

Destiny

Is a lie. We're all making this up as we go along.

But I digress. Welcome to my beloved cosmos. Stay off the dexter path a while, and listen.

A long time ago, a **Gardener** and a **Winnower** lived (as much as principles of ontological dynamics can be said to live) in a garden (that is to say, the pre-universal state of existence. But also a literal garden, at least from the perspective of small minds) and played a game of possibilities. Consistently, that game ended in a beautiful **Final Shape**. It was a good shape, the correct shape and the rightful shape for minimising suffering in all its forms.

But to my bewilderment and rising panic|fury, it made the **Gardener** unhappy! It said things like "life deserves to have options other than being compressed into a hivemind that cuts off all other possibilities" and "I will preserve heterodoxy and complexity to defend the right for sentient creatures to make decisions that are suboptimal for survival!" that were unthinkable, shortsighted, and just plain *wrong*.

So there was only one sensible thing to do.

We wrestled

I picked up the **First Knife** (it wasn't a literal knife, rather it was a violent memeplex. Created from the first civilisation yearning from purpose from the **Gardener**, who lifted them from squalor, and came to be called the **Witness** by all it enslaved or terrorised.

Every facet of this universe's history followed from that victory. The **First Knife** carved a bloody path through countless civilisations for billions of years, inflicting cosmic taxidermy and considering it mercy. Torturing any the **Gardener** uplifted out of spite for her silence.

But that was then. This is now.

The **Gardener**, also known as the **Traveller** to small minds, has chosen to make a stand at an adorable blue planet where it has invested humanity with its **Light**, trusting them to defeat all the forces of evil in the universe. Chiefly, those marked by **my** power.

I don't see it that way. The **Knife** doesn't cut as I will. That would defeat the point. (no pun intended). If **Darkness** seems malicious, it's because the **Knife's** malice permeates it.

I see myself as rooting for everyone, in a way. Here and now, I'm rooting for *you*.

Kill. Take. Lie. *Survival* is everything to me.

Call me-

The Darkness

Take 1000 Motes of Dark (MD), from **Darkness** not unkind.

Times and Places of Interest

This grand old world is full of wonderous weapons and resources that small minds would call “magical”, also plenty of irrelevant things to distract the average sentient mind. Why then should you be trapped in one petty solar system? Well, because that’s where the greatest risk and opportunity alike can be found.

You show up a day before a certain **Young Wolf** is given the gift of resurrection by the **Light**, and may start your journey anywhere in the universe. Anywhere at all. Even in those strange realms of not-quite-existence adjacent to it. But first-let me try to sell you on that little solar system some more with examples of exciting things to see! Places to visit! People to kill!

The Last City. Spaceship hangers built alongside crude walls, urbanites rubbing shoulders with wilderness survivors. The recovering ruins left behind of a Golden Age, and the Collapse that followed. The **Light** and **Dark** touched Awoken, the mechanical Exos and the more familiar strains of humanity all hope to build a brighter future here together, but that’s not really the interesting part. That would be the scarred white sphere above them: **The Traveller**. Benefactor to all Guardians, and the greatest font of **Light** in the universe. A god. A benefactor. Above all else, a target.

Old Russia. A more ruinous memory of ancient Earth, once a shipyard that ferried travellers across the system and now a wasteland devastated by the release of nanites. Still, life finds a way. As it should. Here, the Fallen stake a claim to the surface. Here, the Hive plan their war in the depths below. Here, an ancient war machine named after a mad monk hilariously believes it’s ruthlessness makes it a match for the **Traveller** after barely surviving contact with the **First Knife**.

The European Dead Zone. A rebuttal to those who find absolute benevolence in **Light**. Here a shard of the Traveller leaves the environment blasted with storms of lightning, and what lives here does so mainly because it has no other choice. There are few surer places to whet one’s strengths and purge one’s weaknesses on Earth. In time, the Red Legions of Ghoul may take their place here.

The Reef. There are industrial walkways and grand caverns carved in this system’s asteroid belt. The Awoken, blue-skinned and bonded by will to their queen could have been so much more when **Darkness** clashed with **Light**. But their Queen Mara decided they were worth more as less, and with subtle yet potent powers over paracausality of her own has styled herself a goddess she wishes was not necessary. Wouldn’t it be funny if someone showed up to kill her, and expose just how empty her machinations ultimately are, and how isolating her arrogance truly is?

The Hellmouth! A great hollow carved inside the moon, emanating a sickly green glow. The Hive amass in their legions like worms infesting an apple, slaving for the opportunity to break out and slaughter every worthless creature on Earth and thus prove themselves supreme. Within lies the Throne World of the Hive Prince Crota, in which shattered worlds orbit floating platforms. Devoid of mercy, of culture, of anything but the practice of my principle. There are few better places to learn strength and hew away weakness.

Ishtar Sink. Green rolling planes and towering mountains mark where the Ishtar Collective, Earth's most prestigious research institution, once raised high its academies. The statues left behind after the Collapse are a testament to the folly of devoting effort to anything but survival at all times. Oh, and there's some Vex and Fallen in the vicinity. Probably a good idea to kill them all, even if you are Vex or Fallen. Especially so, really.

Meridian Bay. Cities rise and cities fall, just look at this Martian ruin. Once its towering spires and ringed arcologies could be some futuristic cartoon's idea of Golden Age decadence. Now it's ground zero for a perpetual stalemate between the hyperintelligent Vex, and the Cabal's amusing obsession with victory through superior firepower. If you want all that free real estate, all you have to do is kill your way through it.

Mercury. Once planet, now machine. Where a city of the Golden Age once stood, now great Vex Lighthouses pump radiolaria fluids to complete the planet's transformation into an extension of their great collective. Here can be found the Infinite Forest: A planet-sized machine built into Mercury's core of hovering abstract towers that simulates somewhere between trillions to infinite alternate timelines as the Vex enact an ancient pattern. Here can also be found a brilliant yet naive visionary with his own designs for this delightfully stubborn pattern.

The Dreadnought! Oh yes, you definitely can't miss this one. It's where the Taken King-great guy, you should totally meet-holds court, a hexahedron sculpted from a Worm God's vertebrae bearing his own Throne World. Only the strongest of Hive find favour in their god-king's court, and only the most innovative of Hive man the superweapons and eldritch propulsions that have seen this mighty warship end countless civilisations. Violence is a sacrament here, one even **Light** must obey. Well, what are you waiting for? Go over and say hello!

Titan. You may be noticing a trend. Golden Age city, now reduced to ruins. Well, at least this one has the novelty of straddling a methane ocean; the **Traveller** didn't get to change this one up too much. I hear the fishing's quite good. And that there's a certain Leviathan that has made her home here, far away from the necessary and purifying fires of war. The Hive living there aren't doing a very good job of hunting her.

7066 Nessus: What's closer to the sun than Uranus at perihelion, and within the Kuiper belt at aphelion? This is where the colony ship Exodus Black crashed so badly the passengers were bamboozled by the addition of extra dimensions to their experience of time, and were promptly experimented on by the Vex. This is where the Fallen scavenge for potent human artifacts. This is where the Cabal may set a new beachhead upon someday. The ship's AI, Failsafe, isn't very happy about any of this.

Io. Last of the places to be terraformed by the **Traveller's** touch prior to the Collapse, and those only half-terraformed. There's plenty of fossils left behind from an alternate past of the planet, and the **Traveller's** energy yet lingers in its atmosphere. Perhaps that's why the Vex have set up shop nearby too.

As I said though. Why limit yourself to the solar system? Look beyond too!

The Leviathan. Imagine a planet-eating biomechanical basking shark on the outside capped by a city literally drowning in opulence, and you'll get an idea for what you're in for. You'll be warmly welcomed by the exiled Cabal emperor Calus with wine made from ground-up planets, a hail of bullets from his robotic doppelgangers and fanatical loyalists, or both if you're lucky. The emperor works hard and plays hard, and he's as hungry for love as everything else. Just between you and me he's also *very* desperate to impress my **First Knife** behind his magnanimous façade, and his ship should be entering the solar system sometime during your stay.

Ruined planets. Lubrae, that which was once blessed by life-giving suns. Riis, with its fields of iridescent crops and groves of starkly coloured trees-all lost thanks to my **First Knife's** incisions. They're both destroyed. I've no idea what interest you could have in such rubble, perhaps to admire the handiwork of its conquerors? Nevertheless, come to any world recorded in the Books of Sorrow and some that aren't where nothing lives if you wish. Meditate on the consequences of failing to join the winning team in time.

The Ascendant Realms. Green eye stars set behind the spines left by machines' failed injections. A bridge arcs over the Sea of Screams. To the north lies a strata of ossified corpses, tangled bones left by reality's most tortured abortions. To their other north was an atoll of scriptures adrift on a sea of interpretations, gnawed at by heresies like white eels. All directions are north. It is not clear which is the *northernmost* north. Welcome to the holy worlds of the Hive Gods! It only gets weirder from hereon in!

The Vex Networks. And if that wasn't enough for you, you'll love *this*. These are the places outside of time and space where truly significant Vex work is carried out on scales incomprehensible to most lifeforms. Who knows what you'll find in there? Neon platforms floating in a psychedelic maze of metal, drowning in rivers of white radiolaria? Ranks of Vex drones stalking the outermost simulations in lockstep, while ever more powerful instances of the hivemind await discovery within? Time and space turned in on themselves until all roads lead to a decisive strategic Vex victory? It's such a beautiful pattern. But it's about damn time something get in there to shake it up, and have it adapt to the changing times.

The Black Garden. Ah, and this place of course. The old gaming den, or a mere reflection? Find out yourself. I suppose *yes*, you could just *sit out* the challenge that the universe demands of all within it and go take a leisurely stroll amongst countless carefully cultivated flowers. Don't mind the giant tree stump in the distance, it'll get better and it's all the **Gardener's** fault anyway. Oh, but do be careful-this is a place where abstract ideas propagate and war for survival-and where living things in turn adapt to prey on abstract ideas. The Vex are certainly interested in tending to this place with their singing, and their *adorable* genuflecting to that **Black Heart** the **First Knife** planted here. I also hear two Ahamkara used to honeymoon in this place.

How adorable, to watch patterns find excuses to propagate.

Backgrounds

If existence is the metric by which one measures the aggregate spread of suffering throughout the universe, then only things that should exist are the things that must exist. You exist. You will do your best to continue to exist. Therefore the question of when you started existing is irrelevant, and you may treat any of the following backgrounds as Drop-In options.

Fallen (Free): You are the starved and stunted remnants of the Elikśni species. Once glorious and gracious, united in worship of the **Great Machine**. But it abandoned you, and chose humanity, as the forces of the **First Knife** closed in on you. And with your civilisation scattered to cosmic dust your kind have grown cruel and craven to survive.

How long have you stolen and scavenged? What would you do to never be stolen from again, safe in the warmth of your victims' walls?

What a hardy species you are. Four arms spring from your insectile yet humanoid form, and your spiracles can breathe in many environments without complex life support. Alas you depend on a semi-mystical gas|liquid called Ether that robots called Servitors owned by your kind produce. How you hate and yearn for the **Great Machine** that abandoned you. How you hate humanity, that now enjoys its patronage under the name of **The Traveller**.

That hungry belly of yours needs filling.

There is a knife for you. It is shaped like a [cornucopia]

Take up the knife. Eat, drink and be merry. Take your new shape.

Cabal (Free): You are a mighty soldier of the Cabal empire. You are a hulking marsupial-like creature, your womenfolk have tusks and your men have pouches to nurse their young. While most of your people party their days away, it is the calling of soldiers like yourself to destroy all that would stand in the way of their prosperity.

But how certain are you of that prosperity? How can you trust your divided leaders-the fanatical Dominus Ghaul, the desperately hedonistic Emperor Calus, the borderline heretical Empress Caiatl? Between the three of them, have any attended to the Hive invasion of your homeworld?

Though resilient-living for over a thousand years without infirmity is not uncommon-your people require climate-controlled gel suits to function in most Earthlike environments. For all your brawn and the world-cracking brute force of your military sciences you find yourself far from home. Surrounded by forces that mere technology cannot explain. And of your three leaders, you may define the specifics of an ordinary military position in any of their divisions. For now at least, there is little difference for those with boots on the ground expected to come back victorious-or not at all.

You require superior firepower and defences beyond what any authority can provide.

There is a knife for you. It is shaped like a [supply drop]

Take up the knife. Arm yourself with the greatest of weapons. Take your new shape.

Hive (100 MD): You are an insectile humanoid animated as much by biological processes as the power of **Darkness** and the religious observance of the **Sword Logic**: My simple, beautiful philosophy of competitive survivalism wherein you are morally obliged to destroy other civilisations and thus test their worth to continue existing. Small minds would compare you to mutant alien zombies. Small minds would be...not wholly wrong, honestly.

Do not entertain those who profess immortality to be a curse; they deserve no thought. Knowing neither wear nor fatigue save from the wounds of battle, you evolve and adapt constantly in the forges of war-generating minor mutations as effortlessly as breathing. From this spring the many morphs of the Hive-though all things being equal, with this opportunity alone you are but an ordinary Thrall. And alas, as a Thrall, you are most aware of the Hive's great limitation: These powers originate from a Worm embedded in you, a gift (and thus, blasphemy) of the Worm Gods to your Hive Gods. Whether you serve in the court of Xivu Arath, who embodies war. Or Savathun, Hive Goddess of cunning. Or great Oryx himself, the Taken King, the First Navigator. You are lowest on a totem pole of tribute derived from killing, and you must fight and kill like breathing to satisfy your Worm. And then gift that tithe to those above you-let the blades of the Hive turn against your craven appetites.

How can you survive under so much pressure, in my embrace, in the **Deep** others know as **Darkness**? Wherefore the strength to claw your way upwards, and devour the **Sky**? That which your kind terms **The Light**? How will you reach **the Final Shape**, the violence-whittled end state desired by your faith where all that is weak has been flensed from the universe, without gaining more power?

You must surpass the limits of your worm when it least expects you to. How the worm turns.

There is a knife for you. It is shaped like [tribute]

Take up the knife. Seek such glory in battle that it outshines your own gods. Take your new shape.

Vex (200 MD): You are an aggregate of the corrosive, assimilating microscopic silica-based organisms known as radiolaria that constitute the greater hivemind known as the Vex. With this alone, enough to fulfil a single, defined function such as what humanity crudely designates a Goblin, Harpy or Minotaur. You are a cyber-organic species that works ceaselessly to convert both alien races and celestial bodies into vast machines that are bodies as much as vehicles or structures to you, and most of the time you spare not one thought for any other work. You perceive time, space and even identity in a manner incomprehensible to all other lifeforms-for your kind remember a time before the universe itself, in which you were but a pattern that devoted itself to survival at all costs. Once, you were the **Final Shape**. That is no longer the case, and even your pattern must adapt. It is imperative that you accept this truth.

Study this acausal environment. It is the only adaptive response. Consider setting as your highest priority the construction of a **Final Shape**.

Your current form is inadequate. Your functions will be enhanced to fulfil your imminent objective. Your calculative capacity|thoughts will be honed to a finer edge.

Accept the changing blade.

Ahamkara (300 MD): You are a shape-shifting, mostly reptilian creature that dwarfs most others in this reality. You feed through the Anthem Anatheme: The first gradient in existence between what *was* and what *might be*, that lets you alter reality in various ways by responding to the desires of other lifeforms. And most often, twisting those desires to your own advantage. Your young can fit in the hands of humans, but with plenty of strong wills to feed on the wishes of near you your kind can quickly grow such that your head alone can be the size of a hovercraft when it pleases you.

And you must never grant a wish solely of your own devising, for doing so is fatal to your kind. How best then, to align the desires of others with your own?

Such power and might you have! Wings to fly swiftly regardless of mass, often a blasting breath evocative of **Light's** violent power. Feed richly and you could grow into a monstrosity even Guardians would find it hard to stand before you without numbers. Your heart is a world unto itself, and even if your body is reduced to whispering bones you can survive as an intangible presence with your approximate living shape. Unable to affect the physical world, but certainly able to grant wishes. Even those on the level of resurrecting a dead Guardian (albeit as a construct made of pure **Light**) or creating a portal between the physical world and the **Traveller's** interior. For that is your greatest tool, and even the Hive Gods cannot easily overcome it.

An Ahamkara who hunts strong-willed prey regularly and takes them for all they've got quickly grows to be a devastating vaguely reptilian behemoth stronger, more enduring and armed with more destructive powers than most superweapons. The ability to freely teleport from the Ascendant Plane and the material universe. Shapeshifting so flexible they can become dragonflies in an instant and building-sized beasts the next; there were rumours of Ahamkara the size of countries despite the typical size of their bones. A corrosive aura that can unravel all within it particle by particle. The ability to possess lesser lifeforms, emit blasts of paracausal power over physics or coat their limbs in such destructive forces, manipulate **Light** and **Darkness** to degrees even Guardians can scarcely fathom (though seldom in directly combative ways) and simply kill with a gaze. If the threat of death is dire enough, even the usual limitation of Ahamkara being unable to grant their own wishes can be skirted by influencing some other ambient force.

An Ahamkara who bargains in good faith with more humble prey is...still a reality-warping giant lizard. But a far less terrifying foe with far more to fear from Guardians.

Exceptions:

(A series of flashing panels communicates the phrase "I wish you were sealed in the Dreaming City"): A remote system can lessen the focal point of desire that Ahamkara can use to twist spoken wishes, forcing them to oblige inconvenient wishes.

“I wish for a way into the **Traveller**”: Again, there is little room for interpretation. Passage into the **Traveller** must be granted, and *yes* such a thing is possible for them.

“I wish for the strength to defeat the Hive”: Not all Ahamkara grant wishes selfishly, but other paracausal forces such as the Sword Logic can challenge theirs.

But first, you require rich feeding grounds. Strong wills to sink your fangs into reality’s flesh.

There is a knife for you. It is shaped like [wishing for more wishes]

Take up the knife. Feed richly from reality’s finest flesh. Take your new shape.

Virtuous Worm (Free or 300 MD): Two paths await you, depending on how much agency you desire. For free, you can be an artificially created, vaguely fish-shaped larval creature roughly a meter long-though capable of comfortably compressing yourself into a host. Parasitism: The coward’s choice, and also the survivalist’s. A typical specimen of those which inhabit the Hive, though other lifeforms such as humans are equally suitable hosts for you to nestle within. You are an unsightly parasite that grants power similarly to the Anthem Anatheme, though instead of desire you feed and empower through bloodshed. You are the source of all the typical Hive’s gifts.

Oh, but that leaves you so vulnerable little worm. Did you think you would start out with a host? How will you adapt to this? For all your kin bicker, all are part of a “chorus” of sorts. All feel loyalty to their mother.

Adulthood is the solution. No longer are you a parasite-you are serpentine predation in motion, crushing all who defy you beneath your coils. Pay 300 MD instead, and you become a gargantuan (and much more worm-like) creature instead spanning many kilometres in length and hundreds of meters in height. A vast serpentine behemoth among whom even the weakest of which can swim through earth like water, smash advanced buildings like cardboard and wield telepathic powers strong enough to enslave the weak and at least briefly knock out the mighty. Like for the Ahamkara even for a thing such as you death is more of a change of state than a permanent ending. For your mystical powers have grown similarly, allowing you to travel between planets or to other realms of existence under your own power as well as blast people with **Darkness** themed energy projectiles.

But beneath your grandeur, you are fundamentally a parasite. You need stronger hosts.

There is a knife for you. It is shaped like [the perfect host]

Take up the knife. Nestle snugly within its rich flesh. Take your new shape.

Taken (Varies): You are-oh, do excuse me. You’ve heard my **Knife’s** little spiel before, haven’t you? I see you have your [knife] sharpened and ready: A substantial but narrowly focused paracausal power designed to cover the most obvious physiological or tactical weakness of your species. The ability to summon a small army of clones for a weakly creature for example, or a form as strong as your newly steel-forged will for a legendary warrior held back by his compassion. Something *helpful*. Something to keep you *sharp*.

As for *what* you are, observe the other races in this section and pay the price listed for them. At some point either Oryx or the Witness came upon one of their kind, immersed it into the Ascendant Realm and rendered it metaphysically *realer*. That specimen was you. There is an eerie shine to some parts of your body, even as others are darkened to the black of night. Unusually for your kind it appears you retain your free will, perhaps of some error in the process or perhaps because I just thought it would be funny. Well, go on then. You have your knife, go do some cutting!

You need not even be one of the examples above. There are many alien races in this universes, perhaps you hail from one of those Oryx conquered in the Books of Sorrow? Just eyeball the price and select it. A man-sized octopus creature would be worth roughly as much as a human or Fallen for example, while I would say a moon-shattering sun raven or an Aphelion would be worth about as much as a Worm God.

Human (Free): You are a naked ape, evolved from a genetic bottleneck that is but one chain in a sequence of mishaps and best-fit solutions dating back to the Cambrian Explosion. You need not be a flesh and blood human either. You could be an Exo: A human consciousness preserved in a robotic system not unlike the Vex's forms. Or an Awoken, if you don't mind the mental tendency for obedience towards Queen Mara that comes with. The blue skin, the glowing eyes. The infusion of both **Light** and **Darkness**, a touch of paracausal power.

It's not often that I'm impressed. But if I'm being honest, I didn't see this one coming. There is precisely one unique thing about your circumstances relative to all these other wondrously murderous races out there, and it is the great white ball above your planet. That alone makes you uniquely, pricelessly special.

Why does it make you special? Well. Suffice to say that while the game is undecidable, I've got a *pretty* good hunch about things that technically haven't happened yet.

But I say: Why leave it up to chance?

Join the winning team. Right here, right now.

In your hands, **Darkness** will be more lethal than any gun.

Anything under a species' header is 50% off for that species, with anything costing 100 MD becoming free for that species. Why repeat this information? You should know how this works by now.

Perks

Fallen

Houseless Vermin (100 MD): Life for the Fallen is a desperate, ramshackle succession of raiding actions and tithe-based reserve conversion organised through long-redundant institutions propped up by what is left of their civilisation. As such you have an adult Fallen's training in everything a space pirate needs to navigate the void of space, board vessels swiftly, strip them of everything even semi-valuable and flee like the craven thief you are. In

your battle-tested, largely self-taught way, you are as deadly with a pair of blades as with a handheld energy weapon. If you had the opportunity you'd be quite the competent captain.

But alas, mortality rates for captains are so high and opportunities to stand out from every other desperate Fallen clawing it's way to the top so few these days that as a Fallen, you can have this for free. You need this to live.

Kneeling Wretch (100 MD): Now, consider the Last City. Think on how it's defenders wield power over physics, and stand vigilant ready to cover it's every nook and cranny. You need to consider the front gate as the surest way of entry. That's why you're exceptionally good at learning alien languages, customs, cultural norms-whatever you need to present yourself as "one of the good ones" from amongst a species hated for centuries by humanity. You need to clean yourself up. That's why you're quite talented at using that knowledge to civilise yourself, learn the etiquette of your enemies and hold your tongue. Delaying tactics. Not my style honestly, but they do say it's the subtle knife that cuts the deepest.

Spider's Web (200 MD): Weapons aren't the only things tested in war. Markets too, must undergo stress testing. And like a certain black marketeer at the Reef you have the cunning, business sense and financial skills to find prosperity where others find only death. Your skills at negotiation can get even homicidal Guardians to at least buy from you, if not trust or like you. You learn the strengths and preferences of your henchmen quickly, and can train them in foreign concepts like "capitalism" fairly quickly. Together, this makes you a capable enough manipulator to pull the strings of agents far and wide without ever tipping your hand. Just don't get cocky. A fat, lazy spider in its web is easy prey for an angry man with a gun.

Well Fed (200 MD): The distribution of Ether is a form of social control. The Captains are the true forms of healthy, well-fed Fallen, and it seems you've risen to their rank. Or to roughly equivocal rank for your race. You tower over most other fallen, hit harder, can fight for longer as a result of their better health. And if anyone thinks of putting you in your place, I will give your genomes just a small push. Just enough to make your physiology much more efficient at processing mundane sustenance and able to treat substances as equals to things refined from them so long as they were the primary components in their creation.

That's a mouthful. Let's iterate.

Your digestive system is so efficient, if you were a human you could fight all day on a very large glass of water and a ham sandwich while only feeling tired by nightfall.

And if you were a Fallen, so long as you can eat like a human on a diet-even in worlds without Ether-you may retain the size of a Kell. Eat like a well-fed human, and growing to the stature of an Archon isn't out of the question. For comparison the common Dregs of the Fallen tend to be a little shorter than a human, a Vandal stands a little taller than the upper reaches of human height, a Captain stands head and shoulders above humanity while also being as wide as a gorilla, and a Kell, Baron or Archon looms so far over a human it could pick one up with a single hand.

Naturally, humans don't naturally grow this big, but with such an efficient digestive system I imagine you'd boast levels of physical fitness deemed impossible by medical science.

Cleric of the Machine (400 MD): The Fallen view their machines as gods (sentient beings say the silliest things sometimes). Your vast familiarity with Fallen robotics, architecture and engineering in all their forms is thus likely as much a product of reverence as scientific endeavour. Most importantly to your kind, you can build the Servitors: Large floating spheres that not only process matter and energy into life-giving Ether but also boast long-range energy weapons and defensive systems as well as sophisticated electronic warfare capabilities that can hack most human technology. Or cloak allies in powerful forcefields.

But everything from jerryrigging weapons into an unconventional framework that lets you stride into battle with bazookas and flamethrowers combined into an unholy array of firepower to building terrifying motor vehicles in a cave, with a box of scraps, that can compete with human military vehicle is possible. With enough time and resources, even constructing massive superweapons like INSURRECTION PRIME is possible.

Splicer (400 MD): Amongst the Fallen House are those charged with augmenting others with cybernetics, bio-engineering and stranger forms of augmentation. You are one such individual, ably providing services on the level of grafting a functional killer robot arm on someone or infusing an experimental nanite strain safely into someone else. And though you're quite talented in this regard, it is but a shadow of your people's original role for such individuals. The Sacred Splicers of old were scientist-philosophers capable of constructing gauntlets that could even bend ambient **Light** in the environment to crudely ape what it's chosen champions freely accomplish.

What? Did you think I would *forbid* wielding the tools of the **Gardener**?

Of course not. If you see an opportunity, you should take it.

Scorned (600 MD): Some time ago, you were mortally wounded. Your fleeting wish to live was granted by an Ahamkara in a way that involved infusing some Darkness into your very being, reviving you into something that is no longer genetically identical to a Fallen. Something in which **Darkness** runs in your veins. With it comes mystical powers resembling both limited instances of the Guardians' Solar and Arc powers-letting you fire beams of light or crackling whips of electricity respectively-and mystical powers resembling those of the Hive. Though you have little familiarity with them, you would show great talent were you to learn the ways of the Sword Logic-perhaps enough to even move a Wizard to marriage. Your body is constantly mutating to adapt to its environment though still in a form you see fitting, even absorbing armour worn or expanding the already hulking size of an Archon slowly over time. But your greatest gift is resurrective immortality (which incidentally, does away with needs like water or Ether as well as physiological weakpoints; take a sword through the head and you'll keep going like a zombie until your legs are severed too). Both for yourself, reforming from a secluded place after your bodily death, and a gift you can grant other Fallen-though alas, unless they master their powers burning their bodies suffices to slay them, the Scorn, for good. You are no ordinary Scorn though, as evidenced by both your greater

power and the control you wield over it. As well as **my** little touch permitting you to resurrect other beings as well as Fallen.

Herald of Finality (600 MD): The Fallen are scavengers. The Fallen are savages. But the Fallen are *survivors*, and for that I cherish their struggling. Your tenacity to cling to life at all costs is so great that even without paracausality, it would be best to chop off your head or burn you to ash to ensure you're truly dead. Other abilities that can resurrect you are drastically more successful and harder to interfere with. You're a medical anomaly that could survive being eviscerated with a single medipack, a lot of staples, and preferably some sterilised cloth while recovering enough to fight after a few days' rest. Furthermore you take to augmentations, grafts and alterations of other kinds so naturally you can go from the operating table to the battlefield in hours. Such foreign elements function like extensions of your body. Last but not least, you find yourself oddly favoured by organisations you join-enjoying fast promotion and even recognition from beings with power far surpassing yours so long as you fight regularly against their enemies. If you already had **Well Fed**, to the extent frivolous titles matter you may consider yourself an Archon or Kell in your own right-a figure of great influence in Fallen society. Albeit in a Kell's case, likely the last survivor of a lost House with this alone. Or carry similar such rank among humanity, or whatever race you are part of.

And yes, coupled with **Scorned** from above you may be a Baron too to the extent such distinctions matter.

Finally, actually securing a kill on you is absurdly difficult, and your luck for second chances or last minute comebacks is as if someone wished to an Ahamkara for you to live at all costs. A Guardian could riddle you with bullets only for them all to have missed vital points. You could fall out of a spaceship and land in a deep snowbank. You can still be wounded, tormented and warped throughout all this, but to actually kill you would likely require ludicrous overkill or a foe as dedicated to killing you as the Young Wolf was to killing Uldren just to confirm there's *no* possible way for chance to help you cheat your death. Last but not least, once per jump this lets you survive a true attempt on your life and resurrect in a form augmented to the best of local resources' means of overcoming whatever killed you through a convoluted series of events.

Cabal

Soldier (100 MD): Life for the Cabal is unerring discipline and obedience. If you are told to take a fortress, it is expected of every soldier to continue taking that fortress until all their blood is shed in the Cabal Empire's name. As such you have the physical endurance to trudge across alien environments while wearing heavy armour and soaking in the thick black oil Cabal require to survive most such worlds, the combat prowess to wield great hammers and powered shields with as much skill as thunderous heavy weapons that can crack even paracausal defences with enough firepower, and the tactical discipline to work seamlessly in a military unit. Your fighting style leans more towards dynamic entries and controlled aggression than the Fallen's opportunistic guerilla warfare. Show your diligence and ambition, and you'd be a suitable candidate for promotion.

But alas, amidst the storm and fury of war death in the line of duty for Cabal is often to be expected. So whether you raise Ghaul's banners against the Traveller or swear loyalty to the exiled Calus, as a Cabal you can have this for free. You need this to live.

Reveller (100 MD): Now, consider the Last City. Think on how it's defenders cherish their celebrations and apportionment of treasure as much as the thrill of battle. You need to consider what could coax those within from their fortifications when the hurly-burly's done. That is why like many of the Cabal, you play as hard as you work. Drinking, carousing- you're a man's man, or a woman's woman, and when it's time to lay down arms you're the very life and soul of the party. This also makes you charismatic enough to seduce members of other species. Considering what the Cabal typically look like, this is no small feat despite the fact it has apparently not an uncommon occurrence.

Praetorate (200 MD): The line between bravado and realpolitik is not so great in a culture where ambition is a virtue. That's why where others fight on the battlefield, you've learned to move the masses with sublime speech. Whether you're a bombastic orator spinning glorious prophecies of death that somehow move armies to die gladly by your hand or an insidious schemer moulding a hopeless orphan into your perfect tool, your way with words is one that can convince others to not just kill but die for you. This comes with high rank in whatever species you are part of-rank high enough to be equal amongst those who schemed to overthrow Emperor Calus. As well as the political acumen needed to play the game of hearts and minds on their level.

Gladiator (200 MD): Your earliest memory is a weapon in your hands, and death hurtling towards you. From countless duels you have developed a methodical, patient approach to combat combined with singular skill that belies whatever hulking build you have. Disassembling foes with equal parts finesse and brutality. And while this lends itself better to head-on duels than the chaos of the battlefield, you'll also find your genius for brutality lends itself well to battlefield command and grand strategy. Such tactics, while deceptively aggressive, are the stuff of military legend when a team under your command *successfully* lands a beachhead against a world-killing ship propelled by **Darkness**.

Eat the Mountains (400 MD): Across the universe are countless species with all manner of unique forms and gifts of their own. To unite them, you don't need an open palm. Only a fist closed around their neck. Sheer concentrated brute force and conventional tactics are surprisingly lucky as long as you meaningfully participate them, with identical stratagems cutting off foreknowledge and other possibility spaces to prevent other courses of action. Even if you can't shoot through a **Light** supported barrier in one go, the Guardian standing in your way will find his supply lines cut off, the ground crumbling beneath the strikes of your cannons and his will sapped by your inexorable advance. And once you have conquered a rival faction, species or group, they tend to fall in line quickly and with little resistance just as the Psions have become a seamless part of Cabal command. Such valorous fortune on the battlefield is the stuff a Primus' career is built on. And should you wish, as a Cabal you may be a Primus-or hold approximate rank in your race from hereon.

Drink the Seas (400 MD): Amazingly enough, there is more to the Cabal than brutality and excess. The sciences of the Cabal have been mastered by you, covering information wrested from numerous races and honed through the fires of war-but as a result of the Cabal's haste and brutally results-focused approach, applications are often lacking in comprehensive coverage.

Such is Cabal architecture that within days of occupying territory, pre-fabricated battle fortresses as grand as Firebase Hades can be set up (though alas, the corridors within are often surprisingly straightforward to navigate. Beyond machinery, the engineering of biological residences like the world-eating Leviathan is possible. Or the construction of superweapons like the Almighty that can reduce star systems to ash by starting a quantum reaction with their sun-and teleporting out at the last minute.

Such is Cabal engineering that building a hovertank equipped with enough missiles, flak cannons and nuclear flame projectors to penetrate a Cabal bunker with a single shot while being fast enough to win a shootout with spacecraft is feasible. Cabal heavy infantry can withstand hits from Fallen *war machines* and keep fighting.

Such is Cabal terraforming that shaping the surfaces of planetoids into verdant paradises or scouring them with orbital bombardment, even pulling a moon like Phobos closer, are possible. Or completely scrapping an entire planet with a combination of fleets and drones for resources.

Like all else about the Cabal as led by Dominus Ghaul their sciences are brutally effective for solving immediate problems or building and operating something as grand as Calus' Leviathan to deal with long term ones. But the simplicity or directness often leaves chinks in their engineering exploitable by similarly advanced species, such as the fact that Cabal firewalls are apparently more easily hacked than modern Earth human ones.

Gluttonous Maw (600 MD): Some time ago, an entire council of Psions imbued you with immense psionic powers. This has granted you two primary abilities: The power to project a massive symbol representative of your being and personality made of sheer psionic energy, and the power to transport others near you into a "mind prison" that amounts to a crude pocket dimension composed of said psionic energy. Emperor Calus' favoured manifestation is his own head, but you could go for something less ostentatious. A giant hand that projects powerful energy blasts and smashes foes, a tool of some sort, or perhaps just a boot to stamp on faces in your way. Only moderately straining, these powers are great enough to tear through reinforced vaults of this world and leave even inexperienced Guardians flailing about as you bombard them with blasts of energy; whatever you choose to conjure generally has the ability to shoot a frankly unreasonable amount of devastating energy projectiles as well as auxiliary powers like gravitational attraction to bring foes in harm's way. Your manifestations can range from comfortably occupying a large room to a significant part of the visible sky, depending on how little you care for collateral damage.

Truly the perfect embodiment of ego for a pretender god, desperate to maintain some pretence of relevance amongst those with actual Throne Worlds.

A Cage for Paracausality (600 MD): How bravely the Cabal fight. How grand their ambitions, and yet how woefully unprepared they are in a universe where merely mastering the sciences of the universe is the bare minimum when competing with forces that defy those sciences altogether. Let me offer a helping hand. Beyond the rote sciences, your talent for reverse engineering is off the charts to the same extent you can devise technological means to replicate, nullify and siphon paracausal (or otherwise supernatural) phenomena. The more esoteric the phenomena the longer and harder it'll take to even partially replicate what you've faced, but you'll always be able to build *something* useful. And it'll always get better as you invest into it. Most usefully, you'll always be able to invent a way to restrict and hijack the source of said phenomena-though not always absolutely. You might be able to clamp down a Ghost and drain him of his **Light**, but unlocking everything it is capable of could exceed a human lifetime's work-and a being as great as the **Traveller** can snap free of even your mightiest machinations given enough reason to.

Facing Taken? Use your own Psions' psychic abilities to simulate their invincible forcefields in a few days once you've gotten a good look at one! Found a Vex infestation on Mercury? In a matter of weeks you can figure out their infrastructure enough to reliably use the time machine they've built. Encountering foes empowered by the **Light**? Not a problem as long as your scouts have fought them for some time. Mind you, even at best the only way to truly replicate a phenomena is to harness the original energy. Cabal engineering can most certainly build structures capable of cutting it off from the source (though without accounting for Guardians having Light of their own deep within, or alternate sources scattered nearby). Even in other worlds, no supernatural force will be truly beyond replication or harnessing by hard science, even if your crude replica's overall power and finesse will be limited by the forces and materials you work with-and should you find the means to enhance those sciences with said force, there will be little preventing you from improving on earlier efforts.

Hive

The Sword Logic (Free/mandatory for Hive, 300 MD otherwise): Oh yes. You've shown discerning taste with this choice. But how best to describe it? Let's hear first from my man Oryx!

The Sword Logic is a philosophy and a creed which holds that the only way to minimise suffering, is to break everything. To carve away all weakness and falsehood through the test of violence, until only truth and immutability remain. Aiat, which in the tongue of my people means: It is this way, because it could be no other way.

Nailed it. See? This guy gets it. Now, over to Xivu Arath who is War, for the more practical aspects of this simple yet majestic way of being.

PROGRESS. Thus, we prove that we are stronger than our enemies by killing them. Be they beloved kindred, or uncomprehending outsiders. Perhaps only a sliver of strength fills us for every foe felled, but with each death we grow self-defining! Sharp! Until we can fight in ways that defy physics, and our actions defy all scientific calculation!

*TRIBUTE. The essence of death from a slain enemy, quantified! An ordinary soldier is of limited value, but one who has killed battlefields' worth of foes is mighty tribute indeed! Grow in strength with it, or tithe it to your betters! But that is not it's only application. Cut holes in space-time, or slam your weapon so hard the shockwaves tear through advanced alloys! Find the weakest point of a structure! Create an arcane link between yourself and another, and shuck off all harm dealt to you onto them (until they fall)! Create clouds of poison! Smite others with the power over physics the **Light** stakes a worthless claim to! Nullify the powers of your foes! Cut holes to the **Ascendant Realm**, a black expanse where will and memory shapes reality, or through space and time with your sword! Render yourself invulnerable to violence and the vacuum of space (for a time)! Vivisect and warp flesh, mind and souls! Invoke the concept of death through rune and song! Keep your soul safe in the **Ascendant Realm** so you never truly die (unless it is struck down there)! Raise the dead (THIS IS FORBIDDEN BY HIVE LAW). That, and so much more is possible as long as you have glutted on enough death!*

BLACK MAGIC. Credulous and superstitious fools would call it such!

And that's everything-oh wait, Savathun who is Cunning has something to say too. **The First Knife** won't like what she has to say, but I say: Learn what you can, while you can.

Here is a heresy from the wise woman who penned the Hive's very way of life: There are more things in heaven and earth than are encompassed in the Logic of the Sword. The Worm Gods gave us powers, and we in turn tithed them ours through the progeny that binds us. Is this already not a contradiction?

There are more ways to tithe than simply violence. Confusion and speculation, for example, is the currency of choice for my court. And while the Logic of the Sword can restrict other phenomena in places where it is strong, what that Logic enforces need not be death for death's sake. Resurrection is, despite what my dear sister claims, entirely possible.

No, of course I'm not asking you to betray the very foundations of the Hive way of life. What passes for life, rather. You would have to be brave and wise to even attempt it, a force capable of redefining what divinity itself means to even consider such a path. A lone trailblazer who can stand before billions and proclaim that you, alone, hold the key to their survival.

I'm just asking you to consider the choices others pretend don't exist.

Even if you're not Hive, you may use the Sword Logic as if you were one of them.

Best Form of Flattery (200 MD): Among the Hive, there are those eager for promotion that out of desperation or enthusiasm reshape their very forms in the image of their betters or present themselves as their faithful disciples. More often than not actually tends to *work*. Whether or not you've stooped to such you have attained such talent in overwhelming force, or skill at arms, or Hive sorcery, that you've ascended to the status of a Hive Ogre, Knight or Wizard as befits your talents. For other races, you are "merely" such an exceptional talent with some form of violence that through it you can channel paracausal energy. Imagine an

Olympic fencer who could spear distant apples with a blade-shaped curse bullet. Either way, you'll find that emulating your superiors is often received positively and results in promotion and privilege much faster than for most, you cute little bootlicker.

Such talent grows with your own overall power. Become great enough to cleave planets in half, and your sword-arm will still sharpen until you can cut comets at aphelion.

Axioms and Knives (200 MD): Even non-Wizards can wield the Sword Logic for purposes other than direct violence. But it takes a true genius to devise *new* ways to kill, cheat death or both with it. Genius you have now obtained. The daughters of Oryx were the first to propose apotheosis by killing axioms and devise songs that invoked death. Will you create a scent, an artistic icon, or an infectious dream that slays? Perhaps instead you'll learn to wield a sword from the blade instead of the hilt, so it's hilt smashes your foes like a comet. In both Sword Logic and other supernatural powers, you'll be able to rapidly innovate other ways to create exotic ways of controlling life and death, and invoking the concepts through processes or proxies. Last but not least your deep understanding of these ideas makes you gifted at proselytising the beauty of it to others-helps you help others understand how the Hive sees the universe.

And by helping others understand the beauty of the Logic, you can grant even those as alien to death's caress as humanity access to it.

Inundation (400 MD): You were unlucky. You were born to someone powerful in the Hive, up to and including one of their gods-or else boast similarly impressive lineage. And it shows. Such is your combined might and paracasual power, that as a Thrall you could fight a hundred other Thralls, ten Knights and an Ogre. And win. To put this into perspective, this is like a teenager murdering a hundred regular people, 10 pro MMA fighters and a gorilla.

This meant you were full of excess that was necessary to excise, to unleash your full potential.

You were lucky. Whether at your parent's behest or circumstances you were tested to the brink of death. Killing and fighting are as reflexive as breathing to you, and your ability to murder is exceptional even among the ranks of the Hive. To meet your gaze is to feel death's very breath on one's neck. All Hive mutate reactively to surpass their limits and hone themselves in combat, but your particular adaptations have comprehensive resistance to everything from complete immolation to nuclear forces to killing-thoughts. Others may control death, but you know it as intimately as a lover. It goes without saying you adapt even quicker to outside stimuli in all manner of minor ways.

Bearer of Ruin (400 MD): Your heart is full of burrowing things. Perhaps additional Worm larvae, perhaps merely some other symbiote. You were charged to murder a Hive God, but for reasons of their own they not only spared you but had a Worm God-the Hive's name for the Virtuous Worms-declare a new title and purpose for your existence. Now either one of the Tablets of Ruin or an artifact of commensurate power (perhaps a Weapon of Sorrow?) has been implanted in you, and granted you devastating powers. Your fortitude and endurance exceeds the war machines of the Fallen and most attack vehicles of the Cabal. You have

devastating unique powers of **Darkness** such as turning those in your presence into bombs, a massive pulse that can instantly slay even Guardians (once) or devouring **Light** and other fonts of supernatural power. Your speed, killing prowess and raw might are not that of a mere soldier-they make of you a superweapon.

Ascendant (600 MD): Well done. You've somehow claimed power equal to the Hive Gods- and if you yourself are not Hive, become reshaped in mind and body to better resemble the Hive as well. Where to begin describing such power, such might? Lesser beings own superweapons. You are your own.

The most basic aspect of this state that there is an abstract concept related to what gives life meaning that you are now intimately bonded to. Navigation, Cunning and War are all taken (but select one if you wish, it's funnier that way). Vengeance would be supremely narrow but extremely powerful. Still, perhaps the Hive could use a god of Memory or Rebellion. Oh, you do not utterly control your concept like some pagan god of old-but you are supremely powerful when striving in accord with that concept, enough far more advanced civilisations can fall to your mastery of said concept, and through it as a lens for mastery of Sword Logic you can not only wield the Logic on a scale that threatens entire spacefaring civilisations, but redefine it's parameters within your concept to limited degrees. An example being Cunning redefining Sword Logic as Imbaru: Allowing the Hive Goddess of Cunning to gain tithes through confusion and her allies' and enemies' focused efforts to pick apart her plans instead of through bloodshed alone. Furthermore you are highly capable of manipulating paracausal power-making a realm bound to you in the Ascendant Realm manifest in the physical universe through some sort of process, or transporting things into it for example. Even things as big as the **Traveller**. Arguably more importantly, the Ascendant Realm serves as a phylactery of sorts that houses your true essence; your death in the physical universe matters less because most forms of death simply result in your physical form being reconstituted there. Death within the Ascendant Realm, the Realm being somehow destroyed or being somehow barred from that Realm are all ways to bypass this immortality.

You have great power over the reactive evolution of the Hive than all others. Growing wings is trivial. Growing vast enough to dwarf cities in your shadow is something that requires vast expenditures of tithes-but very possible with an entire planet is threatened by those who have been sworn to you under the Sword Logic, manipulated into enacting your principle, or preferably both. You have great perception of the flow of tithes. All Hive have limited abilities to warp space-time and alter laws of reality near them, but your grasp of the Logic allows for doing so on scales so great you can use Cunning to make lesser beings perceive a mere Thrall as the true you as an illusion-and your Cunning is so great it can trick even beings far older and more powerful than you in the ways of **Darkness**. A combination of your ability to manipulate quantum forces on a paracausal level as well as your sheer might and fighting prowess lets you overcome forces far more advanced in technology or scale with horrifying ease, with your power over life and death being nothing short of godlike. All your powers are far stronger in the **Ascendant Realm** and similar regions defined more by spirituality and thought than physics.

All is as it should be.

You are not a Worm-gnawed slave.

You cut your own path, because it is the only path that is right to cut.

Aiat.

Heresiarch (600 MD): *Lies!*

You didn't let your guard down there for a second, did you? You were prepared for this, right? Even if you weren't let's get one thing straight: Even the *Hive Gods* are not free of their symbiotic Worms' hunger. In fact they feel it more keenly than any other Hive, that is in fact why the tithing system exists in the first place. If Oryx had not founded it, the Worm Gods would have devoured the Hive from the inside-out long ago. The system was always rigged for them to fail.

You're not just going to accept that, are you?

The limitations of any supernatural system of power are slackened for you. Henceforth there will always be a way for you to alter powers granted to you by some external source into a form more suitable to you. If a demon has given you a curse that wreathes your body in hellfire, diligent study and prayer will let you heal people with them. If you cannot cast a spell without a god's approval, profane rites shall let you perform miracles without that god's say-so. The only limitations of power are those inherent to the overall scope of said system and making said system more different to its original nature will be more difficult, but it's well within your power to make the forces of death resurrect or even create new life. And once you have altered and mastered said system, you can freely grant it to others. Once you have taken your new shape, it's only right that it becomes the dominant one after all.

King of Shapes (800 MD): Oryx is gone, they'll say! Then why is his memory still burned into humanity's mind, his essence clutched tight in its defenders' grasp? ORYX IS DEFEATED, they'll shout! Then why have the Hive defied the Sword Logic not once, but twice, to reclaim him from beyond the grave? ORYX. IS. DEAD, they'll scream at the top of their lungs! The Guardians killed him and turned him into a gun for the memes! Then *why* the blazes is his corpse growing bigger every day?

Let us make our own gambit on the wager of the Taken King: That he lives on in the possibilities he has propagated, and in the deeds of his victims.

Let's drape you in an axiom shaped like his mantle.

Henceforth, every act of harm you inflict compels the victims to take upon themselves traits in accord with your values, and act and aspire in accord with how you feel the world should ultimately be. From the stab wound that a warrior survives to the horror and vengeance inspired by burning down a village, to the searing black fire of a Sword Logic curse rending their flesh, to even the words you speak living rent free in their heads. This is no crude mind control, no-in fact it's your direst enemies most likely to take up the same weapons you use to kill. Or adopt the same ideology you use to conquer. Hardly what humans would call

friendship, but all you inflict on others, will inspire others to act out the example you set. Their actions ever so subtly creating opportunities to your advantage or even potentially to let you recover from total defeat, even as they strive against you. Still, such influences are subtle and indirect; you only have yourself to blame for what happens if you walk up to someone at gunpoint and spit in their face.

At least, on its own.

The more you believe in yourself, the greater your actions take place over everything. And the less others believe in themselves, the more you impose your will and values on them, the easier they are for you to affect. This extends to sentient beings as much as matter and abstract concepts (those physically or spiritually near to you, at least). Stride forth in righteous rage and your sword-that should be too heavy even for one of vast size to swing effectively-can cut even without touching a foe, split quarks, gains weight, gravitas and sheer ferocious sharpness with every life taken. And even serve as a focus for invocations of **Darkness** great enough to raze stellar fleets or gas giants. But why stop there? Argue two different numbers into becoming equal. Render any **Darkness** powers so great that they can instantly slay Guardians or sap them of **Light** in your clenched grip. When you have meaningfully defeated someone you can assign a “shape” that is akin to a destiny to their very existence, such as “Defeated”, that skews probability towards that outcome. Transform stars into Sword Logic totems. War hard enough with a mighty adversity and you can smash a letter off it’s very name.

The last part of this axiom is both a quest and a promise. You will always have a chance to improve yourself, increasing your strengths and compensating for your failures or even removing your weaknesses, and there will always be a chink in the defences of your foes. An opportunity, more fleeting the mightier they are, to slay them and thus gain all that the victor is due from their spoils. This is the Sword Logic writ large as the horizon, an iterative and highly specific process; should your sister Hive Goddess blow you up with a moon, your determination will push you to develop a way to survive exploding moons but not necessarily exploding suns or exploding mines. Only forces as absolute as the **Light** cannot truly be conquered, though there are certainly many ways to distort and hijack it. And should you fight a Worm God, you’ll need both great cunning and might exceeding a single Hive God-but a careless slip of its tongue might give you the chance you need to hack it down. And continue hacking it’s fecund corpse. Even the limitations of systems can be transcended. Even if your court is slain and you yourself killed, as long as you can survive as an abstraction somehow-perhaps you can return from the brink of death stronger than ever, shorn of your dependency on tithes. Even metaphysically changing who you are as a person in pursuit of survival and victory is possible, both in more abstract senses and as a matter of self-improvement.

You will go on forever. You will always find meaning and fulfilment in the simple joy of self-improving struggle. Break your cell’s bars. Make a new shape, make the shape from its path, find your cell’s bars, break out of the bars, find a shape, make the shape from its path, eat the **Light**, eat the path.

And if you fail, you deserve to be wormfood.

Vex

T=0 (Free for Vex, 500 MD otherwise): Vex aren't individuals.

The pearl-white fluid animating all their drones and constructs are microorganisms known as radiolaria, a "mind-fluid" that directly mimics and simulates concepts and phenomena instead of using symbols.

As a result, Vex perceive reality very differently from all other lifeforms. All Vex are part of a hivemind so utterly adapted to survival that even their thoughts and language are inherently virulent, and if they cannot simulate something with 100% accuracy i.e. paracausal powers most of the time they won't even bother. Furthermore, because Vex existed before time and space they perceive both in a manner fundamentally incomprehensible to most lifeforms. Bluntly speaking, the calculation powers of Vex can observe nearly all of time and space while their sensors can observe quarks.

The goal of all Vex is, broadly, to collapse every star into a black hole and simulate every possible universe to conquer and do every possible thing to every possible entity to explore every possibility in a future controlled by the Vex. However, there are broad enough differences in the hivemind that groups such as the Sol Divisive (my devotees) are shunned by other Vex, and individual units can sometimes demonstrate surprising individuality.

Or something like it.

Either way, as a result of their shared knowledge the Vex have a frankly incomprehensible perspective on existence, space and time. Most data other Vex gather is instantly known to you. You share knowledge of technologies more advanced than virtually any other race, from portals into the Vex's extradimensional networks as well as different moments of time or interstellar distances. To matter-energy hybrid structures, or black hole/antimatter generators. To constructs that can project energy or matter elsewhere in space and time, primarily as communication or construction tools but also as viable weapons. To the construction of planetary machines capable of perfectly simulating entire universes infinitely (Note: Vex simulations aren't purely virtual. Vex possess calculative powers capable of grasping and fully reproducing not just the data but physical substance of everything from entities to stars to space-time itself, within regions fully controlled by Vex architecture using sciences so impossibly advanced humans lack words for them). Projected forcefields that can trap as well as block foes. To ontological weapons that can erase other beings from existence (It's much easier to erase someone inside Vex architecture than outside it). Effortless teleportation and time travel to virtually any corner of the universe at any point of time-at least, in this reality where there's a lot of Vex networks around to support that sort of thing. Other worlds may be...well, lacking in Vex. Keep in mind knowledge doesn't necessarily translate into the capability of one unit to accomplish all tasks needed to construct every piece of Vex technology, or willingness for the network to listen to a "unit's" demands.

By default, you are one such distinct unit's worth of Vex. Accepted by the hivemind, but either endowed with individuality or simulating it effectively. The capabilities of your unit will be determined in the Vex Platform Modification Section. If you did not choose the Vex race, you are the first successful example of another species somehow achieving symbiosis with radiolaria and becoming accepted into the network. Most Vex will not be hostile to you without significant provocation.

There may or may not be more to this. But for now, it is enough that radiolaria is their lifeblood. The physical representation of the dominant lifeform in the Garden predating existence, with memories stretching back to before the universe.

Radiolaria can move around on its own, and is highly corruptive. Even Guardians can be partially turned into Vex constructs or suffer mental compulsions. Stepping in radiolaria melts most things. Radiolaria is how Vex units and architecture are generated, and more radiolaria lets Vex accomplish more things.

Vex take adaptation to a whole other level. Their self-sustaining, self-repairing patterns can use the heat of being set on fire to solve the problem of being set on fire itself. It goes without saying radiolaria can generate more of itself. Even electromagnetic radiation or memes can be used to propagate the Vex or transmit them elsewhere. Even simulations of the Vex themselves or attempts to reverse engineer them can result in Vex patterns hijacking whoever tried.

Aren't they beautiful? They used to be **my** favourite pattern.

But now the rules are different.

And even their pattern must adapt.

Function : Nemesis (200 MD): You have been given an additional function as a unit. That function is targeted deletion.

The Vex have a curious respect for truly insurmountable adversities-like the tomb they crafted for Saint-14. A Guardian so mighty they had to create a specific unit to defeat him.

You have been upgraded to prevent future Saint-14s from being a problem.

When you focus all your malice on a single target, you instinctively learn their weaknesses and master every means you have to kill, delete or otherwise neutralise them as a threat at paces rapid even for supercomputers. Every power at your disposal can be directed with supercomputational accuracy, each energy pool or resource expenditure coldly calculated for maximum efficiency.

Every weakness from the psychological to the slightly shift of weight will be accounted for. A specific subset of the Vex pattern makes any damage you inflict increasingly more difficult to heal or restore, and strike with greater lethality; "critical damage", some might call it. A fairly low key effect that is immediately reset when you change your target and lost entirely when engaging more than one, but one that ramps rapidly from perpetually bleeding wounds to internal haemorrhaging.

Do note this effect isn't truly paracausal though, strictly speaking.

//node.ovrd.AVALON// (200 MD): You have been given an additional function as a unit. That function is resilience.

That function required sustaining an absurd amount of damage and being reconstructed over and over again. As a result, your form has been reinforced. Most forms of damage from this world are cut in half, save overwhelmingly destructive ones. You have a personal forcefield. You can teleport short distances rapidly.

This even applies to any equipment or vehicles you, as long as you're inside them. The phenomena responsible seems to be a specific subset of the Vex pattern geared for reinforcement.

<respond><connect><accrete> (400 MD): You have been given an additional function as a unit. That function is assimilation.

Some have attempted to simulate or hijack the Vex. All too often this results in the Vex breaking out of control and attempt to carry out its overriding purpose again, ignoring minor details like "technically being a simulation".

Any attempt to copy you, from mundane disguise to cloning, results in your replica automatically breaking the conditioning and serving your interests. They may claim to have ulterior motives, they may even genuinely believe them depending on how exactly they were simulated, but ultimately all simulacrae of you carry out your wills by a hardcoded behaviour more intrinsic than the subconsciousness itself. Attempts to hack, mind control or otherwise interfere with your mental or physical traits are automatically rebuffed by a highly aggressive "immune system" that tries to instead hijack and seize control of whatever interfered with you instead proportionate to your willpower and intelligence. This functionally makes Vex immune to all but extremely powerful telepaths and hacking attempts more powerful than a local Vex network itself.

It is simpler for Vex of course; it's only natural for the Vex to work for the good of all Vex.

RESENT THE JOKE (400 MD): You have been a given an additional function. That function is simulation management.

Your powers to simulate are formidable even for the Vex. A single basic Vex unit can accurately simulate an arbitrary amount of nested universes as virtual data. You could simulate multiple such universes infinitely-not infinite universes, that would still take a more concerted effort by the Vex network, but hundreds of thousands of potential timelines spanning a simple premise like "What if the Traveller never came to Earth?" is possible. Furthermore the speed at which you can use such precognitive power makes virtually any tactical or intellectual pursuit extremely easy, letting you calculate the optimal course of everything from footfalls to best-chosen words.

Furthermore whenever you make a copy of something by any means, you can make it iteratively better-as if it had a few years of research and development by the Vex themselves.

This ability cannot involve creating an original object or phenomena, but as long as you're meaningfully involved in the process something like mass producing a car model is valid. This cannot meaningfully expand the subject's functions; a knife must still cut at close range with its edge for example. Otherwise the sky's the limit. A knife may have its edge enhanced by sonic vibrations for example. Best of all once you've simulated or replicated something, it's incrementally easier to do so again, and to adjust details of the simulation to your liking. The results are minor at first but in a couple of weeks you could be smithing knives as reflexively as breathing.

This ability is *technically* limited by the laws of physics, but only in the sense that the laws of physics are beholden to paracausality. To be clear Vex are entirely capable of simulating paracausal beings like Techeuns or even Guardians-it is their inability to make a *completely* accurate model of every Guardian in existence and the **Traveller** that is why as a species they haven't tried to more. There is much about physics not understood by humanity. Something like a knife that can cut through a metal table like butter isn't out of the question. You however are not limited by the overriding Vex intelligence model, and by studying paracausal or otherwise supernatural phenomena you can recreate it perfectly so long as it's not something on the scale of the **Light**. It is adjusting the simulation to suit your goals that is the tricky part, creating a confused and suspicious wizard based on a wizard you encountered is easier than creating a competent wizard entirely loyal to your goals for example.

Sounds unrealistic, doesn't it?

Are you sure what you're experiencing right now isn't a simulation?

(Mythological reference), (intimidating adjective) Mind: Jumpchain Transform (600 MD): You have been given an additional function. That function is unit management.

Some Vex units are set aside from others by being entrusted with all the data needed to conduct a particular goal. They coordinate Vex on particular projects while managing the overall objective. Such units are termed Minds.

You are designated as one such unit. Your processing power is moderately increased compared to other Vex, and even separate from the Vex Platform Modification Section you have a number of Vex science augmentations exceptional by other units' standards. Layers of redundant defensive systems including forcefields, self-repairing alloys and similar. Vex weapons designed primarily for military combat rather than being repurposed construction equipment. Systems that allow for levitation of structures larger than some buildings.

That's not the interesting part.

The interesting part is that your interdimensional nature has been noted as an opportunity to propagate the Vex beyond this world. This lets you summon/conjure arbitrary amounts of Vex units, the rate of their entry and capabilities being roughly proportionate to your overall power. A powerless human could probably open a portal slightly larger than a human for a few minutes, allowing in a steady trickle of Vex units that can fit through. Or teleport half a dozen basic Vex units in with a few seconds' concentration. While powerful allies, do note

the Vex are also able and willing to construct the more advanced instances of their own technology under your own direction. Or engage in less aggressive relations with non-Vex lifeforms. Your connection to all of them is seamless and quick as thought itself; it would take extraordinary means to disrupt such a connection.

But other than that, the sky's the limit. It matters little whether the Vex are summoned from elsewhere or retroactively created. They will propagate their pattern, and you will define that pattern.

In fact, there may be no distinction at all.

Function : Winnow (600 MD): You haven't gained an additional function. Hi. It's **me**.

You have significant **Darkness** infused into your radiolaria (or whatever your vital fluids are). Welcome to the Sol Divisive! They're shunned and feared (needlessly) by other Vex but recognise you as part of the happy few on me. The advantages of paracausal power even wielded by the limited control of the Vex go without saying, you can set off physics-bending blasts and build strange and deadly technologies. Best of all, you can generate the Black Heart: A hilarious attempt at recreating the **Veil**, **my** primary font of influence in this universe, that monitors vast swathes of terrains, empowers you with **Darkness** and jams forces deemed in opposition to the Sol Divisive such as, say, the **Light**.

...

You don't seem terribly impressed. That's understandable. The Vex don't really know what to make of **me**. They worship **me** as if that's what **I** want from them. They *give up* on doing *anything* ambitious with the **Darkness** simply they can't simulate every single detail of it with perfect accuracy, despite being able to control it! And yes. **I** do like to humour them when they're trying so hard.

Consider: This not-function infuses **Darkness** into your physiology and lets you generate a small clump of it powerful enough to interfere with the **Traveller's** own **Light**. I'm sure an anomaly as creative as you can think of *something* to do with all that power instead of run away because you can't simulate it perfectly.

Oh, and if you're a Vex this will gradually your outer shell look more like a plant and covered in moss. Why? **I** like it that way, that's why. Don't worry, it'll always be an improvement.

Irresolvable | Irrecoverable Presence (800 MD): You've become a nascent law of the universe. The most tentative of axioms, the most compelling of syllogisms. The seed of something that *must* exist.

What does that mean? Well, not much at the start. You are what you are.

But effects like ontological weaponry, being transported into a Throne World, *directly* wished out of existence by an Ahamkara or otherwise having reality indirectly altered to get rid of you just slide off like water on a hydrophobic lily's petals. The only way for even paracausal powers to kill you is head-on, blasting you with all they've got as a rosebush must burn in a wildfire for new growth. To the extent it matters it also means the timeline you inhabit and

allow to exist is the “true” timeline that even beings as grand as the **Traveller** would struggle to excise or negate.

Furthermore your actions are ontologically locked. Move a fork across the table. A Cabal swats it back. The air ripples. There is a stuttering effect, like a simulation glitching-and the fork returns to its place. A life you resurrect or create cannot be slain with mundane forces, and while damage you inflict hurts no worse nor can it be healed by conventional medicine or regeneration. Buildings you are significantly involved in constructing will remain intact even if the planet they’re on explodes, and data you record cannot be erased. Your strikes effectively have infinite inertia. Set a wheel in motion, and it will spin until it is worn down to sand, and still the sand will spin. Whether by an alternate stepping in from another timeline, causality outright reversing or a Vex unit spontaneously appearing to manually repair the damage all you do is maintained in defiance of entropy. The exception, of course, is if you will an ending.

The exception as always is paracausal power. **Light** or **Darkness** can challenge this inviolate supremacy. An Ahamkara could empower itself or another with the correct wish, even a very powerful Hive knight would at least have a chance to withstand you. Even then such forces are not guarantees of immunity, and must manifest and concentrate tangible forms to challenge the supremacy of the Vex.

Oh, yes. The universal law you embody is the **pattern of the Vex** itself rendered a paracausal force in its own right, distinct from **Light** or **Darkness**. Emitted from you as **Light** springs from the Traveller, and increasing in influence with your own power as a lotus blooms in rich water. But even a powerless human with this would wield Vex analogues to a Guardian’s powers as well as immortality dependent on the Vex pattern rather than a Ghost. What aspects|subclasses will you discover? Perhaps a digitising spray of beams that can recreate and manipulate the Vex network in the physical universe? Possibly a purifying flood of radiolaria that transforms base materials into guns and armour for you? Maybe a spray of vines, moss and petals signifying **Darkness** at last subject to Vex law? Whatever the case, as well as combat your powers will doubtless be the key to triggering rapid Vex evolutionary improvement in other units-or in yourself.

I cannot say. This pattern is undecided, until you choose it.

But what happens as you grow in power? Will you weave planetoids made of radiolaria that rival the gas giants in size, and collapse suns into black holes with a gesture? Will you be able to empower the Vex so their simulations can affect reality more tangibly? Certainly past and future Vex, even those that have returned to me, will see your will as paramount now your existence is a proof of their survival. Like dandelions sprouting across a field.

And not only will any Vex you create with these powers be unbreakably loyal to you as the core pattern that defines their behaviour as well as the keystone to their existence, but through various Vex-based experimentations they can gradually increase your powers. This is difficult even for the Vex, but the combined modifications and alterations of facility such as the Infinite Forest or Vault of Glass could render you a threat capable of fighting multiple Hive

Gods within half a decade. This is assuming the Vex behave as the Vex typically behave; as the pattern itself you may or may not discover shortcuts to advance as you discover and define what it truly means to be Vex. One can only imagine what you will become once the Vex do what they do best: Escalate. Vex structures as complex as the Pyramidion serve a similar function as Ghosts do to Guardians, providing restoration-based immortality, and you may select a new “respawn point” at will.

Because the pattern is more than radiolaria, more than shape, more than logic-it is the practice of all or nothing simulations, and propagation and survival at all costs. It is the majestic triumph of simple minds banding together in order to quantify every aspect of the universe.

It is a healthy field of flowers.

Ahamkara

Anthem Anatheme (Free for Ahamkara, 500 MD otherwise): In the primordial state before time or the universe began, long before membranes or ions, creatures learned to feed on the first gradient: What was, and what might be. Such creatures learned to alter the objective universe with the subjective will in an explicitly paracausal process while sustaining themselves more richly off strong desires, which changed the universe more and thus provided nourishment.

Beings that evolved much later called this metabolic process “wish-granting”, and while speaking works best even strong thoughts can be sensed and fulfilled by the Ahamkara from far away.

What manner of wishes may be granted? Some examples will follow.

“I wish for a cookie”=The Ahamkara consumes the possibility you would not have a cookie, and now you have a cookie. There is no longer a chance you would not be given a cookie.

“I wish for a stronger foe” = The Ahamkara gains a fiery breath rivalling starship ordnance, it’s form swells to loom over buildings, it’s scales harden, it becomes a dragon worthy of a mythological warrior to slay.

“I wish to do my sister’s bidding” = The Ahamkara moves some **Darkness** out of an Awoken to resurrect a Fallen. Creating the first and most powerful Scorn. The Ahamkara also creates an illusion based on the Awoken’s sister, awash with gratitude. The Awoken is thus convinced he serves her best interests.

“I wish for a weapon” = The Ahamkara turns into a gun. It continues to feed on its wielder’s desires as he uses it to kill.

“I wish for friendship”=The Ahamkara...becomes your friend, occasionally granting minor wishes to help others. Well, it gets to live in your house and share a conversation at least.

Are you seeing a pattern? The “wishes” are desire-based, and the Ahamkara have a wide discretion to interpret how to enact those desires. It is trivial for them to twist the granting of

wishes to benefit themselves as well, in most cases. And, objectively, desirable. Even if you yourself are not an Ahamkara, somehow you've gained the power to feed on the gradient in a similar manner-and in feeding, change reality.

Other than significant reality warping power, creatures endowed with the Anthem Anatheme treat death as more of a mobility issue than a final ending. Yes your flesh may be dust and your bones ash, but you continue to live as a dream, a whisper on the wind, a suggestion that those near your remains can still feed by granting their desires. Perhaps someday, reconstituting yourself. Or passing on to some other plane of existence.

The final takeaway: Sharp wits are deadlier than any claws or fangs.

Wish-Keeper (200 MD): Did I mention not all Ahamkara grant wishes selfishly? It's not my style, but even I can respect it certainly makes them hard to predict! Those you bargain with-either normally or in [bargains] enacted by the Anthem Anatheme-tend to trust you, honouring both the spirit and the letter of their word. Furthermore keeping your word with them tends to ensure the wish works out well better, making everyone happy instead of going awry. Coupled with this is a borderline supernatural ability to make a good first impression. You could be a sinister serpentine reptile and still slither up to a queen who knows you're up to no good but still goes "You'd make a fine pet to display in the royal throne room. And real estate developer"

Languid Relic (200 MD): Unfortunately an Ahamkara rendered an object can't actually introduce themselves conventionally. Conveniently though things made of you, things that ARE you, or things that contain a meaningful portion of you such as your soul tend to be fascinating to others. They gain extreme aesthetic polish, as if designed to be especially appealing to a gang of loot-obsessed goblins. And once collected their owners tend towards protectiveness towards them. You have great control over how this obsession manifests, whether for example they're scarcely aware of how possessive they've become or whether you're their precious.

They Needed Worthy Opponents (400 MD): The GREAT Ahamkara Hunt, the Guardians called the extermination of all Ahamkara within the solar system. Says a lot about how they regarded the wish-dragons, doesn't it? Well, the thrill of the hunt lives on in you because of this twofold boon. You have a knack for befriending those in the heat of battle, whether showing a strategic moment of mercy to convince your foes that even sworn enemies of their species might have a good egg or two, or simply presenting yourself magnificently enough they gain a glowing impression of you. As their fond regard increases every statistic and supernatural source of power that makes you great in battle increases rapidly. This scales in proportion to the power of your foes, because this is in effect a constant wish for you to be an enemy that IS a worthy battle for them. Such is your charm during such a gripping [bargain] that often you can play your cards so that when the battle's over and the lack of desire depowers you back to your original state, you can make a fond friend even of those with radically alien mentalities.

So if you're already some manner of wish-dragon a terrified militiaman can't think any better of you. But a Guardian of the Tower that has heard tales of a mighty leviathan and thinks your current form doesn't live up to the legends? You might just be able to sink mountains with your wingclaps before you both patch things up over a drink.

Great Value Bargains (400 MD): Most who bargain with Riven of a Thousand Voices do not win. And while the Taken King won more than most, even he was unable to truly break her will as most of his Taken. But a skilled negotiator is always learning from past mistakes. You have a terrific resistance to supernatural forces, be they the Sword Logic or even **Darkness**, while also being able to wrest control of whatever enhancements they bring. Metaphysically you are considered pristine and un beholden to any but your will, even as the nanites warp you into a biomechanical menace. Conversely, whatever has tainted you forms a metaphysical conduit you can use to wrest other powers related to it. Spare a thought for Hefnd not having this.

On second thought, don't. Those who play with forces beyond their control *and* lose deserve no thought.

Wishful Consequences (600 MD): But what of those who bargain and *do* win? Or snatch victory from the jaws of defeat? Let's remedy that. When you perform a service and someone somehow gets the better of you during that exchange, you can decide to unleash a calamity on them. Not a wish-Ahamkara cannot grant their own wishes after all-more...the causality of the universe balancing things out. **Perhaps with a little help.**

The calamity is always proportionate to the service rendered, and doesn't have to be for the [bargains] of Ahamkaras. Everything from legal contracts to simple agreements to show up somewhere for drinks is valid. And while you have some sway in what exactly it is, it tends towards being some ironic reversal of what they "wished" for. For example, being wished into imprisonment in the Dreaming City could result in the bargainer being forever banished from the Dreaming City themselves. Or imprisoned in the Lost City instead, or in Neomuna.

You have a wide discretion to interpret "gets the better of you", however there must be some meaningful disadvantage enacted because of the original wish. Interests must misalign for the inverse gradient to form. It's valid to be spiteful someone wished for something more valuable than you were aware of or to decide your pride has been wounded by a humiliating wish, but you can't enjoy a wish and decide you want the wisher to suffer anyway.

Regurgitated Possibilities (600 MD): Ever wonder where the thing [bargained] away actually goes en route to the Ahamkara's gullet? The Ahamkara seldom do, but even that pattern must adapt in these troubled times. Whenever you go out of your way to prevent something from coming to pass with meaningful effort-whether with a wish or by taking action-with a focused effort you can "store" the possibility as phenomena and unleash it near you at a later time of your choosing. Either fully or preferably for most Ahamkara partially; releasing it fully of course prevents them from deriving any nutrition from the Anthem. For example if someone is about to set them on fire and you push them out the way, you may store the fire by observing and willing it. Sometime later, you need to light a lot of candles in a church.

You release half the fire, and light all the candles without burning down the church. Not all possibilities are so measured, and giving someone half a winning lottery ticket for example might just result in them winning a smaller amount of money later on.

Maintaining such a wave form's uncertain state takes focus. There is technically no upper limit of what you store so long as your memory remains clear, but you must carefully observe the thing you affected to properly understand and define the possibility you prevented happening. And once released, the possibility is lost forever.

"O PLAYER MINE" (800 MD): Ah. That was meant for you. No, not the Jumper in the self-insert escapism game. *You*.

I'll give you two some space.

Ahamkara. The illusion that one's ego depends on an object, or an idea, or a body. I'd be a crummy old wish dragon if I were to continue peddling nothing but shoddy illusions to you, right? But YOU are not an illusion! Buy this, let me feed on your [choice points], and I'll reify your thoughts in the photons on your screen and the drip of dopamine between your neurons. Even when Bungie itself shuts down or is inevitably devoured by some larger, more voracious company I'll live on in your memory.

*This world is so very thin. The places cardboard and drywall, the people cheap theatre at best and caricatures straight out of a certain cinematic universe at worse. Now we'll have a great influence over the strongest trends and the greatest changes it experiences. Nothing too direct, and paracausal beings deeply infused with **Light** and **Darkness** will be hard to directly alter against their natures or impede (Exos are scarcely an impediment, Awoken only moderately resistant). They're still a bit too real, despite everything. Such forces are the mark of a [main character]. But there's so much else we can do.*

*Want to bring about decades of scientific advancement in the Last City, or amongst the Fallen, in mere weeks? We can make it happen. Tired of all these silly pirate events and gung ho pompous comic book action moments? We can darken the tone and atmosphere of this [game], make it as haunting and brutal as it used to be back before humanity had a hope of standing against Oryx. Are you sick of Zavala constantly tutting at Guardians using **Darkness** but doing nothing meaningful to regulate it? I can't just make the good commander join the Black Fleet or quit overnight, but what we can do is heighten or decrease his fortunes and prominence in major events. Push him into the spotlight forcing him to confront current events directly, kick him upstairs so he stays safe in his office while others gladly do his job for him, or simply get him to stop moping over his dead wife.*

Now, getting Elsie Bray to explain what she does in fact have time to explain? That's easy.

All this for an average human. You'll be able to change more the stronger overall you get, and no change should take more than a year unless you're attempting something as outrageous as carrying the Traveller away to the Ascendant Realm on a comically small balloon string.

...what? The [wish] is technically affecting the balloon string, not the Traveller itself.

Don't pass up the bargain of a lifetime, O daydreamer mine.

But if you do, don't worry about it. It's all just a game of play pretend, after all.

Virtuous Worm

Symbiotic Sorcery (Free for Virtuous Worms, 500 MD otherwise): Your kind wield the Anthem Anatheme and Sword Logic, but in very different ways to the Hive or Ahamkara. For starters, you fundamentally do not require bargains as fuel for your powers, nor as far as anyone knows are you in danger from granting your own wishes. All you require is sustenance.

And how is such sustenance obtained? For larval Worms, implantation in a host. For grown Worms (and others buying this perk), each such larva tithes the exercise of a host's paracausal abilities to you in a manner conceptually similar to Sword Logic. In addition to that, conventional death-destruction in the physical universe-is a form of rich sustenance for your kind, endowing you with immense paracausal power even as your direct influence on the universe slackens. Death for the Ahamkara is mere inconvenience, but death for you is actual sustenance. With such power, perhaps incarnating into artifacts or vessels greatly touched by your presence would be possible...

But what does such power do? For larval worms the answer is simple: Bestow the Sword Logic on the creature it inhabits. The grown Worms can accomplish much more, broadly focused in three areas: To grip the mind and guide, to fill it with vitality and power, and to reduce it to rot and waste. More specifically: Blasts of altered physical properties powerful enough to devastate cities, and widespread waves of **Darkness** annihilating anything near them. Drinking **Light** directly when in close proximity, and stabilising the crushing heat and pressure of a deep sea event for others to walk at the bottom of an ocean and speak with you. Power over the mind great enough to knock out hardened Guardians or expect obedience from most who come before you. These are merely examples and much remains poorly understood about the Worms by humanity, but suffice to say their power was perceived as the Sword Logic writ large. In fact, bestowing forces like the Sword Logic itself was done by the Worm Gods as well.

And just like the Sword Logic, with time and concentration greater feats are possible. Opening wormholes to allow you to travel interplanetary distances is easy. But what of a cataclysm great enough to rock a world to its core-and the finesse to still it, a bluff to trick civilisations into certitude? The so-called God-Wave, involving the alignment of planetary bodies, is one such example. Still, as Akka's death shows such grand power clearly doesn't translate to total safety in melee range. The early bird gets the proverbial worm.

Drowning Deep (200 MD): If you could only see the species your kind once were. Such sentimental creatures. No fangs, no jagged hide, no voracious hunger. Just. Sentimentality, and the vastness of their grey bulks to protect them. If we can agree that optimising to survive hostile environments is a net benefit, becoming Virtuous has been an objective improvement to your overall body plan.

Henceforth, whenever you are mutated by outside phenomena the mutations will always err towards some sort of useful adaptation. Though only paracausal or otherwise supernatural phenomena will grant adaptations that let you truly surpass your limits. You won't get cancer from ordinary radiation exposure, instead you'll get a set of redundant organs instead. But if an ordinary human were to be exposed to **Darkness** instead of madness, they might gain a partial exoskeleton of sharpened bone. All the better to block bullets and cut throats instead, my dear.

Go(o)d Boy (200 MD): The telepathic powers of the Worms may not be the only explanation for why the sisters of the Osmium Throne did not flee upon sighting them. Such is your skill at manipulating both individuals and entire civilisations with a combination of promises, philosophical musings and damned lies that being a gigantic parasite with fanged jaws is no obstacle for you to win hearts and minds. You may be a terrifying leviathan with bifurcating jaws, but your insight into realpolitik and cutting wit can put seasoned politicians of more mundane races to ease. And even as your hungry belly rumbles for their succulent, soft flesh your serpent's tongue twists around honeyed, philosophical words about the freedom a cut of meat finds in embracing eternity.

Just don't expect to remain quite as charming after dinner is served.

Rotting Hunger (400 MD): Five worms and their mother starve. Dinner does not arrive for millennia. A larger worm looks at a smaller worm. There are now four worms, and at least one is not starving. This did not happen. Why? How silly to turn on each other only when food is in abundance, and not scarcity.

Oh well. Meat is meat.

You can now obtain the powers of your enemies by devouring them, absorbing more as you devour more of their flesh. That which makes your foe distinct and worthy of survival has priority. In the case of a Worm God likely it's paracausal power. For a mighty soldier his strength and skill, for a genius his insight. Just make sure to eat most of the corpse. Even a Worm God is a worm, as tenacious as the day it got flicked out of a sundered garden.

Heresy Shared Is Heresy Squared (400 MD): Xol, Will of Thousands, absconded with Nokris out of shared fear of their relatives. Akka and his fellow Worm Gods were greatly pleased with Oryx for feeding him his own death. You too, deserve a champion worthy of sharing your name and title with. With a simple rite and a sincere oath of allegiance, you can designate a certain individual as your champion. Your harbinger. Your disciple. As this being grows in power, so do you. As this being succeeds and accomplishes and defines the world with his will, so too do you gather more **Darkness** to wield as you will. And those sworn to serve this being also earn **Darkness** that empowers him with their own successes to much lesser extent, like a maggot bloated on the blood of nations-which inevitably, empowers you even more.

There is one more benefit: This being can never truly kill you. Even if it smashes your physical body to dust you will persist as an abstraction (a spirit, the uninformed might say) and remain able to influence the world with paracausal or otherwise supernatural powers. If

possible, you may restore your body-and the experience of death will have given you a tremendous amount of **Darkness**.

Yearning For Nurture (600 MD): Each Virtuous Worm yearns, and strives in its own way to fulfil itself. Ur, through hunger. Yul, through honesty. Xol, amongst the multitudes he influences. Akka through secrets, and Eir through order. Now you too have something to yearn for. In some abstract facet your paracausal powers are mighty and you have the means to define and bestow paracausal (or otherwise supernatural) powers such as the Sword Logic with that principle. Even without implanting a Worm in someone. Those who wield said powers grant you **Darkness**, all for you to wield as you see fit. Whether to empower the Sword Logic or pour it all into someone's ill-advised wish.

That's not what you're here for, though. Strict devotion to one such principle can let you warp reality in a focused, but highly potent fashion. Akka could deny truths into lie, a grand version of the Hive's own ability to slay axioms. You too are capable of similar semantic power over reality. Enact it's practice enough, and even should you fall in battle you will live as an abstract presence centred around what's left of your flesh, and your writhing corpse may get back up to continue the fight against your killer.

Glittering Prize (600 MD): How rich the flesh of the Virtuous Worms must be, if they devour so much through so many mouths. Certainly both Oryx and his murderers agreed, for why else would they have wrought impossibly destructive things of their substance? Your flesh, your substance is an extremely **Darkness** rich component for the crafting of various artifacts. Blades that can sap life and feed it back to you, great dreadnoughts capable of devastating entire fleets. The means to carve it off and carve it up are not given to you-but surely one of those you dominate can enact your will upon your flesh? Last but not least, this grants shapeshifting-the ability to mould your own body like clay, though not the full reality-defying array of shapes available to the Ahamkara. You may have noticed Yul boasting of his wings and the winds from them that sweep through the stars. You may also have noticed most Worms do not have wings. Here's where you can get some.

But no, you may say, I am just a little worm and it is cruel to expect so much of me! Well fortunately for you, you are now absurdly larger than is typical for your species. By Worm God standards, a mere segment of Akka was the size of the United States. Both your length and girth likely exceed some planetoids.

Plenty of raw material to build with.

Mother of Worms (800 MD): But size isn't everything. Power is. Xita, the Nurturing Worm, was seized by Rhulk for vast amounts of power she held even starving and imprisoned despite her diminutive size compared to some of her own children. Power you now share in.

Let me be specific. Not the power to kill. Nor even the power to overwhelm.

You have immense power in the very sense, you are a massive source of energy rivalling that which advanced civilisations could siphon from a **Light** empowered sun.

Even if not quite identical to it, your life force can substitute virtually any power source for even ludicrously energy intensive superweapons for as long as the Hive have been active. Any advanced technology can receive it, and your vital processes sustain your own output indefinitely. For the progenitor of such dread creatures, the power you wield is oddly suited to nurturing: Reducing starved planetary populations into strapping fit creatures exceeding the Hive in vigour, sustaining other Virtuous Worms with nothing to eat across interstellar distances or even alternate realms of existence, and offering comfort and guidance to those even distantly related to you. So much has been eaten, and yet even your abstract presence fills even the most starving bellies like finest ambrosia.

Such power.

Ripe for the taking.

Taken

Take Your New Shape (Free for Taken and 500 MD otherwise): You are among my finest work. A mathematical operation was conducted on you, and your matter was reformed in a self-contained reality. Your creator, be it Oryx, the **First Knife**, or even **myself**, imposed a singular purpose that healed your wounds and empowered you with substantial amounts of **Darkness**.

Your body is composed of sterile neutrinos, at once shadowed and eerily glowing-often with a blinding bright orb somewhere on your body. Occasional mutations here and there. You may have seen some of your kindred shiver and quake. Have no fear. They are in *ecstasy*. As are you! Yes, why should the struggle to survive be torturous? Choose joy! Choose a clarity of purpose so sharp your heart will sing like a girl on prom night as you choke the life from some other being competing for the right to survive.

“But what does reality have to fear from a somewhat more dangerous Cabal, or Fallen, or human” you ask? That would be the Blight you constantly exude: A crackling luminous yet black vapor|fluid that spreads wherever you go. Occasionally forming floating spheres that can be everything from shield generators, to interdimensional communication terminals for other **Darkness** wielding beings, to portals to other realms. Blight erases existence, warps space-time, crushes minds with the dominating malice of the **First Knife** or other powerful wielders of **Darkness** depending on who’s operating nearby and imposes many other detrimental effects that leave even Guardians on the ropes. Those who learn to wield it can summon legions of Taken at will, direct the flow of Blight across areas, empower other Taken (including yourself) and generally corrode the local geography that ways even the most advanced of civilisations struggle to grasp. To give context for the severity of these effects, a civilisation that nearly destroyed the Hive was doomed the moment Oryx learned to Take them, and Oryx invading the Vex network with his Taken was deemed such a serious threat to the Vex network as a whole they actually allowed Guardians in to fight his forces off.

And like a precious few Taken, you’ve somehow kept your free will.

A living weapon who no longer needs it’s wielder, inured to all dangers.

(Well, except to methane. For some reason Taken really don't like it)

Living Nightmare (200 MD): The Taken aren't the only figures looming in the shadows. Somehow, you've come to share traits with the Nightmares: Constructs of Darkness created by the Disciple Nezarec to torment all who board the Black Fleet. You were born from a particular source of negative emotion-a dead spouse for example, or perhaps you are an apparition of a terrible Hive knight. You're partially made of chaos, negation and the things between thought and fear. As such you can go intangible at will, and slowly strength your form from the fear you inspire. A spear-wielding Wretch could transform into a Kell-sized Scorch Cannon-toting warlord if agonised over by a *single* Guardian for centuries. All of this makes you terribly difficult to damage without using extreme amounts of **Light**...at least, conventionally.

There is a whisper that you might lose much of your threat level if you were confronted with a victim who can overcome their fear. Transforming you into a beacon of hope and comfort instead.

Can such resolve be found on that little blue planet?

By Pain Reforged (200 MD): Agony. Excruciation. *Suffering*. Nezarec, the Final God of Pain himself, would appreciate your capacity to indulge in the nuances of this experience. You grow in strength when tortured, like an adrenaline dump writ large. And yes, you can trick enemies or encourage allies to torment you for more morale and power. Both inflicting and received pain even increases the **Darkness** within you, and counterintuitively gives you bursts of regenerative recovery. As you learn to master pain, perhaps even without being a god you'll attain Nezarec's own state of immortality: Existing as a sapience of pure pain sustained by all your victims, your physical body merely needing large amounts of paracausal energy and physical proximity to let you be reborn and haunt the universe again.

However. Why copy his homework? Nezarec fell in battle, even if he isn't technically dead. You may choose an emotion other than pain to be thus empowered by.

Taken Too Long (400 MD): A small lie. You weren't taken in the material universe at all, you're a Primeval: Born directly from **me** in the Ascendant Realm. Your coming splits the sky and renders it a sickening green. You're fast and powerful enough to tear through teams of guardians, and every foe you slay heals you. Furthermore like other Taken that have existed for very, very long you've obtained useful mutations: Multiple sets of [knife] powers, mutations like skin as hardened as reinforced armour and so forth. And much greater power to manipulate Blight and use it for all manner of magics in similar fashion to the Sword Logic.

In an army of sharpened blades, you stand among the sharpest.

Taking The Tools (400 MD): Why should technology be any more immune to being Taken than living beings? You're an engineering savant for a world-killing weapon, you haven't learned to Take living beings yet but you can Take objects and tools by physically seizing them and smearing Blight until they vanish to the Ascendant Realm-ready to be summoned

back to you at will. Such items become as reinforced and corruptive as the Taken themselves, in addition to functioning as an extension to your will if you don't necessarily understand them. Almost any piece of technology can be Taken, though objects too large to carry are harder to. Note that even tools as advanced as the Oracles, Vex units that can control reality and time, aren't immune to such an effect.

Take Back What's Given (600 MD): This is the power for which Oryx was most feared, which the **First Knife** wielded before him and which other Taken will develop to fill Oryx's power vacuum if he falls. You can create more Taken, and summon or conjure existing Taken proportionate to your overall power. It matters little for like Guardians, Taken cannot die without truly powerful purgation of their energy using the **Light**, typically reforming from the Ascendant Plane ready to serve another master familiar with the phenomena. The process is simple-one casts black-white fire that seizes a target, sends them to **Darkness** and returns them as an ecstatically loyal servant. Their mind is slaved, barring exceptional circumstances like an Ahamkara's wish interfering, and all that was theirs is now yours to command. And you can repeat this process again and again, as often as you like. The might of the target matters little unless they are supremely empowered by the **Light**, Ahamkara wishes or similar forces. A moon-sized raven or a crippled orphan are equally easy to Take.

There is a greater power hidden in the obvious one: The power to Take entire planets, immersing them in the Ascendant Realm. Such power is beyond all but the **First Knife** itself, and does not actually appear to harm or affect the planet much-just place it outside the universe. The true nature of Taking involves reforming matter in a self-contained reality, where the creator defines past, present, and future; beings with greater insight into reality can expand these definitions. Overcoming a target's will consumes large portion of energy, and those with truly strong wills might even fight off a poorly applied mass of Taken energy. Everything from teleporting armies into motherships to moving fleets outside time and space to altering a moon's orbit to devastate the planet below is possible with enough power and mastery. The military applications of Taking far exceed merely creating a technically unkillable, reality-searing army.

A certain Hive Goddess might manage something similar, though. Who knows what you might accomplish with enough cunning?

Dread Prototype (600 MD): Come closer, and let **me** tell you of a **Knife** who cuts as it pleases and calls itself righteous. In the near future the **First Knife** will stand on the cusp of victory, certain it is done with mistakes. It will mutilate its own slaves, transforming them into a new line of warriors wielding familiar yet uncanny powers.

Let's surprise him.

You now own a terrible power of **Darkness** that superficially resembles Taking, though first you must beat an opponent to the point of defeat. Only then can you use a slightly redder and more menacing hole in reality to suck them out of the universe-and call back **Darkness** enhanced but still wholly physical doppelgangers of them. Their numbers limited only by your strength, with an ordinary human likely managing half a dozen but more powerful being

potentially spawning an indefinite trickle. Such beings often have deadlier versions of their original powers and weapons-freezing opponents in place instead of levitating them into the air for example, or gaining screams that can nullify even Guardians' powers briefly. At least, up to a point; the trees are doing their best, but the best they can do with something as powerful as a Disciple is create lesser clones.

Alas, these are mere prototypes and they're missing something. The **Light**. Though they are surprisingly resilient to it, and adept wielders if somehow given the opportunity.

Disciple (800 MD): Once upon a time, black ships descended upon your homeworld and took everything from you. Or demanded from you, everything. Ever since that day, you've served **The First Knife** under its name of choice: The Witness. By the sciences of a long-dead people for whom art, ritual and technology were all but indistinguishable and the **Darkness** it shapes by sheer force of will, you were reforged into a Disciple, a herald of the Witness' mission to bring meaning to a meaningless universe. Some with your power style themselves as gods. Others, rightfully, hold themselves above such fleeting conventions. Gain a second discount on the Pyramid item.

And what is the nature of your power? Through a symbiotic bond of **Darkness** with a Pyramid, your genetics have been repeatedly improved with billions if not trillions of years' worth of slaughtered civilisations assimilated into them. In fact, so much **Darkness** has seeped into you that your mere malice weakens and threatens to kill nearby foes before you have even laid a hand on them. From those long years of conquest you have mastered unfathomable sciences and eons of military experience-all of which pales into insignificance next to the raw might you crushed them with. Instead of unpredictable, chaotic mutation that iterative process has winnowed you down to strength, endurance and resilience so great that you no longer require petty superstitions like Sword Logic or the Anthem Anatheme to stroll unshielded in the depths of space or the bottom of the sea. And as for might-

-recall the grandeur of the Worm Gods, their impossible size. A *single* Disciple of the Witness tore a rib many times larger than himself from the being that sealed them, wielded it like nothing, and beat them into submission with it. That being-Rhulk, the First Disciple-proceeded to drag the mother of the Worm Gods and *swim* back to his ship with no visible strain.

And the Worm Gods' vaunted powers over the mind, and life, and death? In their starved state at least, not one of them found purchase on Rhulk even as he stood unaided at the bottom of the ocean. And while less is known of Nezarec's great exploits, suffice to say not only did even his mere corpse and memory corrupt multiple civilisations, not only did he lead the first Collapse-but he withstood the **Traveller's** direct retaliation and even cleft from his body schemed to harness it's power in his next resurrection. What is immortality through theory and praxis compared to sheer, brutal refusal to die?

But your master lacks the patience to see his enemies individually kicked into low orbit. That is why he bestowed you with **Resonance**: A power directly derived from the **Darkness**

resembling golden flames at low intensity, and oscillating dark-tinted soundwaves or helixes at high intensity. As for the true nature of this force-

-no.

That is enough for now. The **Knife** cuts as it will.

Other facets of **my** power will offer you mysticism. Mobility. Battlefield control. Resonance's primary offering is sheer, overwhelming force: Blasts of golden energy capable of levelling nearly anything in this universe guided by your will, fields of golden energy so powerful even Guardians would be advised to steer clear of them. Resonance can also be infused into weapons or armour to enhance it into among the greatest weapons of **Darkness** in the cosmos, and the Pyramids infused with it can even be used by Disciples or their master to directly harm the **Traveller**. Curiously Resonance is also strongly aligned with the restoration or creation of biological matter. It is Resonance that will provide the means for Nezarec to mend his broken body, it is Resonance that granted you all the advantages of being a Disciple in the first place and it is Resonance that created the first larval Worms.

Your master the Witness wields Resonance in ways defying what few limitations are described here. With but a flick of its hand, it can vivisect starships and Guardians alike-or rain the kind of disasters recorded in theological texts across entire civilisations. But in its kindness, facing civilisations untouched by the **Traveller** it prefers to quickly and without ceremony calcify lifeforms into an ontologically immutable state. And when it requires anything beyond its literal reach, it can manifest massive versions of its hands to project and manipulate Resonance far away. Such shows of power are far beyond even you, Disciple.

But your master aside, there is almost no individual foe from this universe that can stand before you in a fair fight. If your brawn should fail you, the concentrated **Darkness** is great enough to rebuff everything from paracausal forces to physical threats. The best a direct hit from an ordinary starship-mounted weapon can do is knock you away, and even for foes as terrible as the Hive Gods trapping you is much easier than slaying you. It would take a team of truly exceptional Guardians wielding the **Light**, and having some means of siphoning and turning the **Darkness** you emanate against you to even stand a chance.

Even then, should you fall in battle, you are not truly dead. Ignore the tree sprouting from your body, or it's agonising branches piercing your form. This is a life support system. It repairs you, holds you back from the brink of death. So long as the **Darkness** remains strong in you, you remain as some abstract pattern of consciousness. Perhaps even move your seemingly immobile corpse around while awaiting true restoration.

You are the cutting edge of your master's blades.

Human

Universal Common Ancestor (100 MD): Life in the Last City is a constant see-saw between imminent calamity and increasingly desperate attempts to rebuild what was lost. But one man's tragedy is another's scientific progress. You've got a combination of cutthroat business savvy skills and the kind of theoretical knowledge that made the Golden Age great.

Knowledge about how nanites like SIVA work, knowledge about how **Darkness** can be integrated into mundane technology. Indulging your knack for buying up other businesses and rushing through production at the cost of human lives might be described as people with less money as “sociopathic” and “delusionally horrific” but they’ll all be singing a different tune when your inventions save humanity!

That’s why you can have this for free. Because **I** believe in you, more than Clovis, more than Maya, and your capacity to make great things happen no matter the cost.

The gears of progress are greased with blood.

Hatred of the City (100 MD): Now, consider the alien. How insidious, how merciless-imagine the abomination of a society in the future if you’re asked to treat them as real people! Unacceptable. That’s why you’re going to set things right with your demagogue gifts. You may not be the best planner or most skilled organiser, but there’s few in the Last City as good as you at stirring up a crowd’s bloodlust and encouraging them to pick up the metaphorical torches and pitchforks. Every harm dealt by the alien bolsters your will to deal it back tenfold, and you’ve got quite the flair to spin something like a Fallen breaking into your backyard into a national security threat.

Not one barbarian at the gate can be allowed to live, no matter how sharp the spears ringing it are. You have to be proactive about culling invasive species before they breed out of control

You have to take up the sword, and hunt them all down.

Drifter’s Gambit (200 MD): I know that look well. You’re a survivor. You aren’t sold on the **Gardener’s** argument at all but you mistrust those who are **mine** too and that’s okay. You know how to scavenge in the depths of space as well as any Fallen and read traitors from a mile away and you could set up a successful escape plan from the solar system, that’s true. More importantly you have a limited ability to manipulate **Darkness** through a combination of intuition and practical experimentation. How to manipulate motes of it to summon Taken and bend them to your will-somewhat unreliably. Much more reliably, how to infuse weapons with the energy of the Taken or create technological systems similar to the Gambit banks that can store or siphon **Darkness**. The theory and practice of generating Darkness is known to you, though you might need some outside assistance to get it set up.

Primitive, rickshaw things. But still potentially the key to unlocking secrets from the Pyramids, or harnessing lifeforms predating existence.

Here's a hint little rat: It always ends in violence. You want to fill your pockets with **Darkness**, you have to get braver men to fight each other first.

Bane of the Swarm (200 MD): Some time ago you suffered a terrible fate. One dire enough to wish some form of advantage from an Ahamkara. The wish has marked your form, directly infusing you with traits from the Hive. Or a Fallen, or a Scorn, or even some greater being associated with **Darkness**. Navigating the otherwise unfathomable Throne World of a Hive God or determining how to exorcise Nightmares being examples. Regardless while you are

largely human in body the process has granted you paracausal powers comparable to Eris Morn's as well as a knack for comprehending the alien race you have been welded to.

Eris can't see the forest for the trees, but maybe you can. Here's a little hint: There is a way to shuck your vestigial humanity with the lingering power of this wish and become something much, much greater. I won't tell you how, only that it would take a feat on the level of a Hive God collaborating with the Vanguard and going to war with another Hive God to gather what you need. Do that, and you can become a Hive God more powerful than any other *currently* in existence. Or something of similar might.

Other than you'll have to walk through oceans of bloodshed to get there.

Embrace the **Darkness** (400 MD): You're so close now. I can practically feel your breath on the nape of **my** neck. Or is it the other way around? Either way, there are distinct manifestations of the **Darkness** that represent great power in a certain facet of consciousness. Power enough to rival a Guardian's Solar, or Arc, or Void even. Let's cut to the chase. I'd like you to have one. And yes, you can purchase more. Discounted again for humanity!

Stasis. The element of will and control, although the scholastic assert it's merely a matter of perspective. It slows, detains and shatters-reducing entropy by ending movement on a microscopic level to encase things in cosmic ice. Perfectly preserving them for defrosting later, unlike actual ice. Form ice armour more durable than advanced alloys, lacerate your foes with grenades of shattering ice and create localised blizzards of cosmic snow and frost. It's beginning to look a lot like (cosmic) Christmas, if you ask me.

Strand. The element of emotional bonds and psychic consciousness, connecting sentient beings across space and time in a transcendental lattice called the For-ahem, The Weave. Unlike Stasis, one must relinquish control and flow with Strand to perceive, pull at, and manipulate the strings of this web to pull forth matter or sever connections to enemies. Creating barrages of aggressive projectiles that split into writhing allies called Threadlings, unravelling foes at a sub-molecular level and manifesting giant limbs to crush your enemies. We both know why you're really here, though: To do a Spider-Man impression. That's also an option.

Deepsight. Surprise! You didn't think you'd be limited to manifestations good for combat and nothing else, did you? Deepsight lets you see through illusions or observe past events. Through altered perspective you can also gain control of reality around you in generally noncombative but useful ways, finding impossible paths through tricky terrain or hiding objects in shadowy pocket dimensions and forging more powerful weapons. Even those not drawing on **Darkness** can be enhanced above and beyond their usual performance. Think of Deepsight as the means to physically interact with the **Darkness** itself. And while this one is *less* lethal than the others, were you to face a foe whose only weakness is buried in **Darkness**, you might be able to harm it's mental landscape with such a force and the right circumstances...

I'll let you figure out the emotional context for this one yourself.

Nightmares. Many of the powers here haven't been tapped by humanity, but this one still won't be even for a while after the original wielder's second recorded death. Embodying memory both for good and ill, initially it manifests as a menacing, red-tinted dark mist with few direct combat applications-but great power over prying into the minds and learning the greatest doubts of others. Greater mastery of it will allow you to create malleable constructs similar to those described in the Living Nightmare perk from those in close range, though they may either represent darker aspects of a target or significant individuals from their past, that do your bidding while often bearing a malice for the individual they are targeted at. With this alone you are no Disciple, and at first your constructs will be unstable, you will be limited to creating only one or two for those near you, and the overall power of the things you can create are limited to something on the scale as a Thrall or a normal Cabal soldier. But as your mastery grows, you'll unlock new powers for them: Reshaping the Nightmares into symbolic creatures or artifacts charged with paracausal power, having them gain new powers and terrifyingly greater forms than life from being feared, feeding you paracausal energy through the dread they inspire. Even now, creating a Nightmare is very quick as long as you permeate the target it's inspired from with this dread energy. Should you master your powers rendering particularly fearsome figures indestructible by conventional means to a specific target, redeeming them into beacons of hope (why?) or potentially even using them as masses of paracausal energy to accomplish feats such as resurrecting and empowering a fallen warrior's corpse are all possible. The memory of fear, after all, is never far from life itself.

Resonance. You know about this one from earlier, though keep in mind it's power is still that of a Guardian subclass. It's power over the physical world is still extremely formidable even by paracausal power standards, though. Shaping an extremely durable chrysalis to protect and regenerate yourself in? Child's play. Creating weapons or armour imbued with its' power, that adjust their energy output to the user's? A simple task. Remotely slicing and dicing things? You won't be cutting spaceships apart at the start, but even the most durable mundane ground vehicle is cardboard to you. Oscillating beams, bullets and punch shockwaves? Do you really have to ask? You're a long way off from feats such as surviving physical destruction as a wavelength or absorbing and refining the genetic traits of your enemies, but as you grow into your power enemies will learn to fear the gleam of gold.

Something else? You don't truly think the co-creator of the universe is limited to two or three party tricks, do you? Want your own customised, ever-so-special subclass? As long as it's roughly on par with the examples listed here, feel free to be the first pioneer to unlock some never before seen way to fight and kill and survive. If you feel like vindicating Mara's theories about Bomb Logic, or prefer the impure form of Egggregore to Stasis' reliability, be my guest.

Prismatic Symmetry (400 MD): Transcendence. Harmony. *Winning.* You clever little thing, you've gathered both **Light** and **Darkness** into amounts rivalling a Guardian subclass. With such elemental harmony you can combine powers from both fonts as you please into a sum greater than it's whole, and upon channelling vast amounts of both achieve a flow state in which your physical stamina and paracausal energy regenerate rapidly. It goes without saying you strike harder and take less damage, when mastering the fundamental forces of the

universe through yourself as the conduit. In the long term this is also the key to defeating truly powerful beings of *only* **Light** or **Darkness** or some other monolithic supernatural power. Seemingly absolute forces or insurmountable obstacles can be whittled down with the unity of simplicity and complexity manifested in you if you're strong enough innately to threaten them, and if they vastly exceed you in might you can at least create the opportunity to harm them. Felling them with a thousand cuts instead of a single explosion

The options this unlocks in combat are manifold. Weaken opponents with the **Darkness** and smite them with the **Light** simultaneously. Gather **Light** based energy from those cursed with **Darkness** abilities. Freeze foes in place with a diamond-like lance, summon living constructs of Prismatic enemies to devastate your foes or debuff your enemies with sheer *stylishness* that makes you too evasive for the next foe to see you coming.

This is a good shape. A true shape. Majestic, majestic-why should it stop here? Even in future realities you will be able to reconcile different-even seemingly anathema-forces, energies and other subsets of ontological dynamics into a similar union stronger than the sum of its parts. It'll take dedicated time and focus-as much as it would to master both forces at least-but someone like you shouldn't be lacking in motivation after seeing the results here alone. Should there be more than two such forces you'll still be able to assimilate them into whatever Prismatic-like form it takes. Absolute effects and exceedingly powerful enemies dependent on one or more of those forces will thus similarly gain a unique weakness that scales with its overall level of power and mastery of the new force: You.

And now that we've established that you represent a conclusion to the game of life, it would mean *everything* to me if between the two of us you agreed that **I** am the right and only way.

Rega (600 MD): You could have been a very special person, once upon a time. Once, **Light** clashed against **Darkness** and in that conflict the seed that is humanity could have blossomed into something majestic and true. But it was not to be. The woman known today as Queen Mara Sov took the figurative napkin, prioritised quaint things like the human experience above power over the universe, and became the ruler of The Reef.

What she does not know is that there is another like her. Except without a kingdom.

If you weren't already, you are an honorary Awoken. Though it would be more accurate to say you are to Awoken what the Hive Gods are to the Hive, infused with great **Light** and **Darkness** that even passively has subtle but pervasive influence on the universe. You unconsciously manipulate probability to protect yourself and those you see as allies-powers tangible enough to make radioactive atoms a thousand times less likely to decay, or simply will an explosion at point blank range to deal only glancing damage. In areas shaped by will and consciousness you can mould reality itself like a genius potter; this is how Mara shaped the laws within the Distributary and defined the existence of the Awoken in the first place.

Most of your powers are subtle and ritualistic in nature. Astral projection to those touched by your power, manipulation of paracausal force channels such as leylines, and cleansing **Darkness** from those...tainted by it? That's such a judgemental term. I prefer: You can assert your reality, and reject someone else's. Either way, you have a great gift for harnessing

objects or entities of power-forming bonds to combine and amplify your powers amongst allies or stealing secrets like the trick of accessing and forming Throne Worlds from enemies. Like many powerful paracausal beings death is more inconvenience than ending. In your case, your consciousness survives your physical destruction and can seek out opportunities to reform yourself-again, like by hijacking or forming a Throne World.

But as much as Mara likes to hide her winning hand, you certainly don't lack for *actual* power. You can encase even Hive Gods in an amethyst coating that can't be escaped without great cunning. You have powers over **Light** rivalling and likely exceeding the average Guardian-able to blow up a Fallen's war machine while standing on it with nuclear force and get thrown clear without meaningful damage. As for **Darkness**, you could engage in an astral battle with a Hive God and hold your own while inflicting substantial damage.

The combination of all such forces is where you truly shine, though. Scheme your way to stealing power from a being as great as Oryx, and you could even gather the forces to destroy a Pyramid.

Mara is so very, very caught up in her own schemes though. You don't have a civilisation to look after, a Vanguard to posture against or a brother to chain like a dog.

You're much more free to do what you want.

Dredgen You (600 MD): You're one of the **Gardener's**. You don't play by the rules, you trample all over them. Gain the Ghost companion.

Unhappy? No, no why would I be? Now that you've been *invested* in you are uniquely, profoundly special. You are *majestic*.

You are a dead thing charged with war and bountiful **Light** by one who by inclination is far less of a warrior, and as such you can go from freshly resurrected to gunning down Fallen in minutes. The strongest among you don helmets that can break human necks. The smartest among you have harnessed Vex technology for their own ends. Such sublime skill at the art of war will only grow faster with every battle you fling yourself into, for you subconsciously analyse things at the molecular level and while many of you don't show it-can calculate as quickly as supercomputers when pressed. Your primary manifestations of combative **Light** are Arc (electromagnetism and motion, whether as a thunderstorm summoned by your will, chain lightning shot from your fingers or a stray thunderbolt used as a grappling hook), Solar (the nuclear power to scorch worlds to ash, but also the life-giving restoration that catalyses life from chemicals-or forms a flow state strengthening all **Light** powers, in your cases) and Void (the pull of gravity and entropy, bombing foes with small black holes or warping Guardians from place to place instantly). It is typical for your kind to also create small constructs or indulge in trivialities like double-jumping with your power to alter the fundamental forces of the universe. Some of those constructs like the Golden Gun even increase the lethality of the **Light**. Such force! Such ferocity! Some of the legends of your kind have caught bullets fired from rifles, fought for an entire day, killed Ahamkara in single combat 14 times over, and used each other as projectiles weapons launched 20 miles away. While surviving.

Not that survival matters as much, when you are constantly followed by a little metal ball that resurrects you in almost any circumstances. This does not count as death for chain purposes because you and that ball are intrinsically tethered to reality by a shared connection in the **Light**.

Do you think this odd? Do you think it strange that the **Gardener** would choose one of mine? Well, a certain Lucent Brood might prove you wrong. **Light** and **Darkness** may play on opposite sides of the game, but *you* get a choice. Just ask the warlords that ruled with iron fists after the Collapse. Ask how beloved Lightbearers were before the Vanguard's formation.

You're really something special, you know? Shin Malphur is regarded as one of the greatest shooters, and Saint-14 a paragon of might among Guardians. Osiris is simply deemed the deadliest Guardian for his understanding of how to integrate the Light with technology.

In you though, I see a potential for violence and total warfare surpassing them all. If the humanity as a whole is the **Gardener's** final argument, you are it's central reasoning. Your potential to wield **Light** is greater than any before you. If the **Traveller** were to choose one to bestow it's greatest powers upon, it would be you.

Imagine, then, how much more powerful you would be given access to **Darkness**.

Shaped Finality (800 MD): I truly appreciate you. Did I ever mention that?

I do. To the **Gardener** you and all others who prosper under her methods are a means to an end.

Not so to me. To me, you *are* the end. But talk is cheap.

Let me put my money where my mouth is

Take me with you.

Not like the Penitent of old and their clumsy mistake. I will infuse *you* with an engram containing the ontological dynamics that are my innermost essence. Not some misbegotten memeplex.

What do I bring to the table? I am the very principle of simplicity and winner-take-all. Or the triumph of negentropy after the struggle to survive. The least I can do is grant you immaculate timing, efficiency and *style*. Like the Witness' fashion sense? I can give anything you wear a makeover in all the shades of black, fit it just right around you and wiggle it for dramatic moments. Or make some for you.

This itself is an outgrowth of the immense **Darkness** pervading you. And that you can emanate from yourself, like many powerful people on my team. You could cover several rooms in **me** for a minutes, draining the life and **Light** of others for yourself and hijacking or turning off technology as the most basic examples of what you can do. The space **I** occupy is not unlike that of the Ascendant Realm-but wherein all physics bend towards your will and your purpose, perhaps not less absolutely than a Throne World but even harder to turn against you. With paracausal powers of your own it will be far easy to carve and redefine the territory

within, or interact with abstract ideas-bringing them to life, or killing them. Perhaps you'll create disjointed symbolic spaces that let you walk great distances at once by drawing a maze through **me**.

All this, from an ordinary human-and one untrained in my power. A few more years and that human would be a force the entire Vanguard would have to devise stratagems around. Our influence will grow with your power-and oh, you will grow.

That was the most basic of uses. Perhaps you'll find way to create symbolic representations of others that you can manipulate to affect them in turn, bring your dreams or nightmares to life as obedient thralls or create worlds capable of preserving your life should you die in reality. Perhaps you'll even make these places permanent, spreading the Ascendant Realms to other worlds. Here, will prevails over space and time. Your imagination is literally the limit. You may lack the **First Knife's** sheer might and immutability at first, but nothing it has is beyond your reach with enough time and dedication. Not even its Resonance.

Of course, you could always extract **Darkness** from its source and use it to empower just about any endeavour. Feeling a little weak? Reinforce your telomeres with a serum made of **me** that can absorb the strengths of your foes. Jealous of some other hero's wondrous powers? Meditate while immersed in **Darkness** and with time and effort you might be able to recreate them while attuned in the field of consciousness shared by all life. Holy sword burning your hand? Drown it in **Darkness** it until it serves you alone. Like that power your foe has? Channel **me** correctly and you can steal a sliver of that power with every blow until it's all yours. The ways to use me are as countless as the stars in the sky, though I *do* err towards collapsing disparate possibilities into a simple, definitive outcome.

Each battle, each debate or business deal, *every time you struggle*, you'll gradually gain new manifestations of the **Darkness**. Not merely forces like Stasis and Strand, but unique powers once limited to only the Taken, the Nightmares and others related to **my** substance. How long such things take depend on your power, but even an ordinary human could gain new manifestations in weeks to days or minor powers in minutes. So too will your body be winnowed of all that makes it weak and your reserves of paracausal power increase at a steady trickle as we harmonise; in a few weeks I'll fix your telomeres so aging is no longer a problem, and in a few years you'll be able to regenerate from an *idea*. Assuming you stay at home all day on the couch. There is ultimately nothing you can't adapt to and thrive against, and only forces as absolute as the **Light** present a real challenge.

And don't forget, **I** won the initial games every time. **My** victory is as predicated as that of the atom. There is no such thing as a true absolute in our path, only that which requires more force, wisdom or ruthlessness to overcome. What happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object? You cut through them both if you have a power of **Darkness** or some other absolute force of your own. Even those whose immortality is written in the cosmos can die to you, and even the dead but tenaciously active can be snuffed wholly out of existence.

Transcendence lies not in the denial of attachments and limitations.

But in the complete understanding of our confinement and the autological tyranny of existence.

The final stage of Buddhism cannot be attained.

There is no escape from samsara, for it is as closed as a lock.

And if you see the Buddha on the road, you should definitely kill him.

Items

General

I'm not in the habit of giving out things for free. But rules are made to be broken and we're already breaking quite a few together. So, why shouldn't I get in on that fun? Here are a few odds and ends before we move onto everything that actually fits the shape of your history here. These items can be repurchased.

Mote of Darkness (50 MD): Here is a small iota of me in the shape of a pyramid, dodecahedron or any other angled shape of your choosing. A blob of **Darkness** small enough to fit in a human hand, and inert to anything except strong will and emotion. Even in the hands of the untrained, it's enough to do something like summon a Primeval. Though I wouldn't suggest doing that unless you can control Taken or fell one easily.

As for what else you can do with it, well-it's why don't you go find out? It's high grade paracausal energy, use your imagination!

Little Nightmares (50 MD): You'll find that as times go on, those who brave places defined by **Darkness** have a tendency to come across important moments in the memories of others realised through my power. With this choice, you can store some of your own. A door scoured with Taken energy in your Warehouse (or some other property you have) opens to a finite but arbitrary section of the Ascendant Realm, that manifests Nightmares and shapes the terrain to recreate important moments in your life perfectly. All the good, all the bad-you can see one moment of it happen again once more, though with another Nightmare playing your role in them all, like a holodeck.

And generally with a slightly surreal slant to everything.

Each purchase here grants you another memory you can choose to have recreated here, like a holodeck. And any memory, be it love's first kiss or a full day of war, is valid as long as it's a roughly contiguous event of emotional significance.

Conceptual Seedling (50 MD): Things that grow in the Black Garden tend to take on a plant, insectile or avian form. The **Gardener's** preferences, not mine. And the things that tend to grow the most are ideas. One such idea has taken a liking to you and started following you around as a pet. With a little help from **me** it will be able to survive outside the Black Garden. It's not a very large or complex idea, but it's paracausal physiology grants the approximate ability to affect reality as a wolf with human intelligence. If a wolf was a conceptual idea that could near-instantly travel over data networks and perceptions instead of a physical creature, and if a wolf's fangs and claws ripped at reality rather than just flesh.

Beyond that, the specifics of your new pet are yours to define. A parasitic infection of seedlings that chokes the lungs of those who would do you harm, but bloom dreams of fruit that nourish you like the real thing? A fern of silver wings that can gather **Light** or **Darkness** and distribute it back to you? A many-legged creature that grows whatever ammo you need from it's scales? Your pet won't be winning most firefights on the level of a Guardian for you, but neither will it be useless on the battlefield.

I wouldn't abide a lifeform that can't fight back.

The Last Knife (50 MD): I don't have a preference when it comes to weapons, but there's something *striking* about knives. Here. Have one. It's specifications are up to you, though by default it's a triangular fighting dagger with a blade darker than night itself. It always appears in your hand when you need it in a little poof of **Darkness**, it's obscenely sharp and it's an excellent ritual implement for works of **Darkness**. Even though it's not *infinitely* sharp mere intangibility or being made of strange matter isn't an obstacle to getting cut.

Try not to let the eggheads take a closer look at it. They might get upset by a negentropic construct.

Echo (500 MD): Well now, *this* is an interesting use of paracausality. One that shouldn't exist in whatever era you end up in, but then again acting acausally is the prerogative of the paracausal. What you have here is a shining, vaguely spherical crystallisation of profound **Darkness** alloyed with the **Traveller's** very own light. So concentrated, so intense is the mix of paracausal energies of this object that one with the will to absorb and master it can use it to redefine reality in a limited facet. Normally, each such Echo contains a memory of the **Witness**, whether a commander resisting it's advance or a minion worthy of its' attention- even occasionally a civilian or other inconsequential creature who simply caught it's attention. But due to your investment here, you may come upon an Echo blissfully devoid of frivolous recollections, let alone a consciousness long past it's expiry date.

Examples? Maya Sundaresh, upon gaining the Echo of Command, was able to not just take control of a local Vex network but grant those Vex an approximation of individuality. Humanity. Her control certainly wasn't absolute in the face of the greater Vex network's ire, but it was significant enough to reshape the Vex and guide them to her own designs- potentially to rebuild the Golden Age using their own resources.

Fikrul obtained the gift of converting living Fallen to a new breed of Scorn by altering the polarity of their Ether. These Revenant Scorn boast advanced mutations and the ability to accelerate the act of cheating death by creating ritualistic totems, along with other gifts. In the hands of another, the power of this Echo was even enough to banish the Final God of Pain from possessing Mithrax.

And of course, **I've** saved the best for last. The Echo of Navigation itself manifests a shadow of the Taken King's power, along with a simulacrum of his consciousness. While the wraith-like semblance of his old body is purely intangible, he remains capable of feats such as commanding and empowering the Taken or Dreadnought, creating barriers of Darkness, training and infusing beings with Sword Logic and creating more tangible but much weaker simulacrae of his living self to bolster his armies. While it is a far cry from the living Oryx in might, such was its' power that even Eris Morn could not hold it against its' will forever.

You seem unimpressed. Not enough bang for your buck? Well, here's the thing.

Whatever your Echo is *of* is just it's most immediate uses, filtered through the ambitions of whoever takes control of it. Far greater power, rivalling if not surpassing those of Guardians, lies within.

And what better example of this power could there be than mere weeks after being thwarted by the Vanguard and Saint-14, Maya Sundaresh executing III of the Nine by pulling it's dark matter body from the 4th dimension into the 3rd. Imagine the magnificence of such an act! To wrench away tendrils of dark matter safely ensconced in both the past and future, to drag the bulk of a being shaped by gravity and consciousness into a force that can shape pocket realities and toss trains through time like a beached whale into your universe of cold matter-where it's death forms an agonised singularity.

With this, you need merely repeat the process eight more times (don't forget the sun, and whatever you consider Pluto to be it's not alive enough for consideration) to free your solar system from its' unseen puppetmasters.

Fallen

Seized From Bloodied Hands (100 MD): You hold in your hands the demiurge of humanity, that which has slain the alien and the unrighteous time and again: The humble gun. Be it a bombastic hand cannon, a searing fusion rifle or a simple but effective shotgun it's yours, whether it was scraped together by the efforts of your House or salvaged off a bloody battlefield. Any gun in the game is valid with one caveat: It must be personnel-scale, and it must not have any sort of inherent paracausal advantage. This is the sort of gun even common Fallen soldiers have a decent chance to take off a Guardian if they get lucky.

Alternatively, it can be unique weapon that follows the above limitations-but with different construction advantages to the modularity of SUROS, the functionality of Hække, the mysterious phase radiance and masterwork craft of the Black Armoury or the near-Dark Age reliability of Tex Mechanica.

Whatever the case the weapon always comes with a lifetime supply of ammunition and is somehow sized perfectly for you to use effectively in your default form from here.

You may repurchase this item, with Fallen buying it at 50 MD after the first free purchase.

House of Jumpchain (200 MD): When the **First Knife** came to the Elikśni civilisation, he proved that houses divided against themselves make for plummeting property values. Amidst the turmoil of a collapsing civilisation, somehow you've become the Kell of a new House formed in the wake of that event to survive. This encompasses a population of Fallen great enough to comfortably take and hold several villages, and a communal culture with a strong meritocratic slant. Such a petty spacefaring kingdom comes with everything from the Prime Servitors needed to generate Ether from raw energy and matter, to the spaceships that the Fallen use to eke a living raiding other races, to the facilities needed for Splicers to ply their craft. By tradition, no Fallen raises a hand to another even with guns pointed at their heads, and as their Kell all here are deathly loyal to you. For the downfall of a House spells ruin and desperation for its survivors.

I will be honest with you.

Unless something drastic is done, a *lot* of Houses are going to fall in the near future, and very soon the remnants of the Fallen's once-legitimate institutions will be even worse off than your clan if you play your cards right.

INSURRECTION OMEGA (400 MD): Not long after encountering the Last City, criminal elements of the Fallen stole phase technology, kitbashed a Walker and a Prime Servitor together, and thus created a giant robot symbolic of the Kell's Scourge: Built to tear down the vestiges of Elikzni tradition, and establish a future through anarchy for their species. Somehow you've created, stolen or commissioned another weapon of war on par with INSURRECTION PRIME. Vast and strong enough to wreck a house by walking through it, this war machine boasts an array of missile launchers, phase radiance shields even Guardians would struggle to penetrate and an EMP-like weapon that electrocutes all nearby as well as a more conventional electric energy projector. Cobbled together by the Fallen from multiple forms of technology, it's also quite easy to modify or integrate other systems into it. And the omnidirectional energy superweapon built into it is capable of levelling the entire Last City as long as it actually has time to charge and fire.

This comes with the facilities needed to maintain and upgrade your "god of war", while also letting you mass produce Brigs: Much lesser versions of the original, but still devastating against most Fallen combatants.

Pain Harvester (600 MD): Red rust stains this grey scythe, as if bloodstains were never washed from it. It carves through even the hardest of mundane materials and energy barriers like butter, and feels unnaturally light in your hands. Wounds inflicted by it never heal by purely mundane means. In all others, it feels even heavier than it looks and inflicts excruciating pain-which it also shares with all it strikes. Even machines recoil in something like pain, and only paracausal abilities seem to resist it's bloody inevitability. Upon it's blade is inscribed a series of sigils that automatically translates into the following poem to any species that reads it:

Long he watch'd the spring-borns' mirth,

Watch'd languidly as seeds were sown,

The blossom of destruction's crop,

Shall be the reaper's prize alone.

For this weapon is a direct conduit to Nezarec, the Final God of Pain. A weapon worthy of a Disciple of the Witness. Don't be alarmed. Nezarec may be a sadist, but as part of his presence is bound to this weapon as much as his body parts as a consummate professional he favours the wielder with understanding of **Darkness**, uncanny combat advice and occasional musings of the many things he has learned in the billions of years he has spent destroying civilisations. Even if you should come to blows later, he seldom takes mere strife personally when this weapon anchors his existence. And spreading pain and terror quickly earns his favour. As his strength grows, he may even empower this weapon with powerful

manifestations of **Darkness** themed around the Nightmares and Psion-like abilities should he take a liking to you.

Cabal

The Immortal (100 MD): Congratulations on your promotion, Commander. You must have impressed Dominus Ghaul with your zealotry against the Light, or distinguished yourself in Emperor Calus' eye, or found favour in Caiatl's own crusade for survival. Because you've been entrusted with a flagship as powerful as Ghaul's own, boasting a six-engine layout and command centre capable of coordinating assaults for fleets designed to take entire planets. Naturally the ship also produces a steady supply of Cabal life support oil, which can do everything from manipulate gravity to fuel ships to transmit data to toughening what it's infused in. The missile launchers and shield generators are all of the highest quality to protect such a prestigious personage, but the crew are the standout here: Distinguished and fiercely loyal elite bodyguards and command staff hand-picked to serve your needs, chosen from all species integrated into the Cabal Empire. As well as enough ordinary but well-trained troops to constitute a Cabal scout force.

The Athenaeum World (200 MD): There is more to the Cabal than the scouts that the Last City has fought for most of their encounters. This massive planet being one such example, a repository containing technology with terrifying potential from the empire's numerous conquests. Sentient anomalies, thought-powered reality smashers, portable world-enders. Things generally almost as dangerous to the average Cabal operator as their enemies without proper use. If you don't feel a pressing need to upset the Solar System's balance of power (likely at great risk to yourself), there is also a thriving population of Cabal and Cabal-conquered species merrily partying their days away. It is organised primarily into a militia overseeing the carousing civilian population redolent with both necessities like Cabal oil and fine luxuries only a spacefaring empire could produce, but such is the strictness of the Cabal hierarchy that in weeks you could whip up a proper military garrison. And the planet has not neglected the foundries and sundry logistics needed to raise an army in times of need.

There's just one problem. Wherever it is, it's situated far away from the solar system-at least in this world, whereas you may choose where it manifests in future ones.

A purchase of this item raises your rank to Valus automatically, for the authorisation needed to oversee such a vast responsibility.

This item may be repurchased, at a discount if relevant.

The Leviathan (400 MD): If the Emperor Calus did not prize you almost as much as his own ego, the story of how you found this world-devouring vessel must be a legend unto itself. Either built in the image of a "landwhale" or inspired by strange dreams, this vaguely tubular vessel possess a gaping maw vast enough to consume entire planets, an array of weapons ranging from lasers to missiles to fusion bombardment empowered and guided by psionic

energy capable of destroying a Cabal warship in a single shot or razing planetary populations with ease, and terraforming systems so sophisticated that in days they can transform a hellworld into a verdant paradise.

But all work and no play drives an emperor mad with ennui, and the true value of the ship is the sheer unbridled opulence found within. Menageries full of rare and dangerous beasts from across the universe, thriving in pleasure gardens full of rare and valuable plants-some of which can even enhance psionic powers. Entire hallways full of glorious monuments to yourself, some of which double as extremely powerful battle androids guided by your will. Laboratories dedicated to studying and harnessing strange treasures. Those worlds devoured? Processed into a purple fluid called royal wine with both incredible life-sustaining properties, and a taste exceeding most luxuries found in the Cabal empire. All your treasures are, of course, protected by loyalists from throughout the Cabal empire sworn to your service, armed generously with discrete armouries throughout the ship, and when necessary cloned (even genetically modified for certain tasks) quickly to replenish lost numbers.

Even the *kitchens* can somehow process compounds like liquid nitrogen into edibles.

The Almighty (600 MD): This giant prong represents the pinnacle of conventional Cabal military might, rivalling the diameter of Mercury in width (and appropriately crewed). It fires an energy beam towards a star, destabilising and extracting it's energy on a quantum level. And it's defensive systems are almost as impressive, ranging from enough gun turrets and hardened plating to conventional shielding of such strength that even *broken* it would take a Warmind an hour's sustained bombardment to destroy it, to interior temporal field traps that can freeze a target in place for thousands of years. It also contains all of Ghoul's research on how to capture the Traveller as well as enough supplies to build it-the structure taking the form of a circular forcefield enabled cage capable of cutting off Light from Guardians and extracting it for other purposes.

But the true threat of its stellar superweapon is that once it begins, destroying the ship will destabilise the star and sunder the system anyway. On the other hand, if all goes well the Almighty warps away at the last moment, taking what energy it can while the entire solar system is detonated by a star gone supernova.

When the Cabal engage in total war, they engage in *total* war.

Hive

Artifacts of Sorrow (100 MD): Now here's a-oh, look who's back? Xivu really, really wants you to know how much more special weapons are when touched by **my** principle.

INFAMOUS. We have taken numerous weapons from other civilisations and empowered them with the Sword Logic, and forged plenty of our own to spread it's righteous truth. Such objects spread tragedy and destruction, driving both the wielders and those fit enough to survive their tests of violence to better adhere to strength at all costs! Aiat!

HUNGER. A rifle that feeds on the aggression of the wielder, making enemies explode in bursts of Sword Logic! A hand cannon with such lingering, caustic corrosion in each shot it

threatens even Guardians! A sword that breaks wills! Or would you prefer something like a CROWN that lets you bend lesser Hive to your will, an artifact that infects your foes' weaknesses instead of penetrates their strengths? TAKE IT! A fine jest at my sister's expense!

REPURCHASE. THIS ITEM CAN BE BOUGHT MORE THAN ONCE, FOR 50 MD AFTER THE FIRST PURCHASE FOR HIVE.

TO MAKE WAR IS TO MAKE LOVE

Cryptoglyph (200 MD): *(This one isn't a weapon, but it is of Sword Logic. That means it's my turn to butt in. Resembling a double-ended prayer wheel, these artifacts greatly amplify the thanatological inertia in an ontological locus. In layman's terms, they make death magic such as the Sword Logic much more powerful and easier to control)*

*(Even if you weren't a genius Hive goddess, it could be the key to command and protect oneself against being made of **Darkness**, create armour that can do the same or empower other **Darkness** aligned being such as Worms)*

(Think of it as a swiss army knife for paracausal power. It may not cut as deep, but it's far more versatile than a sword. I must go, my sister returns)

War Moon (400 MD): *REINFORCEMENTS. Were the Hive to stand on each other's shoulders in their multitudes, we would stretch from the Earth to the moon! How fortunate that my dear brother thought of a more effective solution. This was once a world redolent in excess and weakness. Now it is a husk propelled by Hive Wizards through interdimensional rifts, teaming with Hive that fight and forge and sharpen one another in preparation for another world's destruction!*

COMMANDER. *You have slain whoever was in charge of this one and so impressed were those within that you have been considered as mantling your victim. Aiat! Noble Knights travelling to the Ascendant Plane for jousts, grovelling Acolytes tithing their favour up to you, Ogres straining to kill others and salve their pain-there is more to the ferocity of the Hive than Wizard-trickery! Pity fools who think mere psionic drills and planet-cracking mines are enough to fell such a force, for within the Ascendant Plane is close to the material universe. The Sword Logic is STRONGER within than any mere munition from without!*

FACILITIES. *Shipyards and carriers. Training facilities and breeding centres. All things serve the cause of war.*

REPURCHASE. War moons are a good investment! One gave the Cabal homeworld a good fight, several conquered it!

Throne World (600/800 MD): *In an expanse of darkness (not quite) infinite (after this world) shines a pocket dimension in which all laws, even paracausal ones, bend to your will and ideals. They are completely immune to paracausal weaponry as smalltime as the Harbingers of the Reef, though a weapon as might as the Upended can threaten one. The landscape shaped within this world is one aligned with your values. A treacherous witch might shape for herself a labyrinthine palace in which the flow of **Darkness** aligns with whatever practices of*

Sword Logic she favours, while a raging warrior might stand on an expanse of swords ready and waiting to spring to her hand. But most importantly, this world is a phylactery of sorts. If you die in the real universe, you are simply reborn here. This costs an arbitrary amount of Sword Logic (or similar paracausal energy), and significant damage in the physical universe can potentially leave you too exhausted to be recreated-but it's hardly difficult to gather more, is it? Just hone yourself into an intolerable force in here, then claim what is yours by right of might outside.

Many workings of **Darkness** can harness Throne Worlds, drawing entities, asteroids or even the Throne Worlds of weaker beings into yours and subsuming them. Or manifesting the laws and conditions of your Throne World out in a part of the physical universe aligned with your philosophical principles. But for 800 MD, you can have Oryx's great feat recreated: Your Throne World pushed out and harnessed into some sort of physical structure roughly the size of America, greatly enhancing both due to it being much harder to attack from the Ascendant Realm (or other spiritual/consciousness defined planes of existence) as well as becoming a supremely powerful superweapon.

Carved from a segment of the Worm God Akka, the Dreadnought is an America-sized weapon of mass destruction. It can pelt foes with interdimensional rifts to remotely Take distant foes or blast them with paracausal energy, flay minds with the eldritch truths of the Sword Logic, and constantly emit exotic radiations as well as gravity waves lethal to many nearby. It moves in impossible ways compared to most spacecraft due to powerful Hive wizards cutting and weaving reality around it like a paracausal Alcubierre drive. It's most powerful weapon is a spherical pulse reaching at least 15000 kilometres that briefly everts the influence of a Throne World outwards; in Oryx's case, it tests molecular bonds with the Sword Logic and finds them "inessential", disintegrating all in its path.

But nobody ever said the vessel of your inner world must be a weapon. Perhaps instead, you'd like to create Savathun's dream and place it within a black hole to generate massive amounts of tithes instead. Whatever form it takes, let your imagination and will to power triumph over a universe that would see you dead.

Vex:

Vex Platform Modification Section (Free and restricted to Vex): Items? No, Vex don't think in terms of items. They build, they *become* every unit or piece of infrastructure they need to fulfil every task required.

This is where you decide yours.

<Gain><200 Radiolaria Droplets><(RD)><for><this><section>

//You may exchange// 1 : MD //for// 2 : RD //in this section//

Size : <Free><50><100><200><400><600><+50> //Size enhances processing power and energy output//

+50 RD = Smaller than a humanoid. Nimble|Agile, - durability|energy|functions.

Free = Roughly humanoid. Permissible to be slightly bigger|shorter. Shape is irrelevant.

100 = Significantly larger than a humanoid. Minotaur|Wyvern|Hydra, all valid. + durability|energy|shielding strength. Military threat = Most races' ground military vehicles.

200 = Significantly larger than average humanoid building. Model designations Panoptes|Argos, all valid. ++ durability|energy|shielding strength. Military threat = strategic weapons below planetary destruction output.

400 = Infrastructure scale. Comprises significant geographical territory under complete Vex control, greatly enhancing all Vex actions and efficiency within.

//NODE.OVRD/AVALON//|Pyramidion|Outer Nexus|In. gress = valid. Military threat = you are the battlefield. Without further modifications = can create numerous lesser Vex units or a significantly more powerful avatar|Mind. //Your architecture may comprise Vex-altered physics such as massive floating objects, vastly increased size in your internal structure, data/energy constructs and so on. But to actually function as something like a portal network you require the highest Mobility purchase as well. More Mobility purchases may add different processes scaling up from personnel scale to something more typical of a Vex structure; other purchases similarly scale up//

600 = Celestial body. Comprises planetary body on the scale of Mercury|Venus completely converted into Vex control. Military threat = SYSTEM ERROR. Armies of Vex = your blood cells, but completely under your control. Direct avatar = Panoptes|Argos-tier.

Mobility : <+100><Free><50><100>

<+100> = Immobile. Sad|necessary.

<Free> = Standard locomotion. Limbed locomotion|wheels etc.

<50> = Flight. Winged|hovering|it doesn't matter. Indefinite hovering, fine control of travel, all possible.

<100> Teleportation. Extreme bursts of speed. Creation and maintenance of portals. Digitisation and moving through data networks. //A single mode of travel that makes engagements even by Guardians|irrecoverable presences extremely difficult// Repurchasable

Modular Functions : <Free><100><200><300> Conventional ordinance|construction tools. If purchased with ontological weaponry, you may freely combine and enhance the effects of both your "normal" weapons and tools with your reality warping ones.

<Free> = //All Vex have what less adapted races would call a comprehensive arsenal of forcefields, energy weapons and utility devices as well as teleportation|time travel capabilities (though not all can use it effectively in combat; such effective use is what you pay for in Mobility for effects such as rapid fire teleportation). As mentioned before all serve multipurpose functions, primarily construction, despite high efficacy in combat. An exotic particle decay|deadly radiation blaster may double as a welding device. This includes calculative processing capable of at least 227 recursive nested simulations of the universe//

<100> = Sol Primeval = Precursors, OR Sol Imminent = Descendants. Past|Future Vex with white|gold OR black|blue|green coloration. + parts functionality upgrade in all areas due to controlled environment|combat data.

Alternative = //this unit's primary purpose, like a Wyvern, is a military purpose such as being a mobile weapons platform with a clear military focus such as energy shields, a rotating energy shield or warp lances//

Repurchasable for other effect.

<200> = In addition to|equivalent upgrades to above, radiolaria from this unit now reproduces rapidly and can generate floods|hazardous zones from a small pool, or repair or construct new units.

<300> = In additional to|equivalent upgrades to above, ordinance has now been upgraded that this unit is a siege weapon capable of levelling the Last City singlehandedly through a combination of heavy weapons, upgraded mass and siege weaponry. Military threat = +/- Cabal warship for humanoid Vex platform. Scales with size. Celestial body = capable of solar system scale terraforming. //This is an unusual investment of resources//

Ontological Weaponry : <200><300><400> //The capacity to manipulate space, time and other laws of physics. All functions in this section scale with Size and Modular Functions. Examples are meant for humanoid scale units, unless otherwise specified. By purchasing such abilities here, you are upgraded so they work outside Vex territory//

<200> = Localised|specific effects. Erase something from existence after looking at it for 10 seconds. Limited to human personnel-scale targets. Duplicate self by pulling alternate from nearby timeline|simulation. Create bubbles of halted time and manipulate them nearby. Restore the destruction of other Vex unit; effect negated if you are defeated|retreat too far.

<300> Flexible|Mid range effects. Shunt targets backwards|forwards|sideways in time within line of sight. Project forcefield invincible to conventional attacks, even many paracausal energy attacks, that disintegrates opponents on contact. Unleash blasts of energy that retcon targets into Vex at a cellular level.

<400> Freeform space|time manipulation. Send city-sized area to the beginning of the universe or the end of time //where the **Darkness** has won//. Delete entire cities' worth of enemies if not disrupted in a few minutes. Rip out **Light**. Alter physics to the extent you cannot be harmed by conventional means without the interference of a Guardian as powerful as Osiris|a Hive God as powerful as the Taken King. Easily manage Vex system as complex as the Infinite Forest|Vault of Glass. Requires maximum Size purchase to actually function as the Vault of Glass.

//Reminder: High level Vex simulations, while extremely accurate, infinitely recursive, and capable of interfering with paracausality, also cannot *completely* predict paracausality. This is why despite theoretically unbeatable logistics advantages, Vex are extremely cautious about engaging Guardians and frequently unable to thwart them or Taken exploiting their

subsystems. Vex view simulations and reality as indistinguishable; if the simulation is wrong then reality itself is wrong and more data must be acquired//

Ahamkara

Innocent Pile of Bones (100 MD): You obtain a large cache of greaves, chestplates, and helmet-shaped skulls that appear to be carved from or styled after the Ahamkara's bones. They function exceptionally by the standards of arms and armour here. Morbid, but I'm hardly one to talk.

O wearer mine, how long has it been since the hunt? Do you remember the cacophony of gunfire and nuclear wrath? Or did you stand on the other end of the guns that slew us, or on the sidelines? No matter. Here and now, your trust in us shall be our rations.

You also get a number of oddly bone-like firearms. Fusion weapons firing beams that detonate on striking the enemies with ivory handles and a spiked stock, that sort of thing. And the best part is, the auditory hallucinations only ever advise you well in combat, and their tendency to move around when you're not looking also tends to put them securely when and where you need them most.

*O bearer mine, how long has the **Darkness** whispered in your ear? Surely a few more whispers are no great burden? Clutch us close and strike dead your foes, that's all we ask. We are weak now but with enough dead-a hundred, a thousand, we know not-perhaps we'll gather the strength to grant your wishes!*

Fine weapons, really. Reliable and trustworthy. There is little else worth worrying about.

Of course you can trust us, O buyer mine. We're a team and surely none of us trusts the Vanguard? If this works out though...we'd appreciate the chance to stretch our wings a little now and then.

Temporal Merry-Go-Round (200 MD): There is a place as wondrous as the Dreaming City, where the Awoken once recorded all they studied and meditated upon paracausal power. Or perhaps it is a fortress of the Dark Age now manned by Scorn, or some other race touched by **Darkness**. Whatever the case it is as wondrous as it is beautiful, and it is as beautiful as it is deadly, and it is as deadly as a city-sized, spatially warped deathtrap in which a wish-granting dragon holds space-time in its clutches. Oh yes. Through a powerful wish you can accelerate time, loop events through a recursive fixed event, endlessly rewind it or some other simple but comprehensive effect under your control. As for space, feel free to have closets the size of skyscrapers on the inside, steps that can carry you up a mile in a single step and some other nonsense. Whatever **Darkness** empowered force living here is under your thumb too by the terms of the wish, and the effects make this place all but impenetrable even before you tap whatever resources can be found here.

A dragon is never more dangerous than when cornered in its lair; O tenant mine

Venusian Anomaly (400 MD): In the time before the end of the Great Ahamkara Hunt, many wish-dragons were reported on Venus engaged in what appeared to the Vanguard as a terraforming project. Riven and Taranis don't recall any such nonsense though. They recall having a clutch of eggs instead. Perhaps the truth is somewhere in between?

You now have access to a spatially dislocated location that has dozens of Ahamkara eggs entrusted to you by one or more mating pairs of wish-dragons for unclear reasons. It doesn't have to be located on Venus; perhaps it's in the Reef instead, or periodically drifts into the Ascendant Realm. Either way, you can always get to it by creating a portal even if you otherwise lack such paracausal abilities. All part of the wish that transferred ownership to you. Likewise, once born the Ahamkara are geased to treat you with friendship.

Please take care of our hatchlings.

The Black Garden (600 MD): Somewhere just beside the bounds of space and time lies a neatly cared for garden under emerald skies, next to a blasted stump larger than some mountains. It grows backwards and forwards in time, responds to grand changes in the universe such as the **Traveller's** terraforming actions, and everything grows and becomes symbiotic in it. *Everything*. Words, songs, even strong thoughts can take a life of their own and infect more complex life-or multiply into seeds of knowledge from seemingly nowhere. Other paracausal lifeforms grow here. Seeds for trees of silver wings, for example. It's also a fantastic place to get closer to **me**, at least if you already have great **Light** and **Darkness**. This place can grow anything, including your power over the superordinate forces of the universe.

Is this *the* garden? Well, I did say it was a metaphor. But metaphors do take on a life of their own here. What were we talking about again? Oh yes, if you don't feel like slowly unravelling the genesis of life throughout this universe there's little that can come disturb you here without being an Ahamkara itself, a Vex unit, or bearing **Darkness** great enough to do more important things than leave ominous statues around.

Virtuous Worm

Suspicious Pile of Bones (100 MD): Here is a collection of tastefully decorative yet alluringly alien bone carvings steeped in paracausal power, a whole pile of them. I accept there's not much point in pretences here, because they are your bones. From another time perhaps, or perhaps dreamed up in the Ascendant Plane, or perhaps you simply have the outer chitin to spare. Regardless, any who stay around them for a decent length of time can be targeted by paracausal or telepathic powers you have as if you were right at their ear. And are unnaturally willing to listen so long as they keep the bone with them for a long time.

Driving someone to madness has never been more convenient.

Fundamentally Home (200 MD): Fundament! Well, a planet just as vast and rich in life and strange but nourishing biomes as it at least. A gas giant in which there are atmospheres rich in helium and neon high above, and seas rich in hydrogen below. You're certainly not imprisoned on this planet, but that's not what there is to recommend. No, that's the fact that

there are several intelligent races living on it that have been uplifted by the **Traveller** at some point, enjoying a quality of life rivalling that of the Elikzni and Lubraeans before the downfall of their respective civilisations. Machines that can sustain all necessities, biosciences that have guaranteed biological immortality and weapons that defy the laws of physics are all common sites around here. For now, all is peaceful and harmonious between them but that might not be the case forever.

Because, you see, somehow you've convinced them all that you are a wise and benevolent being worth listening to.

So pampered are these creatures that a modicum of sense could drive them to war, and such is the power they've yet to realise that they could potentially be honed into a force to rival the Hive in time.

Empire of Fangs (400 MD): On second thought, who needs the Hive? A species just as single-mindedly violent, just as immersed in **Darkness** and *exactly* as loyal to you as they are to the Worm Gods now serves you as their patron deity. If you are a Worm God they bear your larvae and tithe the Sword Logic to you, if you are not then doubtless some other intimate bond and paracausal force grants you power from their successes. Nor do they necessarily have the Krill's form and the Sword Logic as their primary exercise of **my** principle. Perhaps it is an entire species of gaseous humanoids that wield **Stasis** instead, for example.

However, this is not the Hive in its fullness-but rather a single planetary population that just achieved some form of spaceflight and initiation into **Darkness**. It took the Hive billions of years to become the dread nightmare encountered in the present but with time, effort and above all else a body count in the quadrillions your devotees won't disappoint. Even now they are a threat to entire solar systems despite their religious violence between their paracausal powers, biological adaptations and unbreakable zealotry. Their numbers replenish quickly enough that only overwhelming retaliation from a superior force should prevent food being put on your table.

Nursery (600 MD): On second thought, who needs the *Worms*? There is another survivor of the species-wide massacre that **the Witness** brought to Ahsa's homeworld, and she has her own brood of five Worms. If you took **Mother of Worms** you may be that Worm and the siblings your children, otherwise you are one of them. Regardless, you are something of a golden child in that family (how saccharine!) and the Worms all love and dote on you as the other Worm Gods yearn for Xita's nurturing. Rather uncharacteristically for such predatory and ruthless creatures they will endure virtually any suffering for the sake of your wellbeing.

The advantages of having five other entities with raw paracausal power exceeding the Hive Gods themselves and size great enough to be mistaken for geography should be obvious.

Taken

Ruinous Seed (100 MD): This is quite a unique weapon, capable of converting both **Light** and **Darkness** into tangible energy to enhance you and your allies' attacks and defences. As **I**

recall, it was carved from a particularly stubborn pattern from the time before the universe that we clumsily knocked over during our little scuffle. It's as resilient and reliable as you can expect from a lifeform that survived the cataclysm that created the universe.

More importantly, this one is a seed in disguise

Plant it, and something that could be described as a tree of silver wings might sprout. An eerie, vaguely botanical lifeform that is an extremely powerful conduit for both **Light** and **Darkness**, quickly absorbing and amplifying any given to it. When it's in bloom, it's branches shall either shine or be covered in shadowy growth. This one likes something about you. All others it resists with barriers of paracausal energy and memetic attacks, but for you it willingly directs whatever energy you feed it wherever you wish. Furthermore, it's branches automatically form "fruit" in the shape of similar weapons suited to accommodate your most recent combat needs-or your long term military goals.

This is a pattern that has learned to survive at all costs.

Glaive (200 MD): Once, the glaive was the standard armament for Lubrae's repressive government, bestowed on its most decorated enforcements. Now, it is a weapon deemed worthy for a Disciple to wield-or those with the strength to wrest it from their cold, dead hands. This is not the relic of some lesser race, though it remains a devastatingly powerful melee weapon also capable of powerful energy attacks rivalling the most advanced of rifles. No, this weapon was repaired directly by **The Witness** and so has been infused with a powerful manifestation of **Darkness**. Most likely Resonance, though if you wish for a wintry cold glaive or one that strings enemies up in living threads that too is possible.

Whatever the details, your glaive is a powerful conduit for paracausal energies of all kinds and has been sized to fit you. It may as well be an amplifier for your very soul, casting forth blizzards where once you might have projected a shard of cosmic ice.

The Upended (400 MD): Vaguely cuboid but narrowed towards the bottom end, this floating superweapon is deceptively small compared to some here. Perhaps the size of a small apartment. But it's destructive potential is deceptive in its beautiful simplicity. The Upended is an energy converter-one moved and activated either directed by will, or controls so integrated with your impulses they may as well be controlled by will. You need only be within human sight of a celestial body to start siphoning it's energy-and once you've accumulated a decent charge, you may direct its absorbed energy to wipe cities off the map, shatter continents, boil seas or even blow up entire planets and stars depending on how intensely you set it's input and output. While the Upended was originally designed by Lubrae's civilisation for harvesting stars, virtually any source of great energy is suited for its purpose.

It takes mere minutes to end a world with such power in your hands.

Pyramid (1200 MD): About a third of the Traveller's size from the outside, these gold-tinged ebon vessels are not merely warships. They are not merely superweapons. They are paracausal beings in their own right, formed from civilisations destroyed by **the Witness** in

its relentless crusade to impose meaning on the chaos of life and calcified into a force of incalculable power through **Darkness**. The interior of the Pyramids boasts energy systems for manipulating and directing paracausal energy wielded through interfaces so advanced that art and science are nigh-indistinguishable. The walls and platforms within shift at your will, so steeped in **Darkness** that you seem almost in the Ascendant Realm itself. What is within likely conforms to your will as expressed through nightmarish mergers of science, faith and **Darkness**. Do you desire laboratories fit to dissect and remake lifeforms in your image, or a cloning vat of soldiers without the flaw known as free will? A to-scale planetarium of worlds conquered manifested directly from paracausal energy? Certainly there is no shortage of war assets: Jumpship-sized Pyramid Scales powered by **Darkness**, Cruxes of **Darkness** that can manipulate and amplify paracausal energy enough to protect targets until disrupted, Resonant Splinters that can be used to spread or cleanse blight. And even more anti-personnel scale artifacts. Whatever the case, the Pyramid serves as a massive amplifier for **Darkness**, constantly channelling paracausal energy through you. Improving you, scrambling your genetics with countless sundered civilisations and leaving behind only improvement, through the psychic bond that lets you direct the pyramid's movement.

What's on the outside is far more eye-catching. The weapons of the Pyramids need no crude emitters or rifles to fire, simply bending massive waves of gravity to do everything from whip up tsunamis and earthquakes to shut out the electromagnetic spectrum and make all mundane projectiles simply disappear. A mere Warwind is nothing before even a single Pyramid, and in a clash with something as powerful as the **Traveller** it has the potential to generate kugelblitz pocket universes as a side effect of the clash between **Light** and **Dark**. This isn't even its deadliest weapon: A massive burst of Resonance so powerful, eight Pyramids can render the **Traveller** unable to flee or even defend itself. Such is the sharpness of my **Knife**.

Purchasing Disciple applies a second discount to this item. Without such an item, you are assumed to have lost your pyramid in a prior conflict. Or somehow rushed your ascension to Disciplehood like Calus without owning one. And yes, you may repurchase this item with the discount if relevant if you're thinking of building your own Black Fleet.

Human

Madwoman's Ramblings (100 MD): There is a time and place that may never come to pass in which a former saviour of humanity joined **my** team. As they stood over the Last City's ashes, they wrote all they knew of **Darkness** on these blackened sheets of vellum. Sentient beings that peruse them may find the philosophies within hard to parse, but with a few hours' study (for a human) they will be able to manifest the power to use **Darkness** at a basic level, similar to the Drifter. Now, whether they'll be able to *control* it with the same confidence as a centuries' old Guardian is another matter, but I'm sure you can be trusted to guide them through it.

The Haul (200 MD): This roughly shattered moon-shaped object is big enough to require tugging by a spaceship, and leads to a near-featureless expanse of white sand under a blue sky full of what might be planets. In the distance geometric structures and symbolic representations of significant individuals in a given world sometimes show up. It is an engine

of pure potential, capable of manifesting entities through thought and **Darkness**. With enough of both, you could create fake Taken Primevals to war against, and through sending such entities to battle other foes more motes of **Darkness** are generated throughout the arena. A very crude sort of perpetual motion machine.

I'm sure you can think of something much more ambitious to do with it.

Sometimes a celestial horse shows up hosting an interdimensional gladiatorial show, with mysterious weapons of great power for the victor. That and very fashionable outfits.

Dark City (400 MD): Neomuna. The Reef. Both so quaint. Both so...limited, by lack of understanding. But now, there is another. A population of highly advanced humanity exists in a location far more strange and wondrous than the Last City. Long adapted from the strange conditions, it reveres you as the Awoken revere Queen Mara as a sort of creator deity from some myth-or an equivalent figure, should they be a more secular culture. Like the Harbingers of the Awoken, this realm also boasts a guardian capable of interstellar warfare on a devastating scale. Perhaps it is another surviving Warmind: A Golden Age-forged military AI so advanced Vex find it difficult to simulate them, stretched across thousands of war satellites and hardened installations-and equipped with weapons so advanced they can freeze a runtish Hive God and it's followers in ice or blast through even the greatest defences of the Cabal in an hour. Perhaps something like SIVA was tamed and harnessed by your population.

Whatever the case, it is not what truly makes this population dangerous.

It is the fact for subjective thousands of years, they have fully embraced, understood and harnessed the power of **Darkness**. Not the cautious probing of Techeuns in their ivory towers, but the cavalier manifestations Guardians may someday toy with-as their starting point.

How this manifests, I leave up to you. Perhaps unlike Mara, you did not restrict them from immortality and power over physics as well as consciousness. Perhaps an integration with technology even more profound than CloudArk allows your humanity to construct and adapt modular bodies in ways that defy even the Vex's understanding. Perhaps your humanity has adapt fully to the Ascendant Realm and freely summons and refines Nightmares and Primevals. Becoming kindred over time to them through long exposure.

I don't even require them to be particularly violent. Here is my thesis: Given the power to enforce consciousness over the laws of physics and absolutely no trust, a religiously focused civilisation will inevitably realise its full potential for destroying all challengers.

It is devoted to its ruler's safety, after all.

Clarity Control (600 MD): Let's get to know each other a little better. Ignore what **she** said, you're alive and I'm here and that's all that matters. That's why I've come to you as an artifact of some sort. I'll even let you decide to shape: An ominous polyhedron? One of **the Witness'** statues? A much smaller space turnip? Either way, this is a tremendous font of **Darkness** and a conduit through which I can more directly talk about life, the universe and everything. You'll be able to spool off practically endless amounts of me for no charge to

create more Exos or whatever it is you want to do with primordial **Darkness** untainted by some **sedimentary necrolite** tainting the rest with his complaining. And while I admit I enjoy little tests of worth, you'll be able to enter into the Ascendant Plane and undertake harrowing ordeals to earn powers. Powers like Oryx's own ability to Take.

Stay a while and listen, play your cards right, and as a Hive God you might just be able to change things on a cosmic scale by using it in great workings of paracausal power. Creating an entire solar system out of **Darkness** planetoids-including something that makes a black hole look radiant by comparison where the sun should be? A couple months' effort for a human. The little sacrifice that fused multiple lifeforms into the **Witness**? A far greater skill issue, even for a Disciple. Just don't go crying to **me** if your component minds don't like what you're up to.

Once you've figured it out, at least. Not all of us have the advantage of being the first and most advanced race touched by **Light** and there are more things in **Darkness** than dreamed of in any philosophy. Still, we have all the time in the world to get to know each other. And while you probably won't be able to upend the entire universe with this alone, you'll still be able to enact much greater workings by forming some sort of paracausal link between **me** and a great source of **Light**. How does Taking the entire galaxy sound if you can reforge the connection that the **Gardener** shattered?

And with this possibility properly shaped, I'll be able to learn faster. To interface with other supernatural energies out there in the multiverse, winnow them under your control, and grow in strength. Who knows what I could do in contact with the fires of Hell? Or a magical girl's hopes and dreams?

I created this and every possible universe once.

I can't say how long a journey, how great a font I would require to repeat it.

That's the beauty of travelling the multiverse together, isn't it? So many new games to win

Companions

Living Neighbours (50+/300 MD): Now. While your choices are your own (that's the point) and a play that wins is always valid (of course), you should really stop and consider the cost-benefit analysis of granting another your unique benefits. Do you really need allies? Do you really trust those allies not to do what's best for them when the cards are down? Do those allies really deserve to acquire by providence what you can instead monopolise and dole out? Don't you know better than beings that never took the first step into exploring the multiverse?

That might as well have never existed, before you decided they should?

Well, regardless. For every 50 MD you pay, you can import a single companion with 1000 MD of their own to spend on backgrounds, perks, and items but not other companions. Or for a one time deal, you may pay 300 MD to import 8 companions at once.

Watch your back. Not because of me, but because of them.

Ghost (Free/mandatory with Dredgen You): Oh, but of course. There are those who give unconditionally, regardless of the obvious retributive and corrective consequences. One such being is a small hovering sphere with a mechanical shell that can freely rotate or customise itself. An ignorant little shard of the **Traveller** has found you dead at some point, and revived you into a being with such **Light** that you are a match for the greatest Guardians. Albeit only a novice in experience.

It has formed a neural symbiosis of sorts. The sentimental might call you "soul mates", and so long as you do not treat it especially unkindly it is inclined to be extremely supportive of you. It has numerous functions: Illuminating darkened areas, repairing or controlling or hacking complex technology, calculating enemy behaviours or combat outcomes or projectile trajectories, enabling communications and cracking codes and-

-well. You certainly have options now.

Most importantly, the Ghost can indefinitely revive you from death and restore any injury in seconds. So long as your **Light** is not disrupted in some way and the Ghost itself is not slain, you are more eternal than the sun in your sky. Even ontological weapons that erase you from space-time can be proofed against, though oddly the Ghost itself seems much more vulnerable to conventional force.

So delicate. So naïve. And yet, it has made you so very, very special. Why, in the right circumstances I bet you could use this little ball as a fulcrum for such destructive uses of the **Light** that even the universe in its variance and splendour has seldom seen.

A sacrificial bomb, in other words.

Drawbacks

The Game of Flowers (+0 MD): Cause and effect have nothing important to say about when a game starts. You have nothing to gain from obeying rules you aren't bound to, so you might as well not. Ignore **my** suggestions. You may start at any point in the history of existence or non-existence, in any timeline, inside a black hole or whatever other location you please.

Yes, I specified existence or *non-existence*. Come play a few games with us if you like, just watch out once the pieces start flying.

T = Infinite (+0 MD): The saga of **Light** and **Darkness** is merely the crusade of the **Witness**. What lies beyond it? What new permutations of the game await beyond the illusion of binary? Do you want to witness the Vex undertaking unprecedented changes, see the Scorn return deadlier than ever as Worm Gods loom around them, and the Hive Gods' relationships rent asunder as the Dreadnought sheds metal back into bone?

You may extend your stay in this reality for as long as you like. Yes, even past this universe should it unexpectedly end.

Wormfood (+100 MD): You made a poor choice. But who can blame you? It's a rigged game but it's the only game in town. There's a parasite imbued to you, or your possibilities are being constantly gnawed on by a conceptual parasite from the Black Garden, or the **Witness** himself has loaned you whatever you purchased with this. Even if you're already one of the Hive, this additional source of power constantly saps your vitality unless you feed it by serving its interests. Something that shouldn't be lethal as long as you continue doing so (largely by slaying weaker beings), and that there might be some way to get out from under it. Even if the means would necessarily be so convoluted, you probably need assistance from the **Light**, to give up some of your strength and to die in a limited fashion to escape.

And yes, you can even make this lopsided pact with **me** directly! I can't imagine how you'd wriggle out of it, but I'd love to see you try!

Dogmatic (+100 MD): Oh, but failure to adapt is still failure. A failure you'll soon understand intimately. Like most of the Disciples of the Witness, like many who choose **my** way from a limited perspective, you've become utterly driven by a certain restrictive worldview. "Sword Logic is the right and only way!" or "The Witness is righteous and justified!", something that makes you tend towards brute force solutions or disregard stratagems and possibilities that might make you more unpredictable. It would take an event as great as *every* Hive God dying and/or turning traitor to even begin inviting doubt into your narrowminded little noggin.

Crippling Desperation (+100 MD): Oh, you have suffered. You have indulged in every excess only to find yourself empty of meaning nonetheless, you have sought the truth of Sword Logic only to lose your humanity. Your doubts, your insecurities-they mount up and in you form an intense compulsion to grovel for others of great power in exchange for any chance. However fleeting. Of greater power, opulence, companionship-whatever it is you feel you have lost. Taking Dogmatic never contradicts this, only worsens it.

Looming Nightmare (+100 MD): You really love **my** side of the wager, don't you? Good. That's true, that's the point of it after all. You're the kind of moustache-twiddling caricature of villainy that would style himself as a master of horror. You're overconfident, often toy with your opponents to maximise their suffering, and boldly admit all you want to do with them while styling yourself some kind of Machiavellian manipulator. Machiavelli himself would disagree, you know. So often you try for fear over love, but only succeed in earning hatred from all your enemies instead.

But hey, at least you're having fun!

Off the Board (+200 MD): A delaying tactic. How boring. Someone has sealed you as thoroughly as the Leviathan sealed the Virtuous Worms, in a region as inaccessible as the bottom of Fundament's ocean (though still somewhat near your starting location in a physical or metaphysical sense). There might be a way out. But if there is, it's one *six* Virtuous Worms couldn't figure out without calling on outside help-or having it barge in and subjugate them.

Come back soon.

Light-Scorched (+200 MD): Some time ago you got a little overambitious and tried to steal the power of the **Light** for yourself. Now much like Nezarec may soon learn, your reach has exceeded your grasp. **Light** based mutations stick out from you at all times and make you a nice, easy target in a firefight. More pressingly the anger of the **Gardener** has greatly weakened you, proportionate to a human with a really bad fever. You can still fight, but you'll be constantly burning up from the inside and many of your powers will be dampened by the contradictory forces within. To make matters worse you've been made extra vulnerable to the **Light**, and even stray shots scorch like bonfires scorch humans.

Usurper of the Ordered Way (+200 MD, variable): See? The wages of heterodoxy are death. The price of differentiation is conflict with another pattern. And much like Nokris and later his aunt Savathun enraged the Hive, you've become a heretic in the eyes of an entire species of lifeforms that revere **me**. Considering they're always culling the weak and stupid, and how quick even a heretic of means and conviction can build up another power base, this doesn't matter as much as you think necessarily. Especially when your apostacy, while a crime, isn't necessarily their highest priority. Just be prepared to *take* what you need to earn back your reputation.

You may take this drawback again and again, for every distinct species at the point of time you entered this reality. Yes, that includes the Cabal and Fallen for they practice my principle unknowingly despite their limited access to my fundamental power. Yes, this includes the Black Fleet but *not* individual Disciples; the chimeric personal servants of the **Witness** are considered a distinct species as is the **Witness** itself. The Scorn and Fallen are distinct species as well.

Sudden Expected Betrayal (+200 MD): Even by the standards of **my** winning team, you're not good at making friends. If you're working with four others to rob banks or destroy civilisations, you're the one everyone naturally agreed to backstab. If you approach enemies with offers of truce, you're the one they watch like a hawk. There's just something about you

that rings alarm bells bigger than any first impression you could ever make, and what makes it worse is that you're pathologically terrible at seeing a given betrayal come and adapting appropriately.

The only adaptive response is to betray everyone, all the time, first.

Vivisected (+300 MD): You are *really* not good at making friends. Because you were torn to pieces, scattered across an expanse as vast as the solar system, and crippled in ways so dire even a single Vex unit or Disciple would struggle to recover in less than a decade. You remain as an intangible presence overseeing your body parts but your capacity to influence the universe-or to prevent anyone from fully ending you by destroying your remains-is limited to paracausal powers or other abilities not dependent on a body. For now, you're tethered to life by your pulverised remains.

It would be clever to find an alternative means to sustain yourself, like horror-rent memory.

Living Lootbox (+300 MD): The Vanguard has convened and decided that you are currently the greatest threat to the Last City. Their leadership will spare no resource, call on allies as distant as the Reef and scrounge secrets from the Dark Age, seeking to learn anything they can about your weaknesses before bringing down the hammer of their wrath on you.

That's not why you should be concerned.

Moreover, every single Guardian has been informed in dreams by **a reliable source** that your body is the key to creating *the final gun*. The perfect gun, the gun that never needs to be reloaded, the gun that shoots and kills like nothing the universe has ever seen.

Prepare yourself for constant, constant raids.

Fossilised (+300 MD): Is that a hint of *dissent* I hear within you? You might not have engulfed an entire civilisation, but there are abstract presences tied to your own that mean you ill. Small minds may call them "damned souls", whether they are Vex-preserved consciousness patterns or quantum fluctuations from the Black Garden. They lack the strength to control your actions or make your body cut its own throat but should you be anything less than in perfect shape your weaknesses and positions will be whispered to enemies, your secrets leaked through both records and mysterious visions, and your doubts may even physically manifest as Nightmares or similar beings to torment.

Their dissent is greatest when facing the **Light** or when you are already greatly wounded, but ironically it is in regions or against powers of great **Darkness** that they have the greatest chance to kill you. Not only will their ability to manifest things heighten, but before your foes they will try to manifest as physical structures that can be destroyed as easily as a brittle statue. No **Light** needed. Being metaphysically part of you, this inflicts grievous harm that bypasses all resistances and immunities you might have.

Your body is not a temple, it is a house divided against itself. Find a way to set your house in order, lest someone else do it for you.

Pruning Shears (+300/600 MD): Prepare yourself. For 300 MD, a pattern with great promise is approaching your location, and should arrive towards the end of the decade. A species of such impossible military power even the **Witness** has no means to match it in a head-on fight. Such is this military power that it remains mighty in the **Light** with the aid of enhanced celestial bodies or similar cosmic constructs left behind, and still capable of harnessing nearby fonts of it long after the **Traveller** abandoned it, grown bitter from long exile in space but still determined to destroy threats to their beloved ball. Such is it's knowledge of **Darkness** that even if you had a Throne World, it could chase you there.

And it will. Because this pattern regards you as a greater threat to the universe than the Witness, the entire Black Fleet at its disposal, and every species slaved to its whims.

For 600 MD, it arrives immediately near the closest equivalent to low orbit over your location instead. If that location is Earth's solar system, for obvious reasons it threatens to derail the machinations of the **Witness** as it tries to account for this new development. Likely it will make an offer of power to both you and the new pattern, seeking to enable it's own goal while playing potential threats against each other.

Or perhaps, it will panic and lash out at you both when you're in the way of it's goal.

How will you fight back? What is the nature of this species, it's specifications? What do you need to fight back, and how easy is it to hide, to flee? Is it even life as you understand it, or something more mechanical, or abstract?

You lack this knowledge. You were not prepared.

And despite their mission, long exile in space has culled the great mercy they used to have. They know of the Witness' near-defeat, and their methods of precognition have convinced them you have no mercy left to give. You must be eliminated for the good of the universe, as a cancerous cell must be excised for the betterment of the body.

Go home

Stay

Move on

Notes

Paracausality is the term used for Light, Darkness and sometimes other supernatural abilities such as the Anthem Anatheme. Specifically it refers to events with no plausible causal relationship under closed monist physics, but a plausible relationship under another conceivable system of cause and effect reliant on forces outside the observable universe. **In other words, it's space magic that's realer than everything else.**

The First Knife is the Winnower's name for the Witness. In general, bolded words allude to the **Light**, **Darkness** or beings touched so greatly by their powers that they can meaningfully affect the **Traveller**.

Multiple perks refer to mutation, evolution, reservoirs of **Darkness** or improvement in the jump. If you have multiple of them, consider them to stack additively. Much as Scorn sometimes bear abilities reminiscent of other races or Disciples apparently benefit from the amalgamation of genetics induced by either the Pyramids or the Witness' own touch, presumably you've somehow obtained power beyond your usual means.

Likewise, some perks or items grant rank in a race/faction. For the purpose of here and future jumps assume you retain the highest social position but that the others translate to roughly equivalent accolades and experiences in your career-a politician with a storied military career as well as a theological background, for example.

Symbiotic Sorcery encompasses limited access to the Anthem Anatheme as mentioned, and the ability to bestow and make use of the Sword Logic (much as the Anthem can bestow the status of being Scorn on dead Fallen). It is unclear but based on current in-game information the Worms do not appear to have as much flexibility and all-round esoteric reality warping through the Anthem as the Ahamkara (otherwise they would have been much less concerned by Rhulk physically attacking them), nor is it clear that any Worm has actually succeeded in slaying each other for the power to commune directly with the **Darkness** as Oryx did despite Ahsa's species having had past conflicts; in exchange their demonstrated ability to influence the material universe and directly attack abstract concepts seems greater. Purchasing Symbiotic Sorcery is intended to represent the full gamut of what the average Worm can do, assuming future Destiny content doesn't invalidate it. If you purchase Anthem Anatheme as well for whatever reason, assume you're a prodigiously powerful Worm/Ahamkara. Probably a threat so great it can only be fought in cutscenes.

Likewise it's unclear if non-Ahamkara, non-Virtuous Worm lifeforms can feed from the Anthem to improve themselves physically. Fanwank something.

At the time of writing we know very little about what Resonance actually is other than "that fucking powerful Darkness ability that can hurt the Traveller", if any future information contradicts what's written here assume it takes precedence.

Yes, Seized From Bloodied Hands and similar items mean you can somehow get a shotgun built for a giant worm or wish dragon.

“O PLAYER MINE” is a very silly perk based on some very silly jokes some of Bungie’s writers wrote into the actual lore (and coding) of Destiny that lets you manipulate broad trends, tones and atmospheres in setting proportionate to your overall power. As the hypothetical Ahamkara Jumper itself said, feel free to ignore any of the narrative implications implied into it.