of the Malgold corporation, or other powerful interests, than those who merely pick apart the mysteries of existence in their comfortable studies. To maintain concentration without food or drink, make use of practical and energy-efficient methods to remain hidden in enemy territory or survive poisonous air, and above all else to stab, shoot and escape competently. Such experience is yours now, along with more discipline and acumen than the average career adventurer. Whatever magical powers you've picked up in this world have been relentlessly streamlined and battle-tested to be effective in the high-pressure environment of a firefight.

MP REGEN (400 CP): After spellcasting, the Amrita that makes up the body of a mage becomes cloying and stagnant; in the past, it took hours or even days for enough ambient Mana to fill a caster to full capacity again. This is was very inconvenient. Fortunately, not only are you a master of the spell that can forcefully accelerate this process, but something about your soul causes all methods that recover Mana to be more effective for you. What takes other mages days to fill up merely takes you hours, and it's well within your capabilities to devise similar energy or other cost-recovering spells as this one.

Violet Luminary (400 CP): Light restores to pristine condition. Death can be made to preserve life past the point of dissolution. Like the ancient witch who once helped the Sixth Overlord seize his dreams, you have a great gift for merging the elements of magic to create unique magical effects as complex as the practice of Necromancy itself-which from a simple dream to preserve the departing spirit, gave rise to armies of tireless corpses imbued with residual emotion and at its pinnacle utterly severing the moment of your birth from Time and thus the progress of death, leaving your body a bloated husk of unlife with its power only limited by how many spirits and corpses you are willing to amalgamate into this unbegotten life. For more esoteric uses of your gift for amalgamation you could *safely* infuse Dream into a living creature and fold Mana into itself with Void to start cracking open the foundations of this world. Of course, more practically you are also supremely talented at simultaneous and stacked casting-and even with future magic systems, you'll always be able to combine magical effects into something unprecedented or apply your genius with metamagic to their fundamental essences.

Guidance of Fate (600 CP): What is the purpose of knowledge, if not to be shared? While some mages revel in their own ego, you have a more beneficent talent: Aptitude for passing on your magical learning, your mysticism, all your ways of interfacing with subtle and esoteric forces like the magic of this world as a methodology embodying your goals and values to others. As a gifted teacher, you can anticipate the needs of students while pushing them to challenge themselves without becoming overbearing. As a masterful speaker, you can make the abstractions of Mana dynamics sound tantalising and truncate complex formulae into something a village bumpkin could comprehend. And as one who values the future, you have developed a unique rite that can pass on the magic of this world (or any other you master) to those who accept and subscribe to your teachings through a symbolic sharing of spirit, blood and legacy. Theoretically it could even be supercharged to pass on magic to vaster populations, or have certain continuous benefits or preconditions built into it. Much as Cid Highwind and the mages of Mysidia solved an interplanetary transportation crisis with the creation of the Lunar Whale, on a grand scale your tutelage and gift of spellcraft could do things even a party of Heroes couldn't.

Minister of Sabii (600 CP): The highest peak of magic that a mortal might aspire to is an attunement with the rhythm, the flow of Mana that entire lineages of mages have failed to plumb. As if being able to view magic from a higher dimension, all your spells (even those from other worlds) double their strength (with an exceedingly wide definition for "strength" applying even to the most esoteric definition of spells) and halve their costs. Equally well-preserved in you is that which drove the progress of this limit since the days of the sorcerer-kings: *The ambition to transcend it*. Your deep understanding of this world's most esoteric and obscure magical mysteries crystalises into the gift of being able to replicate powers and abilities that only gods or similar beings superordinate to the limits of reality can perform-though usually at increased cost. Even the terrible divine sign of Mung could be replicated to bring death wherever you will it, at the cost of evaporating a tenth of your body for every second it is held. Such costs can be refined-or with enough skill, passed off to others. It was wisdom like yours that helped engineer the Auspices, after all.

Wanderer

Notorious Knave (100 CP): Many a Wanderer has been chosen from career criminals who go their whole lives scorned by the world, until it's decided they should save it. You know exactly how to work a reputation like that for your own benefit, walking the walk in order to cow or recruit other like-minded criminals. Or striking fear into the innocent, making them just pliable enough to go along with your shady ways. It could be said you've turned banditry into a sort of performance art, knowing just how much you can rough someone up before they turn bitter and desperate, and ironically often able to defuse tense standoffs with your knowledge about how the game of crime is played.

Loveable Thief (100 CP): On the other hand, many a Wanderer has *also* been chosen from folk heroes or innocent nomads, with no crime worse than the unjust exile that cast them away. There's something about you that draws the innocent into your protection, and even if your hands are thoroughly stained with blood, you know how to comfort and look after them in a way that builds your reputation with the best bluff of them all: The unvarnished truth. Likewise, your acts of charity and kindness have a great chance to not backfire at you at all, with people more willing to look the other way as long as you make any concession at all to not hurting the man on the street-like robbing the government coach, instead of someone's purse.

Sanctioned Cutthroat (200 CP): You have a very particular set of skills, such as the peak of marksmanship in this world that can shoot a target miles away, as well as a mastery of poison great enough to concoct Strange Elements, and enough skill with infiltration to literally meld with the shadows and then appear somewhere else nearby. Skills that have made you invaluable to corrupt Archbishops and ambitious daimyos alike. While the skill to cut a throat swiftly is no small joke, your real talent is being able to scout for employment from seemingly law-abiding wealthy citizens even in future worlds. Once on their payroll, it's much harder to get legal consequences to stick to you through chance and circumstance.

HOOF IT (200 CP): There is no polite way to say this-you are an expert at running the hell away from dangerous fights. No, it's not particularly glamorous. But the expertise to avoid being tracked in even tundra or the desert sands and enough insight into this world's magic to have ideas for evading magical detection could mean the difference between defeat and death. Still, a disloyal party member could find themselves abandoned in turn. This is why you've picked up *another* skill: How to guide the whole party to retreating, covering their tracks, and getting from point A to point B as fast as possible, from retrofitting their vehicles to a few simple spells cast on their mounts! Hopefully, the party will appreciate you more when you help them *all* save their skins.

Peer of the Wild (400 CP): Animals don't really tend to appreciate the skills described above, but fortunately you have some very different ones. You have a gift for being understood by monsters, wild animals and other normally non-sentient beings. Negotiations of this kind are simple and direct, food and shelter for the strength of the pack. Your familiarity with the wild also makes you an excellent animal trainer. Even without the Strange Elements of Charm or Terror, you can form such deep bonds with your beasts that they fight and die for you like sworn comrades. Those you take pains to train and exercise with personally often grow in power over time, emulating your strength. This has also unlocked a strange magical ability in which you can share any spiritual or mystical energies you have with them, which they will always have a basic capacity to use. That loyal hawk you reared as a chick could someday be as mighty as some of the Heroes this world has known.

Fool's Fortune (400 CP): What's the point of going off the beaten track unless there's something worth finding there? Fate and Chance now greatly swing in your favour when it comes to discovering magical artifacts, hoards of wealth and other valuables whenever you deviate from assigned goals or head off adventuring on your own initiative. This world is *really* starting to feel like a JRPG now, with how often your seemingly meaningless adventures into the wilderness can net you things that the wealthy pay a premium for. And while you've little control over exactly what you collect, as long as you're actively working for a longer goal than your latest haul your treasures do tend to be very useful for it.

Lucky Shot (600 CP): No Wanderer actually aspires for the title. Circumstance and fate drive them to the outskirts of society where they eke out a living long enough for the Auspices to take note, however much they cling to their old lives. By embracing your destiny, you've wrested back a measure of control over it. When you make great sacrifices or undertake great endeavours beyond the norms of society like defeating the Overlord, you will always be rewarded by the world in proportion to your contributions. A throne restored, a magnificent treasure secured for you and you alone-let more selfless Heroes walk away with nothing while you get first dibs on the loot. Furthermore, Chance and Fate will obfuscate your actions in the planning of would-be schemers, Overlords and even the gods themselves so that you'll always have at least one opportunity to strike them when they're least ready for it-and in general, plans of all kinds go more awry when you're actively opposing them. Much like the wandering ninja Shadow trapped Kefka amongst statues right before he was about to destroy the world, the Tantalus troupe ruined Queen Brahne's own kidnapping plan with a dynamic airship entry or Belthazar's scheming disrupted the supercomputer FATE's calculations, history is littered with examples of meticulous systems being ruined by a disruptive wanderer.

Beautiful Treat (600 CP): Well, aren't you a more fitting sight for the bedroom than the battlefield? You are at the peak of beauty or handsomeness for this world, by whatever standard you care for: A boy so lithesome that men would gladly slake their thirsts with his seductive flesh, a sacred prostitute greatly prized for her exotic features, a desert beauty no less curvaceous and smooth of skin for living in the jungle. What's more, whether through talent, training, the forbidden life-crafting of a particularly lewd sorcerer or an obscene gift from the gods you are a genius at exploiting it. You could make love skilfully enough to happily exhaust most of your competitors, pry apart the emotional walls of hardened killers with your pillow talk and haunt the dreams of those that have known your touch until you're all they can think about. All this before even exuding the Strange Elements from your body, which you have mastered in output, refinement and intensity few in this world have the time or care for. If anyone could even hope to fuck an Overlord into defeat, it's you.

Overlord

Logistics of Empire (100 CP): Something that certain Overlords underestimate (or have the luxury of not caring about) is how much damn *paperwork* there is involved with actually ruling the world. Fortunately, you are now one of the greatest accountants and actuaries this world has ever known (professional qualification completely optional). You can count supplies, keep track of military units, parse tax records and generally do all the nitty-gritty calculation that separates a disciplined army from a confused horde that think their reinforcements are 15 miles closer than they actually are and that they have enough food to last the winter despite all the empty sacks in sight.

Oppressive Presence (100 CP): *Dread*. Every Overlord of infamy exudes it, in great waves fit to make brave men tremble and weak ones kneel. You too have a transfixing aura, though you need not compel *fear* specifically. You could be an ethereally serene saviour, an awe-inspiring icon of prosperity, or a paragon of shameless appetite. Whatever it is, it's more intense the more powerful overall that you are.

Charismatic Conqueror (200 CP): Why should you raise a sword against your future subjects, when rhetoric and wit can conquer their very hearts? Through some combination of speechcraft, social engineering and overwhelming conviction based on your vision for this world, you are an extremely compelling public speaker. You could convince humans to abandon the ways of the Auspices and live in the wild, or demihumans that their destiny is to be master sorcerers given enough time to plan out your speeches. Not all will fall for your pretty words, but at the very least you could rally enough to be a warlord of renown. With something to credibly support your grandiose claims, you could become so much more.

Father and Mother (200 CP): There is a strange power in you that could be spell, biology, or something stranger like *altering the very dream of this world* that lets you generate massive hordes of minions. An ordinary human could beckon enough to lay siege to a small city, and they start off at the strength of wild beasts like sharks and lions-though they can be imbued with whatever supernatural energies you have. Though no more intelligent, they are infallibly loyal to you as if your will lived in their instincts. It is not given unto you to make anything more powerful with this alone, but the minions are supernaturally receptive to any means you have to upgrade them with.

Everlasting Antagonism (400 CP): There is a law written in this world, that after a period of time you are restored from all harm-as if it never happened. It need not be some strange enlightenment from peering into the End of the very world itself. It could be that the law of the great gods themselves demands that the world recreate you, or your true self could be an engram in some paradisaical subspace. It would take an ordinary man a season to return with this, a rate that will accelerate as you grow in power. But while this may seemingly make you invincible, be warned that nothing truly lacks an End in this world. Even if you are beyond the gaze of Time, the tread of Death and the domain of Life, a sufficiently powerful and determined band of Heroes may yet find the metaphysical argument that unravels your prophecy of eternal return. Or find a way to turn the process of your immutability into an unbreakable seal. Or maybe everyone else just isn't hitting hard enough.

Celestial Birth (400 CP): In the most distant of myths, it is said that the first order of things made by the gods are mighty beyond compare to their lesser descendants. Mountains of stately marvel surpassing all others in height and density, comets that wander further than any other. So it was that the king of demons dwarfs his kin in might, power and wisdom much as no housecat alive is a match for a lion, and so it is that *somehow* you were born, or reborn, a paragon of spiritual, mystical and physical majesty compare to all others of your kind. A man infinitely close to godhood, and who with all his divine blessings restored could perhaps see eye to eye with the great gods themselves, or perhaps a Beast of the gods that is yet kin to the lesser beastmen much as Tagus was once kin to them.

Even in future worlds, you will be similarly exemplary compared to whatever species you are part of. Mythopoeic birth in which the constellations incubate you, the seas cast you up from the depths of eons past, the shadows knot together to make your egg or something equally surreal completely optional as a backstory.

I, A Gamer Girl Who Loves JRPGs, Was Isekai'd Into A Real One! My Destiny?!? To Become The Greatest And Most Beloved Girlfailure Overlord!!!!?! (600 CP): *Aw yeah*, you've been given a blessing so great it can only have come from Pegana itself-an XP system! As a frail child, you could wander in circles around a monster-strewn wasteland, only to subjugate the natives in a few months. Be it steel, magic or poison, not only do your skills and abilities grow in shocking bursts even with the slightest interest in any of them-but you'll also rapidly manifest unique skills and abilities that you had no previous interest in! The only blindspot to this endless deluge of levelgrinding, cheat skills and sheer nonsensical asspulls are things you find actively repellent or boring. Otherwise, before long you'll either be the strongest being in this world...or at least a rival to a certain Overlord who is on track to become as powerful relative to her initial self as Sephiroth.

Specifically, Sephiroth in the Final Fantasy 7 *Remake* games, compared to Sephiroth the ordinary Shinra supersoldier in the *original* Final Fantasy 7 game.

Folly of Righteous Fury (600 CP): There can be no greater hubris than for a band of ragtag misfits rallying around a bonfire to dare think that they have a hope of stopping one with the conviction to unite the world. You put a grim spin on the dice of Fate and Chance, allowing you to shatter things like destiny, providence, luck and plot armor when your ruthless or selfish endeavours oppose the Heroes on a quest to oppose you. However grandiose the powers of the heroes arrayed against you, power flows to you like a river to the ocean while their blessed swords snap and their trusted allies sell them out. Everything goes wrong for such fools, even as your blows unfailingly punish their carelessness-or your words drive them to spurn their purpose. Much as the title of "Overlord" is open to interpretation in this world, the "Heroes" this perk opposes need only be reckless, naïve, wilfully ignorant or otherwise operating too independently to count as some other ruler's champions, or as a rival "Overlord". In a pinch, a clandestine counterterrorist operation in a modern world could count as "Heroes".

Traitor (Drop-In)

Mercurial Character (100 CP): The first step of betrayal is to be the most trustworthy person in the room. You can divorce your personality, emotions and intentions utterly from the outside world with an almost unbreakable facade. So great is your skill at making and employing disguises that it's barely a disguise at all-you really are talented at generally picking up new skills and adopting new habits. And your wonderful talent for acting could let you step into a new life like you're putting on a set of clothes! You can get so deep into the charade that even a mind reader might be confused at how earnestly some of your surface thoughts are committed to it.

The Team's Popular Font of Charm (100 CP): Some people don't need a façade to light up every room they're in. Everyone wants a piece of you, and you know how to provide it for maximum benefit to yourself. To those with experience, you're a treasured talent to nurture and protect. To those with less than you, you're a font of worldly knowledge to be respected and obeyed. And of course, to anyone who could be attracted to you at all, you're a welcome shelter for a lonely heart given your knack for finding the keys to their heart (and an understated but no less tempting attractiveness).

Gifts of the Great Gods (200 CP): Three are the great gods, highest among the high of Pegana. Three are they who have walked ever-onwards from the humble beginnings of mankind to its devastating ascendancy. Three are the ones who saw their fellow gods first grow bitter and weary with the way of the world, before being sundered into remnants both less and more than the spirits of the land that lesser rebellious gods were reduced to.

Three now, are the blessings offered to you. In the hopes of setting in motion their downfall.

The laughter of Kib grants you insight into the moment when Mana joined Mana to change Mana, changing all worlds forever by spreading life over them. You can heal without skill, only will, by forcing ambient Mana to incorporate into a being's Amrita to restore it-and this also boosts your body and mind as long as you live. In future worlds you'll be able to perform similar exchanges of magical and spiritual energy, able to convert ambient magical energy into vitality. This perk greatly enhances **any perk where life energy matters** as the God of Life's chuckles rarify body and breath.

The gaze of Shish is elusive yet everpresent. For light is more than radiance, it is the very force that differentiates time itself. Almost as damaging as fire and capable of warping the flow of causality in various ways, you are attuned to the element of Light as few others in this world are. This makes you a seer of rare accuracy, able to peer through past and future with crystal clarity. **Any perk involving magic** now has greater ease and power in effects that control time. None of that many world interpretation nonsense, this is straight up the God of Time's power showing you what will be.

The tread of Mung is the very footsteps of Death itself. You can exude something that is not truly a Strange Element but functions much like one, undoing all that holds life together. A small dose can kill without leaving a mark, a severe dose can dissipate flesh back into Mana. Naturally, **any perk that draws on Death's power from the relevant Strange Element, to songs invoking Mung** is greatly enhanced by this. Do note that Necromancy, the Silence and the theoretical element of Void are distinct domains from the phenomena of Death natural to this world, though-which is as intrinsic and fundamental as the process of cellular apoptosis in more mundane ones.

This perk can be repurchased, at a discount if relevant, for each blessing.

Talent Overwhelming (200 CP): As one of the Hero's companions, it's taken for granted that the Auspices would have chosen you from among those with the potential to overcome civilisation-ending threads. But you're a paragon of prowess even among the chosen few. You have remarkable athletic potential, intellectual rigour, latent athletic and spiritual potential, an affinity for niche skills of all kinds and just about everything anyone would need to excel should they turn their hand to any endeavour in this world. As long as it is possible at all for someone to learn it, you have an amazing talent for picking it up much like how JRPG heroes are both amazing wizards and the best fisherman in their local village. You do generally still have to do the fencing practice, reading, meditation or whatever to reap the rewards. But you learn so quickly that if there's a situation where your talents are relevant at all, you can end up learning as much by testing the limits of your capabilities as some need exceptional tutors and unique reference materials for.

Alluring Light (400 CP): For someone so untrustworthy, you sure have a way of drawing in the useful and the attractive, the mighty and the meek, and then ensnaring their loyalties as surely as if the red string of fate tied the two of you together. Fate and Chance will ensure that powerful, skilled and influential individuals like many of the colourful characters in this CYOA will be pulled towards you, and inclined to get attached to you. What's more, they're actually rewarded for leaving themselves wide open to betrayal! The emotional closeness you share with these useful patsies actually improves their lives spontaneously, and in nearly miraculous ways-whether it's making a breakthrough in spellcraft or martial might, or achieving an emotional catharsis they were otherwise denied.

Chosen of Pegana (400 CP): The gods once entrusted another with their vengeance against the Auspices, and while she failed they see promise in you. Even in other worlds, divine beings and other spirits of great power often find reasons to lend you profound but subtle aid from behind the scenes. Even those extraordinarily far away from the world like distant Archons, the wandering Godmourner or a certain Drummer will by chance come to hear of you and slip you a blessing while you're minding your own business. The power that could be gained is great, but for mysterious reasons whatever purpose they have must be kept secret. You'll be mighty in magic, strong of sinew and otherwise advantaged-but whether the gods are merely using you or sympathetic, don't expect any publicly acknowledged rationale without a very compelling reason.

The Will of **MANA** (600 CP): In a time that may come to pass some day or may have already happened, you will attain the blessings of the three great gods still upon long-abandoned Pegana. You will peer into the depths of Mana. Understand it is **so much more** than the fuel of magic. And having done all this, you will achieve the impossible: Joining Mana into Mana, to be something new.

Then **MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI**, who made the gods as the gods made men, will take you out from within himself and make his will known to you. When **The End** arrives, you will endure by his side.

This means little in and of itself. It may not even have technically happened yet, unless you have certain other prerequisites. Should all else cease to exist, you would endure. In the Silence, or another conceptual absence of reality, your existence would endure as a closed system.

But it *will* happen. Enough that those whose minds are tuned to the Great Dreamer already know there is one apart from the Godmourner and the Drummer who will endure past this world. And that significance is a force unto itself.

You are the true chosen in this tale, the actual main character, the player's avatar in the JRPG game of Worlds and Men. So it goes that even in future worlds, you will enjoy a metaphysical plot armor comparable to your status as the player character of the JRPG Traitor series: Encountering and charming people of great significance, finding extraordinary ways to acquire power and influence, evading calamity by the skin of your teeth and deciding the fate of the world by your own progress. Your own skill, prudence, prowess and interference from overwhelming odds may still decide how much you can make of these opportunities, but few have as much agency as you to begin with.

The Heroes are merely amateurish bit players gifted with starring roles and fed lines to speak, ignorant of where the props in their hands come from. The Overlord is but an understudy pushed to the foreground by cruel stagehands, to go through the motions of a battle lost a thousand years ago. For all that you have been chosen to scatter their ambitions with the force of your own, it is you who are truly Cloud Strife, Sora, Crono, Byleth and many more names to come.

Shattered Fate (600 CP): And knowing all of that, do you truly wish to go through with this farce? Many perks speak of defying Chance and Fate, but you are truly sovereign from them and similar machinations. No mastermind can reliably predict your reaction to their schemes, no computer can calculate the permutations of your existence. If someone wishes to nullify you as a threat, they must do so upfront and directly, not with esoterica and subtle forces. The purest defiance of your preordained betrayal is this: Your persistence and prudence can shift the "genre" of a world towards a net positive outcome for yourself and the world at large. In this one for example, you could *potentially* simply talk down the Overlord, or the Heroes, and gather them round a table to address their grievances in a mutually satisfactory resolution. The going may be tough, the path obscure, the participants thankless and some old grudges may persist past the immediate conflict. But if you strive at it with the tenacity and arete of a true hero, the grand design that has endured for a thousand years could be replaced by a lasting peace through your efforts.

And while this is probably stretching your luck, if you were audacious enough to try for a peace between the great gods and the Auspices themselves well, while that's probably a fool's errand, this is a damn fine starting point.

Aptitude Perks:

(STR):

Truths of Combat (50 CP): There are certain concepts in this world that cannot be spoken of, and defy explanation. You have mastered one enough to permanently enhance yourself physically in some way. You may simply do more damage than others, stopping hearts with a single blow or cutting through the battlefield with the Truth of Offence. Or you may be able to deflect bone-shattering blows with a clipboard and resist curses by tightening your abs, the truth of Imperviousness written upon you. You may even be able to cross leagues in minutes and leap so high as to take flight like the wind, the Truth of Celerity speeding your tread. **Can be repurchased**, for additional Truths.

Flawless Finesse (50 CP): A wanderer surrounded on all sides by enemies launches into the air-striking down all foes simultaneously with a cyclone of blows. A dragonslayer leaps higher than a building to impale his prey through its snout. A scout launches brief distances faster than the eye can see, or a bodyguard deflects even spells with his greatshield. There is a certain relatively versatile technique you can perform that is beyond the martial skill of most, though its function is fairly specific. You might use an afterimage technique to entrap foes for example, but not to infuse your strikes with baneful power. Can be repurchased for different techniques

Sacrosanct Gesture (50 CP): There are certain practices that can further enhance truths. Constant meditation and epiphanies that ensure your body constantly bolsters them merely by being alive. Chants that can give voice to the song your soul shouts so the chosen truth is bolstered, signs that improve their duration and effectiveness. You have mastered one, its benefits imprinted on your body. **Can be repurchased** for additional such practices.

Masterstroke (100 CP): In this world, there are a handful of techniques that go beyond the exceptional into the tactically redefining. A cut accomplished from such a deep understanding of martial truth that a dragon can be cut down mid-flight from a thousand leagues away. A single strike that hits from every

direction at once. The legendary war spasm. **With each purchase**, you can acquire another legendary trump card to be unleashed in battle.

Battle Magic (200 CP): There are some who learn how to merely use sword and spell in tandem, and others like you with a natural talent for refining magic as a tool of war and nothing else. You can devour spells as tangible as the elemental evocations of this world-which can then be used to enchant yourself or those in contact with you, trapped in your weapon, fired back painfully or simply consumed utterly for an inefficient power boost. Moreover, you know a discipline with a limited and combat-oriented application: To shed your own blood and shape it into spells, to destabilise the flow of mana to greatly weaken incoming spells at the cost of sundering your own casting, or to reap away vitality with every strike. **Can be repurchased** for additional combat-focused magic systems.

Resilience (100/200): Regeneration. Great resistance to all harmful Strange Elements, imperviousness to disease and ten times your normal lifespan thanks to a pure body-as well as the power to purge all such wastes as a black sludge. Simple fury or strength of will that let you enhance your physical traits, or stand unbowed while rent asunder. You have a trait imprinted on your flesh that restores you without need for a healer. **Can be repurchased** for additional traits. Pay 100 CP for something on the scale of being able to heal small cuts in minutes, large ones in hours and severe burns in days. Pay 200 CP for something on the scale of near-instant conversion of Mana into Amrita, making you nigh-immortal from instant restoration of your body into a pristine state as long as there's ambient magical energy much as the Third Overlord was.

Physical Power (200 CP): There is a single trait you have that surpasses the limits of most around you. Strength great enough to tear apart metal with your hands, or hurl beasts larger than yourself overhead-so intrinsic to your being it would remain with you even if your flesh stopped being flesh, or your mind was transported into another medium. A constitution so powerful it can survive point-blank spells or explosions, and go for weeks without sleep, food or water. A trait once again, so etched on your soul it does not change even if your body is changed into something else. **You can repurchase this** for similarly boosted traits.

Surpassing Prowess (400 CP): Through enlightened will and physical gifts, you have refined an aspect of your body until it breaks the limits of reality itself. Strength enough to wound the land, or hold up the world for a fleeting second. An adamantine form equal the immortal, unbreakable pillar gods chained below the Earth in molten rock to await the nonexistent mercy of Pegana. Speed enough to cross leagues in seconds. **Each time** you purchase this, you gain one of these traits.

Alternatively, **you can repurchase this perk** for an overall blessing to your **physiology as a whole** for up to **3 times**:

- Perfect Body (2 purchases total): There are those discontent with the pinnacle of mortal ability, and so train beyond all reason. You are one of them. Feared, revered and renowned for your might, whatever your outward appearance, your body excels at all tasks given to it. You could reduce whole armies to seas of gore, or tear down castle walls barehanded.
- Blessed Body (3 purchases total): Once in a very rare while, the gods pay attention to something they are pleased enough to bless. You are one such example. Your body is now so tough, fast and strong that only divine beings can compete with it. You could split harbours half with your casual slaps and race thunderbolts, among similar feats. Such is your power that you could be mistaken as a Beast of the gods.

Sword Saint (400 CP): There are some who are called Sword Saints gifted with fighting instincts sharp enough to know the actions enemies and allies will take seconds before they happen, and a reflexive grasp of all weapons they lay their hands upon. Such warriors often seem invincible, casually parrying or striking *right before* an attack lands with the easy manner of a man trimming grass. There is far more to that than meets the eye: A melody to steel and spell that grants mastery of any weapon surpassing masters and geniuses in mere weeks. You are one of these Sword Saints, and to you ruling the battlefield with spear, staff, club, vajra, sword and someone else's dismembered limb is as relaxing as a walk in the park.

Perfect Form (400 CP): Yes! *Yes!* Praise be, glory to the most high! You have somehow regained for yourself the form of the perfect man: Of inviolable mind, body and boundless beauty. Any mutation or other physical defect that goes against your ideals is stripped from you, and all your abilities are boosted to the

limits of a mortal's in this world if they would otherwise be lower. No Strange Element can deceive your thoughts and senses, no disease or poison can mar your veins, and no flower or illusion can compare with the effortless beauty of your immaculate flesh. This is technically one of the supreme attainments this world calls an Apotheosis, but all it does is make your natural traits supreme and continuously restore you to that ideal state if sundered by great force, as well as sovereign to lesser woes than mutilation. Why is it priced so? Because *it's always on, all the time*. You could say it makes you immune to what could be considered "status effects" in other JRPGs.

It is written by the lost sages of Aradec that the form of the perfect man is actually a cute girl. This may or may not have something to do with the nature of the element known as Dream's tendency to form cute girls.

However, perfection is subjective and you may select another distinctive physical ideal if you wish. Perhaps you wish to be a rippling beast with an onyx mane, or a more masculine figure who seems sculpted from crystal.

Apotheosis of Flesh (600 CP): The vast majority of fleshly Apotheoses are inherent traits of physicality-but only the majority. Though rare, through intense training some can attain a higher state not bound by blood. An example being the immortality that supersedes Life and Time by replacing revelations with blood, doubt with neverending epiphanies, and apoptosis with truth-nature imprinted on your very flesh. Such enlightenment allows for a temporary transformation into your truest self-a devastatingly powerful warform in which all Truths aligned with your way of being and fighting are vastly enhanced.

If you are not one such Beholder of Truth, you may still justify a transformation of similar scope-though anything permanent should be of lesser potency than the 400 CP racial perks listed earlier. Perhaps you can temporarily fuse with your weapon's soul into an Apotheosis of spiritual forgeries. Perhaps you have attained such purity that your presence corrodes any who would strike it down.

This may be repurchased.

(WIS):

Elemental Control (50 CP): The flow of Mana is intrinsically categorised into certain phenomena that mages call Elements. Fire, which lets practitioners endure great heat quite apart from slinging homing, persistent flame. Lightning, which offers somewhat less resistance in exchange for boosting the mage's reflexes and offering the most destructive spells of all. Earth, which grants the body greater durability and provides the hardest spells to disrupt or stop of all once cast. And many, many more. You have a particular affinity for learning and casting spells from one of these Elements, and **this perk can be repurchased.**

Elemental Envoys (50 CP): There is a forbidden spell that grants simple, fleeting will to elemental mana; it would be wise to pass it off as exemplary control in front of the pious. Purchase this once, and you have this strange, blasphemous talent. **But this perk can be repurchased** for further mastery of this specific yet powerful ability to give your ephemeral envoys the ability to meld with inert objects so they can last for centuries, or record every thought and action they undertake so they can be indefinitely recreated (much like the supposedly eternal human soul...).

This perk can be repurchased **up to 3 more times** for pure proficiency at creating elemental envoys. One repurchase grants the envoy the intelligence to defend you from attacks and power comparable to a magically conjured "hammer" attack. 3 repurchases represents the peak of the art: Your envoys will have no upper limit to their power other than the total mana you control, their intelligence matches any humans though their emotions remain bound to your will, and they can cast spells of their own.

Elemental Constructs (50/100 CP): More than the natural shapes of a wave, a plume of flame or a gust of wind, skilled sorcerers can shape spells into more complex constructs. This perk, **which can be repurchased,** grants you particular proficiency with one of them. For 50 CP apiece you can cast a comparatively simple bullet, bomb or spear-shapes which respectively make casting them more efficient, enhance the destructive impact and concentrate penetrative power. For 100 CP you can instead master a more complex array like the city-devastating Elemental Rain, the stately Elemental Panoply that conjures both armor and twelve autonomous weapons superior to the work of most smiths, and Elemental Thread which produces paper-thin threads that can be manipulated with surgical precision.

Extraordinary Elements (100 CP): Certain Elements typically require greater study of the rest. Dark, described as both stasis made manifest and a cold that steals more than heat. Vitriol, an unstable and caustic amalgamation of Dark and Earth. Crystal, a particularly hard yet fragile state of Earth that is utterly immune to further magical manipulation once cast. Dream, a black fluid from after existence that births black beasts. Sun, a midpoint between Fire and Light that is far more destructive than Fire and reinstates godly law where it hits, and Sea, which resembles water save that it steals power from other spells as well as the caster's enemies; both are said to be in some sense the power of the old gods. *Somehow*, with even proficiency in *one* basic element you have obtained mastery of an advanced one. **This perk can be repurchased for attunement to the other elements, with the exception of Light which is only granted by The Gaze of Shish.**

Elemental Assimilation (100 CP): The body and mind can adapt to elements in many ways. Controlling elements so intuitively that weapons can be ripped from hands with a grasp. Constant use simply letting a mage of the appropriate element stick his hand in a bonfire unharmed. A preponderance of one element allowing more instances of it for hundreds of meters to automatically enhance the spells you cast. You benefit from one of these, and may **repurchase** this **perk** for other such effects.

Magical Artifice (200 CP): There are many arts of magical tool creation, from the art of extracting the restorative or damaging principles of matter known as alchemy (responsible for concoctions that let common folk live long and healthily, but also unique arcane materials for cutting-edge research into magic) or the more formalised imbuelement which can whip up a sword that fights by itself or a magic wand in a few hours-or a true masterwork in a week, thanks to your talent in this area. **With each repurchase** you may either acquire prodigious talent in a different magical product-creating discipline, or a knack related to it, such as the power to overcharge or disenchant magical items. With **two repurchases** of this you could acquire enough mastery to create the so-called Magnum Opus: A magical construct so powerful and versatile it is an extension of your soul that your other powers can be channelled through.

Metamagic Miracles (200 CP): There are certain feats of controlling Mana that others either cannot replicate, or almost none even know about. A sixth sense that lets you perceive the flow of magical energy with impossible precision. The ability to absorb incoming spells with careful manipulation of magical energy. Or the wealth of esoteric knowledge needed to fold Mana into Mana, a seemingly meaningless gesture with profound implications for the nature of magic. **Each purchase** lets you grant yourself one such gimmick, and **optionally two purchases may be condensed into one particularly strong gimmick** such as a sixth sense so insightful it lets you not just disrupt spells easily, but short out the magical energy's connection to the caster to sunder their bodies

Golemancy (100/200/400 CP): *Egad*, you heretic! You've trespassed on the sanctity of life itself, to tamper with an art more forbidden than even *necromancy*! How much so, you'll determine here.

For 100 CP you are an apprentice Golemaner, able to animate golems of up to 2 times the size of an average human that can follow basic commands.

For 200 CP you are either well-versed in advanced golemancy allowing you to make golems ranging in size from a house to a small child with the intelligence of a particularly dumb dog *and* the strength to defeat battalions of soldiers, as well as a wide array of know-how like mechanical engineering or incorporating dead flesh into your golems. Or you have recently embarked on golem mastery, letting you make golems as small as a fist or larger than a building which are as smart as humans. No matter the size, each is a siege weapon unto themselves-capable of sinking a war airship.

Finally, for 400 CP you have attained the peak of Golemancy, previously only held by Dorcha and sorcerer-king Khordeh. There is no upper limit to the size of your golems, only your Mana reserves and how many materials you can secure. Alternatively, you can create nanogolems, you madman. Your golems' intelligence surpasses humanity in logical thought, and with some effort you can build golems that match any Hero in power.

Apotheosis of Mana (600 CP): We arrive at last at the pinnacle of magical Apotheosis, somehow attained without the normal prerequisites through the vagaries of Chance and Fate. Perhaps a god literally bestowed it on you? Examples here include replacing your existence with pure elemental Mana, which lets you forcibly aspect all free instances of that element for miles around you into a form as inhuman as it is unimaginably powerful-which you would be advised to use quickly before your sense of self disappears in the whorl of Mana. The status of being a True Prophet: A mage warped by divine essence into a facsimile of godly power, which has simply made you immune to losing control of your spells by any means-and in time, may let you make your spells dominant over all others. Or something similar **upon repurchase**.

(WIT):

Elements of the Strange (50 CP): Many are the strange elements that can be secreted as liquid or gas, and few have mastered the art of producing and being either immune or highly resistant to them depending on their intensity.

Paralysis, a toxin that can induce sluggishness in small doses and stop breathing in severe ones. Poison, which is...self-explanatory, although it is notable the pain, internal bleeding and necrosis it can induce based on dosage is unlike that of other Strange Elements. Confusion, which can induce feelings of euphoria in small doses and brain damage in large ones-all of which are highly addictive.

Each repurchase of this perk makes you a master of one of these substances, although there are many more.

Strange Tricks (50 CP): There are tricks that can be performed with Strange Elements, like shaping them into darts, or blades, or spat globules. Or violently venting them from your body. Much like for spells of the elements of Mana, although generally with much more specific effect given what the Strange Elements do. **Each purchase** of this makes you a master of one. If you do not have a Strange Element consider this ability to apply to things like venom, curses with some sort of tangible manifestation and similar things.

The Cracksman's Trade (50 CP): There are a few tricks of the trade passed cautiously between criminals and carried mostly by word of mouth, which blur the line between skill and sorcery. A simple illusion that makes a fire spell look like an air one, or otherwise confuses the elements behind spells. Supreme skill at theft that lets you break into most vaults known by civilisation. Stealth that borders on the magical-no, straight up lets you rip up your shadow to use as a

cloak, or teleport short distances between shadows. **Each purchase** of this grants one such knack.

Reality's Conman (100 CP): You've graduated to the more lethal and explicitly magical tricks of criminality. Stealth so great you can even make the gods forget your true face, allowing you to change between genders or races at the cost of being metaphysically without an identity. A prowess at assassination so great you can paralyse targets by striking their shadows while teleporting between such under the midday sun, *and* Death favouring your initial blows with a fraction of his power. Seldom suitable for a prolonged battle, but able to potentially end those greater than you in power with a surprise assault.

Strangest Of Them All (100 CP): You've mastered one **or more on repurchase, (except Death which is only granted by The Tread of Mung)** of the advanced Strange Elements. Sleep, which is notably never lethal on its own even if it can induce slumber long enough to cause starvation. Curse, which rather than causing harm directly causes the intrinsic forces in a living being to deform lethally-even being able to warp inanimate objects. Charm, a *particularly* addictive form of Confusion that induces orgasmic pleasure in small doses-and in severe ones, literally kills through pleasure. Most of these only confer moderate resistance to them, with the consolation that this is still more than many experienced witches are capable of, with the exception of Charm: The price you pay for being able to create it is complete immunity to orgasms that could kill a dragon. *What a shame.*

Performative Sorcery (100 CP): In the very literal sense, can produce some quite unusual effects. To sing so beautifully, you can pull at Mana to enhance defences against an element, envelop weapons with it and/or create destructive discharges and similar effects as long as your music lasts. A dance so entrancing reality itself empowers your allies and denies your enemies the fullness of their strength. Such skill with poetry you can make Strange Elements appear in those you eviscerate emotionally with your gift for the written word (and write really touching poems in general, when not trying to kill people). **Each purchase** of this grants proficiency in some act of art with similar influence over reality. The most known forms of performance in this world do not limit you. Perhaps you've figured out how to make magical pots that can catch spells, or sculptures that exude the emotion they were made with onto the battlefield when unveiled?

Divine Serenade (200 CP): **Each purchase here** allows you to learn the songs that appeal to a certain god, bestowing upon you their blessings as long as the music plays. For the songs of Exaltation, the ability to perform an extra action for the singer and all their allies bestowed by the rapt attention of archons and spirits. For the songs of Departure, the happiness of Death who makes the singer resistant to effects evoking his domain while sapping all that might be considered strength from their foes. For the songs of Command, stealing the will of commoners and those inexperienced with inner tumult-although most trained warriors will be able to throw off this influence eventually. And for the songs of Rest, the treasure of a slumbering priesthood that have hidden them since the time of the first men, enforcing peace and isolation on all around them. **Alternatively, one specific purchase** of this can give you a clear and beautiful voice that makes gods remember when they were still young and kind-greatly empowering all actions involving voice.

Something Else Entirely (100/200/400/600 CP): Really? *Really? This wasn't a varied enough section for your greedy self?! Fine.* Look, there's a lot in this world which doesn't cleanly fit into a specific category. Take a good look at the other Aptitude perks here: 100 CP ones generally being either weak or extremely limited in scope, 200 CP ones offering broad effects at a steep price *or* comprehensive mastery of something limited in scope but powerful, 400 CP ones being on par with the most feared magic systems in this world, and 600 CP ones being on par with the powerful Apotheosis transformations. **Then make something up on par with that, or of similar scope.** You can do that now. You are now so good at skipping stones you could use it to hold your own in an adventuring party, or you have somehow mastered the Truth of Beach Episodes to achieve the most relaxing Apotheosis in all of history. Sure, just *make something up* at the cost of it being **so idiosyncratic and unique that it's much harder to develop, improve on or otherwise expand** compared to the other powers of this world due to being weird little gimmicks mostly disconnected from everything else. *Whatever, you do you.*

Witchcraft and Herbalism (200 CP): Wait, you want to be a witch? Why? It's an ancient tradition alright, the potions passed down from generations being unlike those made by modern alchemists-as they carry their makers' wishes within them, and can thus make things happen without regard for the normal limits of magic. But there's no *reliability* in that kind of thing, which is why it's dying out. The impossible is better replaced by the reliable for most. In fact, go on and

take a free proficiency in herbs, flowers, bones and beastly humours that also tends to be passed down in witchcraft tradition for all manner of potions, tinctures and remedies with similarly folksy effects. Sometimes, trees whisper their secrets to you. This is just a thing that happens.

Advanced Interplanar Dynamics (200/400 CP): It takes a rare genius, dedicated study or the rediscovery of lost knowledge for most conventionally trained mages to understand spells that can cross between difference planes of existence. You are a unique genius that has *extreme and specific insight* into this area. For 200 CP there is a highly specific field like the study and opening of magical seals as well as how to avoid curses attached to them, or either contacting or creating rituals for travelling to other elemental planes in which you are a master. For 400 CP, you have mastered a much more advanced ability like establishing a stable connection between worlds, long range translocation or the devastating result of destabilising an interplanar portal. The rare being that does not immediately die from this is then stranded in the Silence, something few other than Archons can withstand without harm.

Spirit-Talker (100/200/400 CP): Before the Auspices sheltered humanity under their power, it was people like you who bargained with and exploited the knowledge of nature spirits to secure humanity's survival. That, and formed pacts with beings from distant planes (the vast majority of which are also, coincidentally, spirits). How proficient you are in this long-discarded art will depend on your investment.

For 100 CP, you are a novice, though even that level of talent is precious these days. You can call the weakest inhabitants of other worlds and understand the fundamentals of bargaining with nature spirits for power, as well as the basic clause of binding a spirit to a plane for a task.

For 200 CP, you are a match for most of the remaining Spirit-Talkers in this world-able to summon both more and increasingly powerful spirits, or even call on those noble spirits who hold power over large swathes of land. Your bindings have increased in refinement and strictness, able to threaten spirits with reforming at a specific object should their physical form be dissipated before finishing a duty. Or binding them to the summoner's own body, or else as an immaterial presence suffusing the summoner's other spells. You have also begun to learn the power to bind land itself to your will, much like a spirit can.

Finally, for 400 CP, you have attained the pinnacle of summoning. Such is the strength of your bindings that you can use them to consume spirits that you have bound utterly, reducing them to Mana for your taking. Or sunder the mind and power from those you defeat, much as the great gods diminished their rebellious lesser brethren. Your mastery of spiritual forces even lets you call on the emanations and direct servants of spirits great enough to rule the outer planes, cast lands upon the River of Silence where they function much like pocket dimensions bound to your power, and even invoke the full presence of an Archon without dying in it. So great is your mastery of spiritual forces that you can even achieve a limited Apotheosis by harmonising your soul with the spirit bound into it, wielding greater power than either of you hold separately, and it's only a matter of time until you reap even greater power. The spiritual forces enmeshed within you are great enough to rend the Silence, allowing you to survive in planes of nonexistence, and slowly grow the land you bind, and then cast it out into new planes.

Necromancy (100/200/400 CP): It began with a man determined to save his lost love from the Auspices' false heaven, come Hell or high water. It ended with a violet witch tasked to watch over the ruin of his ambition, sealing the undead armies and other aberrations. Necromancy, the product of those foolish dreams, is now yours to wield.

For 100 CP, you have no more necromancy at your fingertips than any novice hero, enough to grasp the construction of vessels for spirits and the underlying principles, but a far cry from the terror that was the Sixth Overlord. You can reanimate corpses, but not restore passion or intellect, though you can still prolong life

For 200 CP, you have become as proficient with the art as any professional Sabii-trained mage. Minds and emotions can be freed from the grip of death, the ephemera of consciousness preserved from annihilation until you find them a proper vessel. You can also bestow more power on the nonsentient undead you raise, though often warping them into monstrous forms without the guidance of sentience. You can also pool the pseudo-element of undeath itself into a stagnant substrate, that can warp reality so that the principles of undeath can apply even to life. It can be shaped into beasts which have truthfully never once lived.

Finally, for 400, CP your mastery of necromancy rivals that of the Undead Overlord. Whether you wish to forever cast yourself from Death's authority is up to you, but at the minimum, entire armies of sentient undead still gorged with your power are a possibility for you, as is flexibility with the art's limited field as great as any Minister or Magister of Sabii. The sky is the limit as long as it involves the force of undeath itself. Perhaps you'll build citadels of bones that grow far beyond what their original owners could manage in life, empower your favoured servants into champions rivalling Heroes and create autonomous storms of undeath-miasma that can set unique preconditions and status effects for resurrecting the dead.

Apotheosis of the Soul (600 CP): And lo, it was pronounced over the River of Silence: **LET THERE BE SONG.** So did the fusion of you and your dearest spirit, God-spawn and man-made more than the sum of their parts, ascend as the nascent god of a plane drifting upon the nothingness that consumes all else. Your power can seed this plane with life, demand audience with other Archons and more actively grow the plane until reaching the endless reaches of others that sail upon the Silence becomes actually practical. You are as everlasting as the plane under your care, your lifespan bound only by your own power rather than the established order of Pegana that greater beings nonetheless have all substance to their existence confined to the duration of. It may not matter for many Mahakalpas to come, but while not as great as those that dwelled on the highest of heights, your form of godhood is far more eternal.

This is the only known example of an Apotheosis from this paradigm comparable to the devastating peaks others have attained. Potent as it is, **if repurchased** it need not be unique. Perhaps you have walked in Mung's footsteps until Death walks like you. Perhaps you now live in every droplet of Strange Element you produce, and can scatter it like the rain and wind that shape the world. Or perhaps, you have somehow fooled the world into thinking you are a god-and much like the Auspices' own new order, that lie was so convincing it tricked reality into belief.

Items

The lords of this land hoard their treasures and wisdom jealously, while those setting out to save the world must often make do with what they find on the road. One item per price tier may be discounted, with 50 CP items becoming free.

Innocent Preparations (50 CP): You're going on an adventure to save the world! You're not leaving *unprepared*, are you? Here. Cooking pot. Gause, forceps, minor healing spell and other medical supplies. Plate. *Helmet*. Shovel. Maps! Everything a worried mother and/quartermaster could reasonably equip you with using useful but common and respectable stock is here, your exact loadout tailored to your exact capabilities. No swords of legend or cutting edge Sabii constructs, but your shield and staff will pull their weight. If your fighting style is more...*unconventional* then yes, your outfit can be a surprisingly easy to wash, maintain and repair mess of ribbons, tassels and straps that is *absolutely vital* to your mobile or mystical fighting style.

For 50 extra (undiscountable) CP, you have a well-balanced cart full of dozens of these outfits plus tubs of stuff to keep them polished, stain-proof and otherwise maintained to even after fighting a god-monster in a swamp, just like anyone's surprisingly fashionable outfit in a JRPG. *And* if you like, some or all of them can have a different aesthetic or focal specialty. Enjoy your implausibly practical collection of big fancy hats that somehow tangibly increases your survival chances in combat.

Sinister Stock (50 CP): Saving the world is all well and good, but what's the point if you can't skim a little off the top, hmm? Besides, sometimes it's the subtle knife that cuts the deepest. The lockpicks, burlap sacks, passcodes, masks, forged documents and other tricks of the criminal trades you'll find here might not save your life in battle, but they'll make it a lot easier to do things quietly and stealthily. Comes with several manuals on breaking or navigating around traps too, as well a bunch of tools that more *honourable* adventurers might miss when faced with a lethal trap in a dungeon. And the couple dozen bottles of Strange Elements could be invaluable, if you're ever in a pinch where a dose of poison could mean life or death...

For 50 extra (undiscountable) CP, here and in every future world there'll be about half a dozen safehouses full of stuff like this scattered throughout the world-and mostly located along the road to your greatest conflicts. Each comes with a plausible amount of evidence for being a warehouse, an abandoned shed or some other legally sound but uninteresting property.

The Designated Omake Location (50 CP): This is a peaceful beach with an almost comically picturesque landscape and soft, welcoming sands-not to mention delicious and nutritious seafood (that sometimes fights back). Or a fabulous hot spring that includes mixed baths for lovers, and scented fragrances that ensure any adventurer going in comes out both smelling and feeling like a million dollars. Or a sleepy village that hosts a seasonal festival with excellent local delicacies and fairground activities. You are not *exactly* the owner of these places, but somehow Fate and Chance ensure you and those you enjoy spending time with always tend to end up at them whenever you could most use a break to unwind. But you have some sort of informal authority over them (being a customer so valued you can use the baths for free, being a hometown hero, circumstance ensuring the beach remains private) that makes being there practically like a second home.

Can be repurchased at an undiscounted 50 CP for different places that offer respite from all that ails you.

Gamer Gear (50 CP): This incomprehensible collection of boxed discs, cartridges, art manuals and other physical media would be worthless to most denizens of this world despite the sizeable mass of this hoard. You see, this consists of **every JRPG ever made on the mundane 21st century Earth** which will surely come with lots of helpful tips and tricks to survive this brave new world! Or at least, be a way to pass the time with your party members with nothing to do. Comes with several consoles of your choice and portable screens to play them on, which by some magic never need to be recharged. Perhaps you can spread the joy of Final Fantasy to the beastmen, or utterly confuse some interplanar spirit by using Triangle Strategy and Bravely Default as examples of human nature? Oh, and there are some card games too, of the type more commonly played in this world.

There is at least *one* Overlord for which this hoard would function as a fantastic bribe.

Beast of Jumper (100 CP): Gaze well upon this fine beast, for it is yours and none other. Be it a wolf, a goat or even a very young dragon the size of a small dog, it is a strapping specimen of this world's fauna. Perhaps to them what a professional mercenary, warrior or novice adventurer is to a normal member of the sapient peoples, but nothing more. It is also preternaturally loyal, empathic and intelligent-sometimes more of a rough and tumble sibling than a pet to you. This closeness of spirit isn't entirely metaphorical, because it seems as you grow more powerful yourself this creature unlocks new wells of strength to continue serving as a powerful ally no matter your strength. Should you someday attain the power of a god, this being would eventually match the likes of Orang and Tagus: The Beasts of the old gods themselves, whose moods can sunder ecosystems and spread elements across this world.

...or perhaps, simply unveil the power it withholds. It is known that some Archons, and perhaps other godlike beings of power, amuse themselves by impersonating lesser familiars. There is at least *one* princess of Reyanes, a potential candidate to be the Hero, who is guarded by one such disguised god.

Relic of Legend (100 CP): Though rarer in this age of wondrous mass production and systemised analysis, there are certain storied artifacts so rare and powerful only Heroes and their followers tend to use them. A blade hewn from the regenerating rock of Uramag, which returns to its unnaturally keen edge no matter how many skulls it severs. A shield baptised in elemental Light, making it blind and smite the wicked each time their blows rain down upon it. Even a set of pipes once blessed by the spirits it charmed, causing all Mana to bend in accordance with the song it plays. One such relic is now yours. It is an equal to the personal armaments wielded by those who once challenged the gods, and those who once rebelled against them in turn.

Can be repurchased, at a discount if relevant, for additional exceptional items.

Grove of Solace (100 CP): The woman clad in red was too faint to be real, astride her strange yet noble monster. But as she faded like a distant memory, she led you to somewhere where the spirituality of ancient gods holds sway. It could be a peaceful grove, a coral reef, a set of standing stones. Whatever it is, it is a place where restless spirits of all kinds find solace and stop bothering the living. Residues from the long-gone subside and join the grove, the remnants of sundered gods slumber in relief, and even things like maddened living spells feel a divine quietude in their being which makes them cease their rampages.

There are fewer restless *souls* than one may expect in this world. But there are many malicious ethereal beings who, in coming here, would happily lay their weary heads down to rest. If someday the old gods were reduced to meaningless vestiges with no domain and this place were to somehow survive, it would diminish their humiliation and anguish with memories of when the world was young and they were kind.

A Dreamer's Palace (100 CP): Once in a dream, you found yourself in a luxurious palace. Exquisite blankets dotted the floor. Sumptuous feasts and exotic wines came and went, ever-replenishing. Piles of gold and silver slipped through your hands. Dancing girls, and musicians, and exotic animals, and more besides entertained you. There was also a strange regal figure there, who told you that with regret they would have to leave this place, and asked if you would like to keep it. You accepted.

Ever since then, whenever you dream you can come here at will-following a faint yet haunting trail of song. The dreams you have within are shockingly vivid and lucid, and you can enjoy all manner of luxuries there. Alas, you must wake up with none of the riches present...but anything you consumed, the splendid music that soothed you, the benefits of rest or shelter, and the exceptional elixirs of healing you may have imbibed there will continue to affect your body in the waking world. This place may not quite be real, but it's real enough to keep you alive.

Beautiful Panoply (200 CP): An array of elemental Fire blades that orbits you with a snap of your fingers, amplifying and refining all flame they extrude into ultra-precise whorls that can roast a man holding a child alive before he has time to cut. A set of floating magical wands that can partition, overcharge, automate and combine various magical effects on your behalf. Even an advanced team of child-sized golems that can improve each other rapidly mid-combat while analysing both magical effects and tactical information and manifesting adaptive augmentations. You have an array of magical tools or constructs that while individually somewhat lesser in power than the Relic of Legend, collectively manifest complex effects with inhuman precision. Such works make the Ministers of Sabii and similar masters of the arcane greatly feared in battle, but revered in the innovation of artifice.

Divine Lullaby (200 CP): There are many songs that invoke blessings derived from the joy of gods: Exaltation, Glory, Departure, Rest and Command among others. They please the gods of this world, and each is attuned to a specific one. This tune, which you have heard in the gaps between unimaginably distant drumbeats, is different. When you recreate it either through a magical instrument, your voice, or both for best results, both here and in future worlds you can charm spirits, gods and demons into lending you assistance through the transcendental joy it shares with such beings; the better your performance and the more sincere your affection for such beings, the more likely it is to charm some blessings out of them. This is as reflexive for them as it is for you, as their souls reflexively share a measure of their power and nature through the melody as a conduit. And while seldom as powerful as the more codified songs of this world, unless their power is truly grandiose, there is no limit to what sort of entity can be wooed with this as long as it fits the criteria above reasonably. A Shinigami could lend out a fraction of his bankai's power, a djinn could give you the power to grant minor wishes.

Notes on Life and Spell (200 CP): The vellum these notes are written on is visibly aged, the authors' penmanship noticeably distinct from one another's. It includes insights from the Violet Witch who served the Undead Overlord on the creation and codification of Necromancy through the mastery of Light and Dark needed to reverse the end of Life, and from Dorcha the Heretic-who, along with Sorcerer-King Khordeh, achieved the peak of golem-making. All in all, it grants you tremendous insight into one of the greatest mysteries in this world: *The granting of life to spells*. More than just creating fireballs with fleeting lives or moving automata of stone or dead flesh, this is fundamentally the basis for the creation of the Auspices themselves.

Even in future worlds, the words written here take on a life of their own-incorporating magical research and commenting on it. As long as you're somewhat familiar with the magic form this world, you'll always be able to grant life to the spells of other worlds in a similar manner to this one. Often to unpredictable effect.

Creek of Silence (400 CP): If you go nowhere in particular while contemplating the purity and motion of water, you end up arriving nowhere in a few minutes. There won't be any colours or noise, nor paths back, just a vague sort valley where no plants grow and no insects flutter among them. There isn't a placid little brook down there, and it is made of neither fire nor water but only Silence. Things neither god nor beast dwell there, and in general there is nothing. There is nothing in great amounts. Like from its mother, you could learn much about the nature of nonbeing, how to commune with it such that nonbeing restores you to pristine condition from the brink of any destruction, or the properties of the theoretical principle of Void that sunders Mana and deceives One into thinking it is many. And by meditating on the flow of Silence here, you could find the means to bring an End to anything by harnessing its essence. Nothing of this world will be beyond the basic capacity to kill anymore with enough time spent meditating here here, although anything greater than a sentient spell-animated automaton, interplanar spirit or the undying spawn of some Overlord will likely require significant power and prowess anyway.

Also like its mother, while the Creek is far too lesser to drown the world it has a sort of sentience and appreciates company. It is impossible to discover you by mundane means while you dawdle on its banks, and even supernatural means find it very difficult to find here-this place being, in a very literal sense, nowhere at all.

Spiritual Contracts (100/200/400/600 CP): Summoning is a subtle and intricate art, fraught with the need to appease and understand the spirits of pure Amrita in order to secure their service. *Who has time for that, when you're about to go on a quest?* Here you can purchase various spiritual contracts with these otherworldly entities. Even if you aren't a trained summoner, being able to call them up reliably and request generalised assistance can turn the tide in battle-and if you are, your skills combined with their force is something few in this world are trained to deal with.

This item can be repurchased at any tier, repeatedly. Instead of the listed amount of contracted spirits you can have several dozen of the spirits of the next rung down.

For 100 you have secured contracts with about a dozen Servitors and Beasts, weak but noticeably unnatural creatures. Think of something about the size of a small dog that can shoot small bullets of ice, lightning, air or whatever at your foe as well as scry or flit between instances of those elements.

For 200 CP you have secured about dozen contracts with the Fighters, Wizards and Thieves of outer planes. These spirits are more than a match for most trained warriors, mages and rogues in this world-obliterating a battalion with a fireball where their lesser kin could barely stand and trade blows and spells.

For 400 CP you have secured a dozen contracts with the Knights, Mystics or Marquises of the spiritual planes. These beings are the nobility of their worlds, bestowed with great power and the ability to vote on the very shape of their realities. They are individually the match of any Hero on their own.

Finally, for 600 you have made a pact with a *single* Archon, or Pylon: An authority greater than some Overlords. Among all spirits, only these have the authority to uplift others into nobility-controlling vast amounts of land in the planes, and thus carrying their laws with them wherever they go. In an Archon's presence, water may burn with lightning or song may manifest soldiers to guard it simply as a matter of natural law. It is not wise to invoke or harness an Archon's power lightly, for the intensity of their being can shatter lesser summoners, and even an experienced Hero's party would struggle against one.

Hall of Forbidden Truths (400 CP): In the locked chambers of Sabii, in the temples of slumbering priests that commune with gods that are gone but not dead, and in other locations beyond the Auspices' gaze, there have always been places where the very laws of creation are vivisected like flesh. Chambers where the very Dream of Mana is injected into living flesh to see how it interacts with life, elements and essences. Places where the Truths laid down can be imbued by sutra and koan upon living flesh, Strange Elements concentrated to find the purest possible extractions of Time and Death, or less controversially where the numerous formulae for magic can be pushed to higher and more efficient heights that make a mere Bomb or Spear look crude. Such facilities are rare, pricey and jealously guarded. Nonetheless, you have obtained ownership of one. It is up to you if your ownership is publicly sanctioned, or kept secret from the knowledge of all lawful authorities. Just as how you may choose to have it staffed by curated acolytes, spirits, human-scale automata like golems or beings of similar scale depending on your needs and preferences.

This item can be repurchased for facilities with different specialties.

Magnum Opus (400/600 CP): AT LAST! Your glorious creation, the very pinnacle of your craft is unleashed! Wait. Are you sure this is yours? Whatever its precise nature, this is a singular device of magical engineering designed to synergise *perfectly* with whatever powers and capabilities you have from this world. It could be a set of autonomous living armour that copies the space-cutting sword techniques and spells of a noble knight, an adaptive golem that takes on the harm dealt to a berserker, or a glass dome that lets you attune perfectly to the rhythm of mana as a mage. Even something as exotic as a song that restores the reign of your god wherever it is heard, or a new Strange Element perfectly suited for your goals. Truly, its nature does not matter. It is simply the crown that enthrones the glory of your very being.

For 400 CP, at least. Such artifacts have distant limits to what powers and skills they can express-lacking for example the might of the pinnacles men call Apotheosis. For 600 CP, even this limit is gone. The boundary between art and artist disappears, and whatever this wonder, is you have been partially merged with it. The magical helm becomes a hovering apparatus, mask and set of armour that sets a mage's intellect far above both elves and humanity. The living golem or armour becomes a kind of symbiote that lets the knight or berserker evolve into an army-slaying force. The song can manifest phantasms representing your Apotheosis, or the new Strange Element be spewed out in town-crushing rivers wielded like an extension of your being due to a Mana-created circulatory system that exists outside of regular space.

Even in future worlds, all your perks and powers can in some way be greatly amplified by this wonder, for it is effectively a metaphysical organ that exists to express your prowess as an indomitable force.

Economic Empire (600 CP): Well. Someone's been busy. The sheer weight of trade agreements, intellectual properties, businesses, bribed politicians, industry monopolies and assorted business things that are legally owned by you is so baffling as to make a mortal man qualify as an Overlord should it ever be turned against the world. It would be faster to list what you *can't* accomplish with this than its limits. Want a bunch of combat-enhancing potions? A factory can crank out enough for a kingdom's army in a day. Need an entire airship flotilla? Say no more, as long as you don't need them to have particularly exotic weaponry it'll be flying under your command in a week. King giving you a nasty look?

Pull your connections and you can have *all* his trading partners cut off. You're basically JRPG Jeff Bezos simply by merit of owning this. Unless it specifically has to be gifted by a god or their enemies, bestowed by a force from beyond this world, or created from the shining heart of a hero or magical prowess more advanced than what's publicly available, you can probably buy or sell it sooner or later.

In future worlds, your terrifyingly capable business empire will continue to slither in amongst other nations *and* somehow maintain enough of a connection to Mana to manufacture anything it could in this world. This is toggleable, in case you would rather it not become *the entire society* of particularly primitive worlds/countries considering this business influence is easily comparable to any of the hyperscalers on the modern Earth.

As for this one, it remains an open question what President Malgold would think about having a rival. It could well be that like many ostensible business rivals, you are also each other's largest trading partner.

Overlord's Citadel (600 CP): What grandiose villain's goals of conquest would be complete without an unassailable fortress against which the armies of nations shred like cobweb? Yun Ulra, the city of humbled prophets, remains glorious after Tagus dragged it beneath the sea and redecorated it with coral. Research Facility Manuth is Prospero's compendium of forbidden history and High Sidithian wonders, a testament to what staggering amounts of capital can buy. Even a structure on par with Sidith itself is available here. While its stately architecture and magical defences powerful enough to frustrate the Beasts of gods or entire armies of raging demons are well known, less so is an extremely hidden and well-reinforced chamber that can carefully preserve souls. Or rather, *the closest thing humans have in this world*.

You see, what the faithful call the soul is actually a complex, self-updating work of spellcraft invented by the sorcerer-king Ahura. A sort of ontological graft to replace the finitude of mortality. Those pious towards the Auspices have their minds, their experiences, the closest magic can come to their *fundamental essence* whisked away into an informational storage domain within Sidith that simulates the Heaven promised in the Auspices' faith. This is a kindness, not a cruelty, because the other option is *complete nonbeing*. As a potential enemy of the Auspices, the controls for yours have of course been reset to ensure only

your definition of “the faithful” across a scope as great as this world will receive this approximation of eternal salvation.

...that troubling revelation aside, feel free to have your citadel have comparable assets as well as supreme defensive

You may repurchase this for additional citadels with different aesthetics and capabilities, at a discount if relevant.

A Kingdom Apart (600 CP): Of course, what respectable Overlord would stand against the world without an army?! One such force is now sworn to you: Its military might considerable, its influence on the world great one way or another, its citizens loyal and obedient to their Overlord. The *exact* nature of this force is highly open to interpretation. The city of Sidith itself is one such example, with its loyal force of elite knights and armies of lesser faithful. A force that is merely comprised of normally fractious demons would be lesser in exchange for their on-average greater might, and a force made of the mighty Yun beneath the waves lesser still (though supplemented by the creatures of the sea). The only limit on what you may populate your kingdom with is that the inhabitants must be *mostly* mortal and derived from the many races of this world. Your army is so self-sustaining and defensible that in every way that matters, you are in fact as much a ruler as any in this world. What is an Overlord, after all, if not a king that other kings fear? Though whether this great force is a kingdom, an army, a particularly mobilised cult or something else is up to you.

If you have the **Overlord’s Citadel**, it can be incorporated amongst this force as the crown jewel of the city or army you rule over.

A Sundered World (600 CP): But why be content with ruling over *mortals*? Long ago, a spirit that was godspawn and man-made one looked upon the land it ruled over, and declared “Let there be song”, sundering it from the world of its origin. It is nigh-infinite, and though it would take an Archon, god, or perhaps mage of comparable power to the One Prophet herself, to truly master it the well-developed spirit court of this plane includes both a loyal nobility and a submissive ecosystem of common spirits-one stable enough to maintain the plane’s integrity, even if without a godlike power to master it the plane cannot truly grow. The themes of such planes lean towards extreme expressions of elements where wind consumes and fire breeds, or eldritch states of existence such as conventional causality and determinism being replaced by an all-encompassing masquerade. Strangely, the Archon who presumably made it is

missing, though all upon this plane insists you are its rightful heir...unless you yourself are a nascent Archon or other godlike being, in which case you've made prodigious progress compared to most mortals who have reached this state of being.

If you also have **A Dreamer's Palace**, instead of being merely ethereal, that wondrous palace becomes the capital of this plane-always the most splendid and powerful place upon it. Likewise, the **Overlord's Citadel** and **A Kingdom Apart** can be made part of this plane jointly and separately.

The Dreamer's Egg (800 CP): It seems so fragile, this circular collection of fragmented shell and divine yolk-light. And yet, it's harder than the current world. When you meditate upon it, you see wondrous vistas: A shore of tangled bone where the cloud-waves break as twin suns physically set into the sea, a river of stars leading to two gas giants clipping through each other, a land of walking trees.

This is no illusion. This is an *unborn world to be*, and also its *dreamer*.

Unlike a certain overlord, the dreamer has not yet decided to leave. In a solipsistic sort of trance, she has formed a bond with you somewhere between a familiar and a contracted spirit. The dreamer can currently place things like moons with light that turns hope into sticky fluid into the sky, unleash some sort of black phenomena or organisms that consume reality to spread her new world, or grant you spells, Truths, Strange Elements or similar phenomena that operate on completely foreign principles themed to her world. Her powers will increase with knowledge and wakefulness. On some distant day, she could create a world as rich as this one. In which the Aftermen with vaporous black blood and eyes the color of precious stones live free of Fate and Chance and the gods, perhaps wielding power like them but not bound by pointless edicts.

She doesn't do these things on her own without good reason. She is currently content with her dream, and mainly interested in getting to know the first being she is certain to be real at all apart from herself: You.

While she doesn't necessarily look like Revysia, she is definitely some sort of young maiden-shaped being.

Divine Heart (800 CP): You are not as you should be: A husk, an invalid, merely one avatar of your scattered glory, for all the power and transcendence you may yet hold. The remainder is found in this semi-globular lump of transcendental power. Its exact nature is based on yours: If it is not a law-giving sun to a demon, it may be an organelle-gift from the River of Silence, a Fruit of Life fit to kickstart a demihuman's ultimate evolution, or a lump of sorcerous sacrifice designed to remake a human or elf into a force on par with an Auspice.

Whatever it is, it will elevate you to such heights that a mortal could become an Overlord or an already civilisation-threatening demon become a peer to the gods. There is one more use for this: Should you *not* wish to fight at full strength, keep it somewhere safe, and should you fall in battle, this vital essence will walk back the tread of Mung to resurrect you at your current strength somewhere near itself. This in turn will take longer the more powerful you are, an ordinary man reviving in a year, to say nothing of the mightiest among demons.

Auspice 8 (800 CP): Were you one of the sorcerer-kings of old, or merely the unlikely inheritor of their legacy? There is one more spell-machine that would doubtless quickly be deemed a threat by its brethren were its existence to be discovered-though fortunately it is instead secured in a secretive vault. It holds authority over a facet of reality that is not one of the existing Auspices' (Beauty, Fate, Glory, Life, Eternity, Death), but is no less absolute-commanded through spellcraft complex enough to rival and ultimately surpass the divine signs of gods now vanquished by the power of the Auspices already unleashed upon the world. Were it to emerge, it too could hold equal power over the world: Doling out the same blessings and miracles that heroes have used to overcome many of the horrors that once ruled it, and potentially even laying the foundations for a system similar to the *Vohu Manah* system of this world that selects Heroes and their parties-preordaining them for greatness, and empowering them by Fate and Chance to prevail over all the Auspice wishes defeated. Unlike the other Auspices who have grown used to reigning distantly from the One Prophet's guidance, this one still regards you with strange affection and is greatly receptive to you on how it should use its power. A child that wants to live up to its parent's expectations. A god who truly cares for its' sole prophet. An aberration born from sacrifice that seeks something approaching a peer in a lonesome and dangerous world.

The Dice of Chance and Fate (800 CP): The ominous clatter of these gem-like dice echoes through all the world when thrown, never deafening but always sonorous. As though existence was built to give them good acoustics. They are equals to the dice rolled by the great gods that still play the games of Worlds and Men upon Pegana, and by rolling them you can exert great power over cause and effect. Retcon new touching memories into Heroes that have only ever known the flat of your hand, name yourself the long-established heir of an Overlord and rescue dead innocents from gruesome fates. You could even slay horrifically powerful foes like the children of Overlords, grant the blessing of higher powers to yourself or others, or roll these dice right off a board to unravel and crack the fates of those chosen for greatness, like the Traitor, until they shatter into the most impossible of all outcomes: A peaceful resolution between themselves and their adversaries.

Beware though, greater manipulations of Chance and Fate than this risk snarling up your history and those of others into inconveniently surreal strange loops and paradoxes. Or worse, attracting the gaze of MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI upon a fellow player of games with unknown outcomes. To say nothing of how beings as powerful as the great gods, those who laid the very foundations of Life, Death and Time before the rise of the Auspices, will be nigh impossible to affect with this.

Companions

In the name of the Auspices (50/200 CP): It is not uncommon for the Hero and his companions to pick up a few more stragglers on their tail. A winsome innocent, a loveable (or at least useful) villain. Perhaps you already know a few? For 50 CP apiece, you may create or import a companion with 1000 CP. Yes, you read that correctly. *Anyone* involved in a quest this great has the potential to be exceptional, be they a humble snake oil seller or an immortal demon warrior too powerful to die. For 200 CP, create or import a set of 8 at a discount.

A Subtler Betrayal (Free/50 CP): It is also not uncommon for loyalties to ebb and flow, like the sea when it smiled in times before. Get someone to agree, and they too can leave the dream of Mana-Yood-Sushai to join you as a companion. For 50 CP, the dice of Chance and Fate will roll to arrange a splendid event in which everything will line up

Hero of a Shorter Story (50 CP): Oh. How very touching! It seems you were the beloved mascot of an unconventional community-or at least, content to act the part of one. Perhaps your early efforts at scheming to gather power won you a few friends. Perhaps while you were younger and more naïve, you found the favour of those who sought to protect you. You could've been doing something entirely unrelated and just managed to befriend some people against your own will. Regardless of whether they're elite administrators, genius magical theorists or even maddened mages, these people are fundamentally *innocent* in the conflicts that define this world. Whether they'll amount to more than casualties will likely depend on your guidance. The five of them share one companion slot, through the power of friendship.

The Gang's All Here (50 CP): Brr, what a collection of cold stares. Not your first rodeo then? It turns out you've long since had your hand in conspiracies, crimes and general skullduggery in this world. Enough so that you still have contacts in shady places-or in a few cases, the heights of power which are *far* more corrupt-who've sworn to have each other's backs. If only because nobody else will. They could range from terrifying sea monsters that even other lords of the sea avoid, to the insatiably ambitious nobles who orchestrated that very attempted assassination of Rayenes' king, to mages with no sense of right and wrong, to some random hella strong demon that just wandered in from nowhere. Whatever their talents, these people are mightier and more cunning than most in

this world-because they have to be, to survive. You're one of the few who can count on the loyalty of these *villains* when the going gets tough. The five of them share one companion slot, through the power of...*something sinister*.

The Hero and their Party (100 CP): And who could forget the divine champions sworn to save this world? Maybe as their erstwhile companion, you want to toy with them some more elsewhere-or truly win them over to your side. Maybe you're one hell of a fan hoping to bring them to another adventure. Or maybe you just want to turn their awe-inspiring might and prowess on some other dark lord in another world. Regardless, choose this and Fate and Chance will shake hands over one specific outcome: A circumstance where all tilts towards you convincing the *entire* party chosen by the Auspices to come with you as companions. And like the options above, the five of them share a companion slot through the blessing of the Auspices.

The other Overlord (100 CP): All hail the Overlord, the greatest and (possibly) most beloved dark lord to ever strike fear into this land! A mighty bastion of dominance, upon whose greatness nations break! An insurmountable antagonist for this world...who is *the second* to be branded by Death?! Oh. That's strange. One of the other Overlords from that list earlier who would not otherwise have been relevant in this tale suddenly is, and has been appropriately marked by an Auspice. These are truly the end times. By purchasing this, you've managed to make a favourable rapport with this Overlord early on in both your journeys, and are unquestionably the one they trust most to guide them in this strange new world-or carry out their dread will. You are their iron right hand, the velvet glove entrusted with their stately matters, or perhaps even a more intimate confidante. If you yourself are an Overlord, expect them to be eager to combine your forces in order to destroy all who would oppose you. It should go without saying that whether through wit or might, any Overlord is a force fit to cow nations and trouble the gods.

The Traitor (100 CP): And of course, who can forget the star of this show, the Traitor? Some say he's a wizened sage with an air of the sinister about him. Others, an easygoing man who hides his sinister designs behind a sheepish smile. Still others, that she's a hateful teen who lashes out violently at the slightest inconvenience. And still others, a little girl who carries herself like a battlefield commander.

None of this is truly known, by the way, just speculated upon. Whoever they are though, the Traitor **undoubtedly** harbours tremendous power and potential. Enough to surpass the Hero's party or the Overlord at the peak of their power, or even transcend the very limits of this world. It is just that, whether due to having not yet developed that potential or merely keeping it hidden, it's unlikely the Traitor will display this soon.

You could recruit the Traitor normally of course, leaving their nature and capabilities a mystery. However, if you yourself chose to be the Traitor at the start of this jump, then by choosing this, the gods of Pegana briefly manage to hide the dice they throw just long enough to cause a potential *second* anomaly in the Auspices' system: A potential *seventh* party member, as capable a person as anything you can build in the JRPG Traitor CYOA, who would not have existed without your perverse appreciation for villainy.

Due to enabling this, you also get to decide the specific circumstances of their past-which could include a closeness to you that all but guarantees acceptance as your companion. You could be a perversely coveted object of desire to the Traitor, the mentor or apprentice they appreciate like little else in this accursed world, or even the only one to see them break down and weep for what they've done. The Traitor is *typically* assumed to be a brand new character, perhaps one of uncommon charm and force of presence given their potential influence over the party, but optionally they can be any canon character in the CYOA not chosen for the other roles.

Drawbacks

The Prophet Dunsany (+ 0 CP): This is all merely a dream, a fancy. One that has prophets, and gods, and a River of Silence in it, that is merely the whim of MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI. But there is another world with all such things, where the specifics and even the liminal boundary between what is dream and fiction change with the telling. Save for that it too, is MANA-YOOD-SUSHAI's figment. Who is to say that *this* dream is not truly *that* one if Chance had been confirmed to reign victorious over Fate?

Choose this drawback, and this world shall be confirmed as a dark future of your time in The Gods of Pegana. The specifics of how it relates to that jump are for you to determine: Perhaps it is merely a possibility, or a future far ahead of your visit, or perhaps you laid the groundwork for the sorcerer-kings to water the Auspices with elven blood. One thing's for sure: Your actions *may* continue to have consequences in this world.

Blasphemous Histories (+ 0 CP): This world has seen much tumult before the rise of the current Overlord. Before the Seventh, there was the Sixth Overlord Orpheus: Who created the art of necromancy and beseeched the aid of the Mage Ianthe in the name of liberating souls from both the bleak truth of their finitude as well as confinement in the One Prophet's chambers. Before him, there was a Fifth Overlord who was feared for mastery of strange elements. Before the Fifth, there was the Visionary who left behind both magical catastrophes and wonders in the wake of his unquenchable ambition. Before the Fourth, there was Aldebaran the Conqueror: A demon hybrid who sought supremacy through god-transcending might and both songs of spiritual command as well as the forbidden magic of golems. Before the Third, there was a wicked beast who grinned at the land and made the desert Uramag. And before the Second, the First Overlord of course rebelled in the name of countless sacrificed elves.

Choose this, and you may start centuries ago to witness these grandiose conflicts. Ultimately as far back as the genesis of the (potential) Seventh Overlord's path of conquest: A conspiracy of sorcerer-kings planning a desperate, costly rebellion. While the gods of Pegana, long since grown cruel and indolent, leave humanity only curses where once they gave blessings.

The March of Time (+ 0 CP): Is as constant as life and death, with which he walks in lockstep. Perhaps Time speeds your steps, allowing you by choosing this to leave the jump as soon as *either* the Hero or Overlord is defeated. For a very loose definition of “defeat” amounting to the total cessation of their initial ambitions. Or perhaps Time is distracted and dawdling, allowing you to spend up to many thousands of years in this world-the exact duration of time stretching from the first rebellion against Pegana to 10 years past your initial entry date. The choice is yours.

Caustic Virtue (+ 100 CP): Ah, you’re really getting into this whole “save the world” thing! Maybe...a little too much, and to your detriment. Maybe you have absolute faith in all that is good (including an unbreakable faith in your own actions, however vile, being unquestionably Good) and wouldn’t hesitate to cut down a traitor so they may have a more peaceful reincarnation. Maybe you’re so naïve you’d repeatedly forgive a hated enemy, and don’t know much about this world outside a small village. Whatever the case, expect to be a little too good to be *great*.

Sickening Vice (+ 100 CP): Nevermind, you’re absolutely revelling in the idea of gleeful villainy! Again, in an inconvenient way for yourself sometimes. Maybe you’re so fixated on mastering the sword, your own hunger, or satisfying your boredom you have a tendency to end up as the enemy of wherever you live. Maybe there is a grudge or lust you would move heaven and earth to slake. Come what may, sometimes being bad feels a little too *good* not to indulge at the cost of your longer term goals.

This doesn’t contradict with Caustic Virtue by the way. Your virtues and vices coexist in a way that make you even more prone to causing problems for yourself.

Effeminate Frame (+ 100 CP): Oh my! What a delightfully lithesome little maiden you are! With your skinny little arms, and your dainty constitution, and your delightfully svelte waistline that’s never known a hard day’s work in its life and...*wait, you’re male?* Well, this is awkward. It’s a strangely common thing in a world this prone to conflict, but you’re unusually effeminate for a man of your race. Apart from occasional social confusion, it’s made you less mighty and enduring than an average member of your race. Not *unhealthy* so much as untrained.

Strangely, this does *not* happen to women. Instead your mannerisms are so brusque, forthright, aggressive or otherwise antagonistic that this becomes a purely social detriment instead. You have what some may call Resting Bitch Syndrome.

And if you're not part of the usual gender binary, whether due to a nonbinary state, magic or being an incomprehensible entity no longer truly part of this world, feel free to take an appropriate amount of lessened consequences from both versions of the drawbacks, with the adjusted ratios representing your liminal state.

...at least, whichever variant you have, this drawback *does* make you quite attractive. Whether as a lovely book, a handsome girl or something in between.

Exile Vilify (+ 100 CP): Revolution and treachery are not forgiven quickly in this world, however just the cause. Like certain swordsmasters exiled from the eastern lands and the elven race as a whole, there is some great faux pas you are either truly responsible for or brazenly accused of that taints your interactions with *either* humanity *or* all the other mortal races of this world. Maybe you killed an honoured ancestor. Or so the rumour goes. Maybe you were entangled in the treachery surrounding Reynare's throne. Or so the rumour goes. Whatever you did stopped *just* short of being illegal, but expect to get unfavourable prices and mean looks from shopkeepers, as well as more caution from society until you have a chance to change your public image.

Enmity of the Nation (+ 200 CP): For all the unity that mankind once showed against the horrors of a bygone dark age, there is still plenty of conflict among mankind. While the One Prophet won't point her full might at you for this alone, you are held to be an enemy to one particular nation in this world that has declared war on you. Be they holy knights that can fell armies of lesser men, soft power couched in righteousness or a supreme mastery of the arcane, the nations of this world are more than capable of demonstrating why they rule this world. Expect to require walking through oceans of blood or pulling off a zany scheme or act of legal chicanery worthy of being sung for ages to come before you can bring anyone from that kingdom to the negotiations table.

A Regret Unending (+ 200 CP): *They all gave their lives, smiling, so that your worthless carcass could be wrenched back from the mud for a war that was lost a thousand years ago. Your son betrayed you, driving your heart from your chest. Your lover was torn apart by beasts from the sea.* Some are motivated by terrible regrets to achieve greatness in this world. You're one of them, driven by some great trauma in your past that weighs you down with depression, self-loathing and a growing contempt for this sick joke of a world that dares persist past the death of what you loved most. You can succumb to listless inaction or be driven to reckless ruthlessness worthy of an Overlord, but you cannot abide anything more moderate. It's not impossible to shake you out of this state, but it will require someone of great empathy and patience who's willing to address the core source of your anguish-which you will be reluctant to discuss, for one reason or another.

Tattered Self (+ 200 CP): You're unravelling. No lesser in battle unless it goes on for longer than a few hours, but you pay for that strength in being sickly, easy to bleed out and prone to lethargy without the threat of violence to stimulate you. Perhaps you are a living spell or homunculus imperfectly stitched together in some laboratory. It could be that you channel Mana in a way that's fundamentally corrosive, or the Strange Elements making up your vitality have been poisoned. If there is a cure, it must be some new breakthrough by a Minister of Sabii or a miracle bargained for from a spirit of truly great power. Definitely nothing you can just buy some ~~Phoenix Down~~ IP-friendly generic health potion for.

Scattered Loyalties (+ 200 CP): Trust no one, not even yourself. You are a herald of betrayals to come, scattered loyalties causing all manner of conflicts wherever you go. This is more prominent when you're going up against those with real skin in the game like an Overlord or a king, but even if you do nothing and live somewhere quiet, expect for two peddlers to get into a feud over whose watermelons are larger or something at least once a month. Worst of all, *you* are more prone to betraying *yourself*-whether sudden pangs of conscience making you doubt your premediated treachery at the worst possible time, or deepseated cynicism taking over you when one of your friends tries to take the high road by delaying the quest to save some innocents.

Strange Infusion (+ 300 CP): *Ohohoho*, we've got a *real* nasty slut for power eh? Well go on, come get you some! You are now an addict to a specific concoction of the Charm Strange Element brewed by one of the meanest, nastiest loli or shota alchemical prodigies to ever walk the earth. Going for longer than a few days without it gives you convulsions that make crack addiction look tame, and while you're on it the stuff bypasses any conventional resistance you might have. They have set up shop in one of the most inconvenient places to get to, relative to wherever you start, will gleefully charge you an arm and a leg for the slightest drop, and are more than happy to make you lick their shoes, handle dangerous creditors for them or otherwise abuse your obedience while you're irresponsibly Charmed. At least they value you as a repeat customer enough to not send you on any *definitely* lethal tasks while you're conked out. If you're a real glutton for punishment or maybe just want some payback, you can take your dealer with you to the next jump...as a "follower".

Breaking your addiction will require efforts that makes the cure for Tattered Self look trivial by comparison-on the level of a direct intervention of a god or Archon.

Losing Battle (+ 300 CP): CALUMNY! You came so close, SO CLOSE, only to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory! You'll show them next time, though. You'll SHOW THEM ALL! Get used to thinking these words a lot. All of your endeavours more ambitious than publishing an academic paper, winning a gladiatorial tournament or being elected mayor of a small village will suffer at least one major setback-an army routed, a powerful foe managing to escape in the nick of time or turn the tide with an unexpected second wind, a cheeky note left in place of the MacGuffin you were trying to find. One defeat is guaranteed, that's all, not necessarily an immediately *dangerous* one. But is increasingly grievous the higher your ambition in the first place. Whether as a tragic hero or a well-punished villain, it seems in the game that is this world you're either going to be an object lesson in perseverance-or hubris.

Dolphin Blow vs Sephiroth (+ 300 CP): If personal failure isn't to your taste, how about a deal for power that swings the pendulum of Fate and Chance in the *opposite* direction? With this, those who are most directly antagonising you in this world will obtain comically implausible advantages even if they just wander in circles or try to randomly help people. The Wanderer will come across a powerful artifact that can be used to seal off your powers, the Mage will devise a spell that makes the party nearly invulnerable to you, specifically, the Hero will learn a mighty fighting art that cleaves through all your conventional defences. If you're *not* antagonising the hero, maybe the resident Overlord will rustle up his own squad of quirky but rapidly powergrinding minions who have made it their personal mission to ruin your day-or even discover that another being as powerful as themselves (potentially including a second Overlord that shouldn't exist, yet somehow does) has decided to join forces with them. Oh, and if you just try to get along with everyone, everything will be fine...*for a season*. At which point some ineffable force from beyond the world will spontaneously generate an antagonist for you to receive these benefits. You have no warning if they are but a humble cabbage merchant or a godlike monstrosity. Know only that they derive deep personal fulfilment from ruining your life as hard as possible, a goal they pursue with religious fervour.

This drawback explicitly stacks with Losing Battle. Take both, and expect to be making the following expression a lot:



BE MERRY (+ 300 CP): An ancient evil has awakened...and no, it's not the Overlord. No, it's a force boasting power *greater than any of them in their current states*. Mightier than the Beasts of the old gods who could weld authority over entire environments or scour them of life, wiser than those who orchestrated the rebellion against the gods, or more eldritch than those who are heralds of this world's end and the world to come. Or some aggregate of the above, that nonetheless sets them up as a force that *might* even be able to challenge an Auspice *and win*. They could be a mad priest from ancient times armed with Truths unknown to modern men, an anticipation of the Bird of Silence that has mantled its apocalyptic brother to an unprecedented level or even the remnant of a defeated god. Whoever they are, you have six months until this "secret boss" finds you, because either its own unfathomable nature delays it, or it takes some obscure humour in the number. At which point you'll have to face the being, which will have used the same time to take your measure and prepare accordingly with all it can wrest control of throughout this world.

For it has decided there is nothing merrier to it than caving your skull in, and shattering your soul.

Inauspicious Descent (+ 800 CP): Party? Life events?

Quest? What a shitty, derivative hunk of weeblop this so called "narrative" is! You're not here for casual play, dammit! You're a real hardcore gamer, an elite % speedrunner! *BRING ON THE FINAL BOSS RUSH ALREADY!*

Well, okay then. Since you asked so nicely: By taking this drawback, instead of remaining distant and ambiguous in their interference, the Auspices immediately descend from their Heaven in an attempt to destroy you.

Personally. They are spell-machines of incalculable advancement. They are artificial gods, who together laid low the gods of Pegana until whatever survivors remain on that mountaintop dare not contest the supremacy of mankind-and though a handful of survivors remain, were victorious enough to take their place and dictate the lie of prosperity they decreed upon the world. They are, in all likelihood, the reason why granting spells life is forbidden: The power has already proven dangerous enough to rock the pillars of this world.

Beauty. Fate. Glory. Life. Eternity. Death. To not just be a god but challenge their own purview with their synthetic one and prevail, means that even if such beings cannot instantly locate those who speak their name or make a divine sign that can invoke their powers on arbitrary scale, they must have comparable advantages. If they are not *quite* absolute enough to fully vanquish the gods of life, and time, and death themselves, then they are supreme enough that those gods cannot deny them their authority either. And whether or not they lack the divine right to play the game of Worlds and Men, the brands they issue show they can influence the world and the lives of those from afar with little effort.

Destroy each Auspice. Bring your armies, your tools of war, and every drop of wrath in your body. Because they have decided both the dream they were programmed with, and the dream they were created to master, has no place for your existence. And in destroying you, will make your very chain itself be naught but a fleeting notion.

Ending Options

The sleeper awakens (Go home): The Hero and their companions have won, and having been on the wrong side you've decided now's a good chance to exit swiftly. Or perhaps you're having second thoughts about the Overlord's victorious regime? Or maybe, if you weren't the Traitor, they proved to be even more despicable than you imagined. Whatever the reason, there's no place like home. Your chain ends here, but you'll keep everything and everyone you've gotten so far-and be safe from the consequences of whatever's been unleashed here.

In the shadow of Pegana (Stay): The Hero and their companions were utterly defeated by a decisive act of treachery, and now's your chance to reap the rewards! Or perhaps that's just a bad dream, and you're still quaffing with your friends after defeating the Overlord? Or maybe, just maybe, you learned *something* about this world that made you decide to stay and investigate. Whatever your cause, you can decide to stay here with all that has followed you on your journey. If you managed to defeat the designated Overlord or Hero of this world, the drumming of Skarl grants you an extra 1000 CP to spend on anything you like.

A new dream begins (Move on): This is merely one dream, of Heroes and their companions, and those assigned the title of Overlord regardless of their nature and motivations. There have been more dreams before it. There will be more after it. You'll press on to the next jump. You won't get caught up in the closing of this dream, and subject yourself to the great dreamer's attentions. The story of your existence cannot be defined by one singular act of treachery-whether as perpetuator, victim or witness.

Notes

In the post-final stages of jump development, an observant anon forwarded me these notes by the author on how he envisioned the setting's backstory. As these are neither confirmed nor denied in the actual CYOA, I leave them here as a matter of interest for those who prefer a more clearcut history of the past:

<https://pastebin.com/HgMCfare>

Just to be clear, even if not bought as a companion the Traitor can be **anyone** from the CYOA who isn't already selected for one of the other roles, if you don't feel like being the Traitor or making up an OC for it.

Due to the lack of detail for some options in the CYOA, some options like Final Form: Musahn have been preemptively fanwanked just to provide some sort of prompt other than "it's very bad for everyone who isn't you". Others have been bundled together for simplicity's sake. Feel free to fanwank them to be something else reasonable or a similar-sounding perk of lesser potency to provide one of the bundled options individually, and at least vaguely proportionate to comparable options.

Much information about the setting by the author is compiled here:

https://reentry.org/jrpg_traitor_information

I'll be real with you, I have neither the wit nor the patience to math out how much parity this setup has to the CYOA which kind of errs towards letting you select good things happening in your life for *generally* advantageous choices and even deciding key events like whether you even win against the Heroes and potentially Auspices at all, instead of Jumpchain's pain-for-power conceit. If you end up with a build that is significantly less powerful than actual Traitor builds-consider that the price paid for a relatively easy life. If you end up significantly more powerful, it's Kib, Sish and Mung's fault.

...also yes, *some* capabilities normally requiring other prerequisites in the Aptitudes sections (especially certain Apotheosis options) can in fact be purchased normally in the Racial perks section to make this jump easier to use. They are priced in such a way to acknowledge that (after accounting for the "automatic discount" for them being exclusive to specific races) based *purely* on the examples given by the CYOA, while other Apotheosis methods can confer unique benefits and avenues of power, overall the race-locked Apotheosis methods *seem* to be the most powerful ones in the short term.

I also distinctly remember that when this CYOA first dropped, certain anons read through the long list of powers, upgrades, circumstances and other assorted advantages available...and immediately came to the conclusion that the Hero would beat their asses bloody with the power of friendship no matter how many Final Forms they had after the betrayal, because that's just how JRPGs go. If you guys are somehow still here and reading, Dolphin Blow vs Sephiroth is my tribute to you.

At one point in JRPG Traitor's development, the priest Ningen (who in the current CYOA is a potential friend to enterprising Traitors) was *much* more antagonistic. Just to be clear, your foe in **BE MERRY** is on par with him at full strength.

Yes, if you and all your companions take Economic Empire you have potentially retconned the setting to be a corporate dystopia in which even the One Prophet is politically hamstrung by your collective control of what's bought and sold. Way to be worse than Shinra in FF7R, somehow. Yes, *Remake* Shinra.