

NightWatch

Novels by Sergei Lukyanenko. Jumpdoc by Aehriman.

Since the beginning, the Others have lived among us; mages and seers, vampires and werewolves, torn between the Light and Darkness. Neither could destroy the other, so in the 12th Century, the Treaty was struck.

We are the Others.

We serve different forces, but in the Twilight there is no difference between the absence of darkness and the absence of light.

Our struggle is capable of destroying the world.

We have concluded a Great Treaty, a truce.

Each side shall live by their own laws, each side shall have its own rights.

We delimit our own rights and our own laws.

We are the Others.

We establish the Night Watch, so that the forces of Light may monitor the forces of Darkness.

We are the Others.

We establish the Day Watch, so that the forces of Darkness may monitor the forces of Light.

Time will decide for us.

From that day until this one, an uneasy peace has reigned. The two Watches monitor and control the Others of each side while scheming for an advantage. Those who grew weary of the struggle become hermits or join the Inquisition which oversees the conduct of each Watch.

Anton Gorodetsky is an unremarkable member of the Moscow Nightwatch, an Other of middling power, a sysadmin on his first field assignment, who will soon be caught up in plans and events far beyond anything he's experienced before.

Have **1,000 choice points** (cp) to get through. You'll be here ten years, starting in 1998.

ORIGINS

Light - You are, at least on your best days, noble and selfless. You see your power as something given to you to help others with.

Dark - You're more on the selfish side. You got yours, so who cares about anyone else?

Inquisition - Eventually, the average Watchman gets jaded with the endless conflict that never makes significant progress. That's when you join the Inquisition, internal affairs over the Watches. You'll be partnered with someone from the other side.

PERKS

Language Learning Spell (free) A common spell has downloaded the fifteen most common/widely spoken languages in the world into your brain, gifting you full fluency and literacy with none of the hard work. In future Jumps this updates to the local time period/setting.

Ranked Magician (variable) Roughly speaking, Others are ranked in seven levels (really nine) in descending order. So level seven are barely mages, while a level two Other could summon or disperse a mighty hurricane. Beyond level one, there are Greater Others whose power level defies easy classification, and beyond even those are Level Zero, a power previously achieved only by Merlin and Christ.

For free, you can be a Fifth level other, a respectable but overall average mage. Each rank above this (sixth, seventh etc.) gains you fifty points. Each level below costs fifty cp apiece, except Higher and Zero, which are 100 cp apiece.

For reference, a seventh level Other can live an extra 10-20 years and use small magics that will make most daily inconveniences a nonissue. Avoiding traffic, unlock things, fix minor breaks, heal the common cold and such.

Remoralization (free)

The easiest thing for any Other to do is to flood somebody's aura with either purifying light or corrupting shadow, depending on your base allegiance. A demoralized person will give in to their baser impulses, a remoralized one will behave better within their context for good and evil. I.e., someone raised in a society of cannibals will still munch down without guilt, but they won't think of stealing.

Deputize (free)

Another fun trick you can do is induce in a mortal a fanatical devotion to the cause of good or evil, lasting a few hours without re-upping. Tremendously convenient if you need to commandeer a vehicle or rustle up some disposable mooks in a hurry.

Blindspot (free)

There's some Prophets and an awful lot of Clairvoyants (who see probable futures) running around, and most of the mastermind types have a dozen on payroll. It won't help them see you coming, as you just don't appear in information gleaned from pre or postcognition, nor can your mind or aura be read.

Gloom (free/100 cp)

All Others are creatures of the Twilight, a parallel reality sometimes called the Gloom. There are seven layers to the Twilight, but the last, seldom reached, is the material world all over again, because the Twilight is also a circle, and each succeeding layer is harder to break through. Being in the Twilight also drains your magical energy, faster the deeper you go. The first layer is like the mundane world, but with colorful mosses growing where strong emotions are felt, buildings and people are like shadows and spells exist as structures or clouds of light or shadow. You can easily see and venture into this layer, handy as mundane people can't see you in the Twilight and you can phase through walls. Deeper layers get more eldritch.

For 100 cp, breaking into each layer is just as easy as the first, nor can you be easily confined by wards. The energy drain effect is present, but also never escalates beyond that of the first level, to the point you can comfortably remain in the Twilight for a day or two .

Enter the Dragon (-100 cp)

We only meet two Others proficient in martial arts so they have a fallback when power fails, Semyon, and Bruce Lee. You have all the potential of the latter, and decades of experience practicing the martial art of your choosing.

Shapeshifter (-100/200 cp)

One of the weakest forms of Other are those like werewolves who can turn into a single animal form and back at will. Changing takes 2-5 seconds and is always painful. More powerful mages can learn this, but seldom bother, despite the uses for mobility, combat, or enhanced senses. Well, unlike your average Shapeshifter, you can at least choose your animal form.

For an extra hundred cp (200 total) you, like the Nightwatch officer Bear, expand your repertoire to a whole family. Not just wolves, but any canine, not just rockfinches but any kind of sparrow. Potentially, you could have hundreds of animal forms, though all related.

Wheels Within Wheels (-300 cp)

The leaders of the Watches tend to be centuries to millennia old, and have spent most of that time trying to outwit each other in ever more elaborate plots and games of “I know that you know that I know that you know that I know that...” They also tend to employ dozens to hundreds of clairvoyants to chart every probable future. Good thing you’re their equal in intrigue. You can craft the most marvelous plans, knowing how people are likely to react, and how to provoke the responses you need, even generations in advance. Individuals, nations, whole continents can be made to dance to your tune.

Meanwhile, your plans are flexible enough to adapt to unforeseen circumstances, avoiding hazards and taking advantage of new opportunities. It would take something truly out of left field for your plans to fail.

Genuinely Good (-100 cp, free Light)

What it means to be good can be quite complicated in some situations, but is on a general personal level, pretty simple. Be kind, be respectful, be willing to admit when you’re wrong and make a change. Try to be a good person. Despite the bleak

nature of the world, the endless scheming of both Watches, there's a core of decency to you that no corruption or cynicism can touch. You may falter, you may err or sin, but each day will be a fresh start for you.

Good-Looking (-100 cp, free Light)

Others tend to be pretty; it comes from having the magic to snap your fingers and spare yourself thirty minutes of makeup, and only witches really age. Still, you're above and beyond. Like Ignat the Incubus, you're a gorgeous specimen of (wo)manhood who turns heads wherever you go and never has to worry about spending the night alone.

Helping Hand (-200 cp, discount Light)

Light magic is really the best for healing. You're quite skilled at it, able to fix a broken rib puncturing a heart in moments.

Humility (-200 cp, discount Light)

The Dark Ones feel the world owes them a living, that they can get anything their arms can encompass. A lot tend to die shouting things like "No! This cannot be!" Not so much a problem with the Light Others. You maintain, at all times, an understanding of your strengths, weaknesses and limitations. You know what you can do and what you cannot, what is and is not your fault, and if you're about to pick a fight outside your weight class.

Karma (-400 cp, discount Light)

It's a very real thing, particularly for the Light Others. You have to justify the power you take from your fellow man, but this also means when you do good works, good things come your way, the universe arranging little coincidences to bring you success and happiness. Being good is hard, you deserve a reward.

Charisma (-100 cp, free Dark)

The Dark Ones can be friendly and reasonable. After all, while some of them are up to evil, most are just living their lives. You are very good at speaking persuasively.

Ruthlessness (-100 cp, free Dark)

Can't make an omelet without breaking a few eggs. No few Night Watch officers take their own lives after messing up, but Day Watch are built more callous. You can do what you need to and not lose sleep over it.

Glamour (-200 cp, discount Dark)

You are most adept in the art of illusions, a most flexible and versatile art, and one that benefits from a subtle touch.

Freedom (-200 cp, discount Dark)

The Dark believe in freedom, freedom to go as far as your skill and power will take you. You are very hard to confine, whether in physical jail, or contracts or more metaphorical or mystical restraints. You will always find a way out, and sooner rather than later.

Higher Vampire (-400 cp, discount Dark)

Vampires are one of the weakest Others by default. Parasites who can barely enter the Twilight, can hypnotize their prey, turn into a bat, but have a bunch of weaknesses and restrictions, particularly their reliance on blood. But if a vampire gorges themselves on the blood of over fifty men in one night and survives (that being the real trick), they become a Higher Vampire, with a suite of powers that would make Dracula envious, equivalent in strength to a Higher Other. So it is with you. You have the raw physicality to bully anything but a Beyond Classification magician or an avatar of the Twilight, plus impressive shapeshifting, flight and spellcasting to whatever level you purchased above. You are a true apex predator.

Be Rational (-100 cp, free Inquisition)

The Inquisition deals with what is, not what they wish the world was. You can look at things logically, identifying and discarding your own biases and assumptions.

Hidden Aura (-100 cp, free Inquisition)

All Others can see auras, though it takes a little training to learn to memorize and interpret them. They tell someone if you're Dark or Light, your values, lineage, history, present emotional state. Each more distinct than any fingerprint. You have learned to obscure yours, and in future worlds this will serve to hide any such information that may be gathered by supernatural means.

Bureaucratic Rat (-200 cp, discount Inquisition)

A signature spell of the Inquisition, this magic construct takes the form of a rat that pursues and bites a target, suppressing their magic for a time. The stronger the caster, the more you need to juice the rat, lest they burn through the effect in a few minutes.

Clairvoyant (-200 cp, discount Inquisition)

There are two kinds of fortunetelling in this world, prophecies describe what will happen, but are only set in stone once a human hears them, and the gift is rare. Clairvoyants scan the possible futures to select the outcomes they want, and are anything but infallible. You're a lot better at this than most, and most Others use a touch of clairvoyance to avoid traffic and hit solid green lights on their commute.

Investigation (-400 cp, discount Inquisition)

The Inquisition exists to control the two Watches, and unravel their schemes. No matter what the cost, you will get at the truth, for you are extraordinarily perceptive with a gift for seeing through plots and illusions, determined, lucky and can always tell when there's something more, whether a witness holding something back or another layer of obfuscation in the case.

ITEMS

Have +400 cp just for this section. You may discount one item at each price tier, halving the price.

Discounted 50 and 100 cp items are free.

Bread Peel (-50 cp)

Flying broomsticks may be traditional, in Russia as much as anywhere, but a baker's bread peel is a far more comfortable ride. Also, you can recharge them off ambient heat.

Discman (-50 cp)

Not really a discman, but a knockoff ipod or other mp3 player, loaded with music you like. Whenever you hit shuffle, you get songs incredibly appropriate to your situation and mood.

Merlin's Smokes (-50 cp)

Merlin, uniquely skilled and powerful among Others, enchanted his pipe and tobacco pouch, the first to be self-lighting and dispose of ash, the second to be ever full. We'll throw in immunity to any harm from smoking for free. Now, sixth century Saxxon 'baccy is actually really gross compared to modern strains, but it's worth it for dealing with Others who will notice your possession of Merlin's artifacts.

Public Pass (-50 cp)

A card to let you ride any train, bus or form of public transport, in any city where such services are offered.

Wardrobe (-50 cp)

Some stylish clothes, for a wide variety of social situations and settings, from hard work on a farm to dinner with the President.

Badge (-100 cp)

You don't have to join a Watch, or even the Inquisition, to get your perklines here. But if you want to, this badge comes with a backstory of having worked for either one for a couple years. In future Jumps you may insert as a nondescript member of the law enforcement organization of your choosing.

Communicator (-100 cp)

The result of a Jinn reading a Popular Mechanics article about future cell phones. This clear smartphone has more processing power than half the world's computers, never runs out of battery, always has signal and cannot be tracked or spied upon. It also has an enchantment that makes your voice sound extra convincing over the phone.

Everyone Lies (-100 cp)

A Rolls-Royce enchanted to look like any car you wish, self-repairing with a regenerating petrol tank. Also has a minor SEP-field effect that ensures anyone looking to fill out parking or speeding tickets never notices your ride.

Shades (-100 cp)

More the movie than the books, these sunglasses show into the Twilight, revealing invisible things including those hidden by being slightly shifted into an adjacent dimension. Also available in flashlight form.

Traveling Case (-100 cp)

Inspired by bags of holding and the like, this enchanted suitcase can only be opened by you, and is about four times bigger on the inside.

Earring (-200 cp)

Some days, you just can't even with the whole hidden supernatural world and their plots and their drama. This earring emits an SEP-field effect to keep Others from bothering you. Truly ancient, skilled and powerful Others have ways around this or noticing that they're being affected, but the rank and file should leave you be. Also has a setting for avoiding amorous or sensual attention, should you want to grab a drink at a bar without getting hit on, or bar your daughter from all dating before eighteen.

Money (-200 cp)

In the second book, Anton complains about how cash-strapped the Moscow Nightwatch office is, there's not many ways to make money ethically with magic. Later books forget this completely and have them spend like water, pointing out a clairvoyant day trader can make a fortune without hurting anyone. You have about three million USD equivalent, refilled each year, in whatever currency is most convenient to you.

Restraint Talisman (-200 cp)

A small fetish of a being, wrapped in twine. This has the power to freeze anything that is the relevant kind of being, inspired by the D&D Hold Person/Monster spells. But it only lasts an hour a day at most, less the more examples you try to restrain.

You can choose what kind of being this works on each Jump. Maybe 'Hold Zombie' works better for you in Resident Evil or something.

Truth Amulet (-200 cp)

We don't get a fancy name for it, but Edgar in the fourth book wields this amulet that compels people who stare into its gems to answer truthfully and fully any question asked. However, very powerful, strong-willed or clever and prepared Others can still wiggle some fey truths out of it.

Crown of All (-400 cp)

Merlin's great contingency spell, recorded in the very stones of Edinburgh Castle. The Crown dissolves the barriers between all levels of the Twilight, effectively freeing all souls trapped in the afterlife to join the cycle of reincarnation. It will do the same in future worlds, which may be more or less useful depending on the local cosmology.

Minos Sphere (-400 cp) A jewel of the ancient Minoan civilization, this polished sapphire orb lets you open portals anywhere in the world. To be fair, a second level magician can also do that, but sometimes you don't have the energy or the time to cast the spell properly, and the Sphere can be used to get in and out of places normally warded against such travel.

Anti-Fuaraon (-400 cp)

A failed attempt at recreating the most infamous grimoire in the world. Where *Fuaraon* creates Others, the anti version permanently depowers magicians, rendering them mortal. Oddly, used on shapeshifters and vampires, it turns them into magicians. In future Jumps this can be used to depower mages and break similar curses.

Chalk of Destiny (-600 cp) A legendary item... with a few restrictions, terms and conditions, etc. The Chalk can generally only be wielded by a Light-aligned Higher Other of the feminine persuasion, but since you're paying out, we'll ignore that bit. It allows one to summon the Book of Destiny - not the destiny of the entire world, that's too complex. The book of a single specific person's destiny - and edit it. You could make a tyrant into a saint, catapult a nobody to being emperor, rewrite the

past and future. But beware, for each line drawn with the Chalk is infused with a little bit of your soul, and you *don't* want to use that all up.

***Fuaran* (-600 cp)**

The holy grail of grimoires, this book contains the secrets for turning ordinary humans into Others, and increasing the power of Others, jumping people two levels or more. The secret is that it actually reduces a person's personal power. The level system is a countdown for a reason, you see, the more energy in a person's aura, the less they respire and use. The Twilight and the Others are literally empowered by the huge crowds of mundane life. Read from the book to affect anyone in your line of sight.

Orb of Forces (-600 cp)

An honestly kind of boring item from the PC game. This softball sized blue orb is the world's best magical focus, which Others seldom bother with, but this one multiplies the strength of any spell cast one thousand times. Try not to lose it.

DRAWBACKS

Prologue (+0 cp)

You should be skipping out well before the big apocalyptic story, unless you took a stay extender, but maybe you really want to hang out with some historic Other, like Merlin or Jesus. Or Bruce Lee before he got recalled to active duty and had to fake his death. Feel free to start at any point before the series proper.

Heavy Dubs (+100 cp)

You gotta love how the English dubs of both the movies and the PC game insist on giving everyone heavy Boris & Natasha accents. Everyone you interact with will have thick regional accents, enough it may sometimes take you a couple seconds to parse out what they're saying.

Long Stay (+100 cp)

Add another ten years to your stay. This may be taken up to six times.

Starting With the Man In the Mirror (+100 cp)

Turning invisible to mortals by slipping into the Twilight is such a simple trick, even vampires and weres can do it. Though, vampires still appear in mirrors and water and other reflective surfaces. Now, so do you, requiring mindfulness if you want to be stealthy.

American (+200 cp)

You're an American! Unfortunately, as this is a Lukyaneko novel, that means you're at best well-meaning but oblivious. More typically, you are greedy, self-righteous, aggressive and think the world works like Hollywood films.

Not a Drop to Drink (+200 cp)

Stealing another weakness from vampires, alcohol burns your flesh like powerful acid. Drinking is strongly discouraged.

Za zdoróvye! (+200 cp)

It is a Russian series, so it's not uncommon for characters to get blackout drunk and wake up in bed with someone awkward. You don't function so well without a drink or two in you, being a (barely) functioning alcoholic. Then again, you don't function too well with a few too many drinks in you. There's a sweet spot you must find through extensive experimentation where you are drunk enough to be competent.

Birdbrain (+300 cp)

Like Olga at the start, you have been forcibly shapeshifted into a bird. You can speak, but it takes great effort and sounds weird. You can assume human form, and use your magic and other powers, for only thirty minutes each day.

Imprints in the Twilight (+400 cp)

Some Others are born in the Twilight, which kills their mother, making the first level count as their 'home' realm. Instead of bleeding energy in the Twilight and struggling to breach through, you find it difficult to manifest in the mortal world, and it saps your energy. At first, you'll be able to stay a day or two, but that time will dwindle away until, by seven or eight years into your stay, you won't be able to interact with mortals or their world at all, only the Others who can still see and hear you.

Mirror (+600 cp)

Sufficient imbalance between the two sides can move the Twilight itself to act. A month into your stay, a random person becomes a Mirror, empowered by the Twilight to match any strength that is opposed to theirs, this unstoppable Juggernaut will hunt you down and drain away all your out-of-Jump powers for the duration of your stay. You cannot escape or prevent this.

Two-in-One (+600 cp)

The magical apocalypse from the last book is here early, and it's coming for you specifically.

END

What now? Settle down, go home, on to the next adventure?

Nightwatch:

Anton Gorodetsky is a middling mage and IT person for the Moscow Nightwatch, just now on his first mission as a field agent, pursuing vampires who are hunting without a license. He follows a Called victim, a boy named Egor, onto the Metro where he first spots love interest Svetlana, who is in the middle of a swirling vortex of bad juju, strongest curse Anton has ever heard of, gonna definitely kill that woman and probably hundreds of innocents. Anton burns a lot of his strength, and the vampire-restraint charm he was given, just to weaken and delay the curse. Of course, that means when the vampires jump Egor Anton has nothing left but lethal force, killing one attacker and driving off the other.

He reports in to his boss Gessar (aka Boris Ignatievich) who tells him there may be retaliation from the head of Daywatch, Zabulon, for the killing. Gessar assigns Anton a new partner, a snowy owl named Olga. Also, killing the vampire makes things very awkward with the nice vampire family who live down the hall in his apartment building, including little Kostya whom Anton was kind of an honorary uncle to.

In frustration, the next day Anton remoralizes a sleazebag, unfortunately right in front of a Daywatch officer, Alisa. But they work things out by Anton agreeing to look the other way when she does something evil.

While Gessar sends the Watch's incubus, Ignat, to honeypot Svetlana and learn about her curse and he bounces, Anton protects Egor again and is shocked when the kid hops into the Twilight, the magical side-dimension, being an uninitiated mage himself. While Egor is thrilled to join the good fight against the forces of evil, Anton is forced to explain the treaty and that the only reason he keeps saving Egor's life is that *these* vampires didn't file for a permit to kill him. Anton agrees the whole situation sucks, but better the kid knows up front.

Anton is called away to deal with the Svetlana crisis. Turns out she is also an uninitiated Other, a Greater One, and her curse is entirely self-inflicted guilt over failing to save her mother. Anton is able to talk Sveta down.

While Anton was busy, the girl vampire returns and Calls Egor up to the roof of his apartment building, where a Mexican standoff ensues between Night and Daywatches. Zabulon attacks Anton, but is foiled when a minor Nightwatch clerk, Ilya, turns out to be Gessar, Zabulon's equal in power and skill, having swapped bodies as a disguise. The rogue vampire is put down.

Egor is still on the fence about which side to choose, so Alisa calls in her marker to hit Anton with a truth-spell, under which he admits that both Zabulon and Gessar used Egor as a pawn/bait. The disillusioned kid walks away from both, but is strongly inclined to Darkness now. Kostya also witnesses this, and his relationship with Anton is shook even further.

Couple weeks later, Anton is called to Gessar's office. Seems the Daywatch is tracking a serial killer of Dark Others, believe it may be a Nightwatch officer, and have summoned the Inquisition to adjudicate. Anton is the only officer in the Moscow office with no alibi for even one or two of the killings, and Gessar suspects he's being set up.

Truth and tongue-loosening spells have various exploitable flaws. The only way for the Inquisition to definitively clear Anton's name is a traumatic ritual involving a crystal bed, and Anton and the Inquisition's two observers (one Light and one Dark)

reliving his entire life from conception to the present. And have fun wondering for the next thirty years if anything around you is real or a memory.

So yeah, let's avoid that if possible.

Fortunately, Gessar has a plan. He will have Anton swap bodies with Olga, truthfully a Greater Sorceress bound in owl form. This way Olga gets to experience having hands again, Anton won't be forced to be a bird, and they can arrange for "Anton" to have no alibi and lure the killer to strike, at a time Gessar (and others) will be able to vouch for the real Anton's alibi!

As "Olga," Anton goes to hang with Svetlana and sheepishly admits his real identity after she confessed to his face that she loves Anton. They go on one awkward restaurant date to talk things out and establish many witnesses for Anton's location and activities, when Anton notices the minor Dark magician at table three with his loving family has been in the bathroom a really long time. Like an idiot, he leaves Svetlana to investigate and finds the man's body, just in time to be found standing over the man's body. Anton had. One. Job.

While they're giving statements to the Watch and mundane police, Zabulon appears and boldly accuses Anton of the murder, and Anton runs.

Anton calls Olga to meet in a Metro station so they can swap back. While waiting, he runs into Egor again and they chat a bit. Anton's new theory of the case is that Zabulon is killing his own people - technically not a crime for each Watch to police their own in addition to the other side - and blaming Anton to provoke Svetlana into lashing out with her vast power so she can be neutralized. After all, she isn't in any Watch. After killing one pursuer, borrowing his face and infiltrating the Daywatch's field HQ, Anton is more confused than anything.

He goes back to Egor's just in time to save him from the serial killer. Turns out, it was a self-initiated Light mage, Maxim, who doesn't know a thing about anything that's going on, he just sees evil everywhere and is filleting the people with black auras. Anton gets stabbed a few times, since he can't very well kill the proof of his innocence. Gessar arrives and recruits Maxim for the Inquisition.

As Anton is patting himself on the back for surviving another of Zabulon's traps, Gessar says this was all their side, he knew about Maxim from the start and allowed events to proceed along these lines to boost Svetlana up to her full potential.

In the book's final arc, Alisa and her crew attack an Uzbek man to intercept the important magical artifact.. Which the old man gave to his son to pass on to the Moscow office.

The gang all get out from the office to Tiger Cub's (a Nightwatch shapeshifter) cabin in the woods. Most of the Nightwatch get blackout drunk and Svetlana wakes up in bed with Ignat and just gets more and more furious the more she tries to explain herself to Anton, who is largely okay with it or putting on a good show.

When Anton gets home, he finds Zabulon in his apartment, reading a newspaper. The head of the Daywatch explains a little about the Chalk of Destiny which he failed to intercept and Gessar now has, Gessar and Olga fill in more of the details in a little bit.

The Chalk can summon a book containing a person's entire destiny, and edit it, rewriting lives and fate. It can only be used by a Light-aligned Greater Sorceress, of which there are exactly two at the moment, Olga and now Svetlana. Also, Olga used the chalk in 1918 to alter someone's destiny, and has never forgiven herself for all that followed, neither has the Watch forgiven her, hence the bird transformation. Gee, I wonder what was happening in Russia around that time? Oh, and it burns up a goodly hunk of your soul to use.

Anton is filled with despair, as he realizes the effort Gessar has put into grooming Sveta for this. Even the thing with Egor, the intended subject. Isn't it *fair*, isn't it *right* that this young man, robbed of a chance for goodness and Light, gets a second chance? Isn't making him the hero of his own story, the leader of a new golden age morally *correct*?

Wandering aimlessly towards the finale, Anton starts draining the Light from people around him, stealing the happiness of all who cross his path until he has enough juice for a single second-level spell, noting that this is very dangerous because unlike Dark Others who take people's misery and suffering, he has to use his stolen power in a way that justifies the taking of it.

Back on Egor's roof, for the last time, Olga and Gessar, Sveta and Egor, Maxim for the Inquisition and Zabulon have all gathered to witness. An enormous storm, almost a hurricane, is bearing down on Moscow. Gessar suggests Anton use his hoarded power to disperse the storm. Instead, Anton charges up the biggest remoralization of his life and, when Gessar steps between him and Sveta, hits

himself with it. Then he tells Sveta she has to choose what to do. She drops the chalk, but she did strike through most of the events of the book already, Egor goes back to being an uninitiated, unaffiliated, potential magician.

After Zabulon crows and leaves, Anton notes the chalk is broken, a piece missing. Gessar admits that Egor and Sveta were a distraction while Olga did the *real* edits (later in the series, revealed to bump up the power of Svetlana's eventual child from Greater to Absolute). Most importantly, with this final act Olga, his longtime love, has paid her debt to society and can be a human woman full-time again.

Daywatch:

We start following the POV of the Daywatch officer, Alisa. She and her team are sent to recruit and read-in a Dark Witch doing unauthorized magic, but when they arrive the Nightwatch have already arrested her. A battle breaks out, in which Alisa is drained of most of her magic.

Alisa is sent to a youth camp by the Black Sea to recover, along the way she is almost raped by several men, but uses her gun to force them to rape each other for her hollow amusement instead. At the camp, she falls in love with and starts a relationship with a counselor, Igor. Only, Igor is a Light magician, Nightwatch, crippled in the same fight and sent here to recover just like her. Igor is outraged at being, ah, 'seduced by the Dark side' and challenges her to a duel on the sea. Igor kills Alisa, then (much later) suicides.

Next POV is Vitaly Rogoza, a man who awakens on a park bench with no memories, but a certain set of skills. Operating purely on instinct, Vitaly catches a train to Moscow, registers as a Dark Other with the Daywatch, and kills half a dozen Nightwatch in a series of traps or self-defense incidents.

Vitaly, see, is a Mirror, a person possessed by a fragment of Twilight, the very will of magic, to ensure balance. In this case, by draining much of Sveta's magic to reduce the number of Light Grand Sorcerers in Russia. Sveta did attack him, having been led by a convoluted set of circumstances to believe Vitaly had killed Anton in a duel. Oh, there's some background fluff about some Dark Others, the Regin Brothers, stealing Fafnir's fang and a great fuss that people might rez the old Great Dark one who could turn into a dragon. This was all distraction and fluff, the efficacy of

ancient dragons against modern attack helicopters is yet to be proven, Fafnir is too loud, too splashy and too used to getting his way to play nice with the Daywatch. Vitaly fades away once his mission is fulfilled.

Last story POV alternates between Anton and a Dark-aligned Inquisitor named Edgar. Mostly this is about Edgar investigating and holding a trial about the previous two events, while Anton tries to buck up an increasingly morose Igor. Edgar conjures the spirit of Alisa to question her about the duel, and though she clears Igor, he still commits suicide. Which turns out to have been Zabulon's plan. See, Anton and Sveta's daughter will be an Absolute, or Level Zero, the most powerful mage in millennia. And Igor would have been her ideal teacher. Since he traded one of his for one of theirs, he isn't technically violating the treaty, even.

Twilight Watch:

Anton meets a grown-up Kostya, now in the Daywatch, as they and Edgar (and Edgar's vampire partner Vitesislav) investigate a series of letters from an Other promising to make a human one of them, giving him magic powers. Tracking the human leads them to Gessar's forty-year old son, but Gessar denies sending the letter. Also, when they test the man turns out to be an Other already.

After, Anton takes his wife and young child on a beach vacation. Anton can't help himself from investigating kids who survived a werewolf attack. Reading their memories he sees a witch drove the weres off, and she had a book titled *Fuaran* in her cottage. That's the name of a legendary witch who supposedly figured out how to turn mortal humans into Others, and the name most often applied to her spellbook.

Digging a little deeper, he finds there *is* a Dark witch in the woods, one who says she's been in stasis since the 1920s. She predates the current level system but estimates herself at a one, maybe Higher. Her name is Arina, not Fuaran, but she apparently wrote a book on Fuaran and explains some of her theories, how humans all have a magical 'temperature' of 97, same as the ambient magic, a minor Other has a temperature of 90-ish, allowing them to absorb and use some outside energy, a Greater Other like Zabulon, Gessar or Sveta is in the 40s.

Shortly after this cordial meeting, Edgar turns up looking for Arina, a person of interest in a very old case. See, Arina was part of a social experiment in building a perfect socialist republic. Her job was to taint the bread supply with a potion that would gradually bring people around to full-throated support of the new system. Instead, they became frothing-mouth fanatics overnight, were mostly killed, and Arina vanished.

Edgar and Anton go to Arina's cottage, and she flees into the Twilight. Each level takes them more time and effort to break in, and she loses them at the fourth level wall, by the time they break in, she's long gone.

The Inquisition raises an impenetrable dome of magic to lock down the whole area. Arina responds by taking Anton and Sveta's daughter hostage, suggesting that 'however will Arina escape this latest jam' has just become *very much* the Gorodetskys' problem.

Fortunately, the local weres are a lot more afraid of Sveta than they are Arina, and are eager to track her down in exchange for immunity for their earlier attacks. Sveta beats Arina like a rented drum, follows her into the fifth level of Twilight, and beats her there. However, after Arina swears she would never have actually hurt their child, and to do no harm, Sveta lets her go and helps her escape the barrier.

Barely does Anton get home, before Gessar sends him straight back to Arina's cottage, where a murder has happened. The vampire Inquisitor Vitevislav has been dusted, there on the floor, and the book titled *Fuaran* is missing.

Could it have been the real thing after all? Vitevislav seemed to think so, one of his last acts was to call his partner to hurry over, he found the real *Fuaran*. Accordingly, this case takes top priority.

Arina seems the obvious suspect, but it's actually little Kostya who has turned himself into a Higher Vampire now with spellcasting capabilities, and intends to use *Fuaran* to give everyone the gift of magic.

Last act is a desperate race to the Baikonur Cosmodrome, where Kostya mind-whammies several people into preparing him a rocket to the ISS and fitting for a spacesuit. Anton even deputizes a driver, which is horrifying and kinda hilarious. Also, Gessar, Zabulon and every available Watch officer is lending Anton juice and riding along, watching with his senses. Anton realizes the rocket is a

distraction, Kostya has no ability to fly the thing, he's planning on using a portal to get to the space station and use a spell that will alter everyone in his line of sight.

The spacesuit is more precaution than anything, the ISS moves very fast.

Anton tries a last time to talk Kostya down, doesn't work. Kostya demonstrates Fuaran on the zoinked driver, unintentionally bumping Anton up to Grand/Beyond Classification/whatever level.

Despite everyone in Anton's very crowded head shouting advice for horrible spells of destruction, Anton just casts a shield. Kostya expresses surprised disappointment at his 'cowardice' before portalling away, but Anton just desperately needed the protection from all magic, including vampiric mind-reading, so Kostya wouldn't realize what he did.

People don't actually run a temperature of 97 F, it's a bit higher. Mortals aren't neutral to Fuaran's hypothetical magical environment, they're producers in an ecosystem. And bud, there's no mana in space. Kostya isn't going to cast Fuaran, or an escape portal, or anything else. He's not gonna hit the ISS with some back of envelope calculations. He's gonna tumble through space and either fall forever into the void or experience the epic flameout of uncontrolled reentry.

Last Watch:

Anton is training with his newly expanded magic when Gessar sends him to Scotland to assist the Edinburgh Nightwatch. A Russian tourist was recently drained of blood there, at a tacky 'Vampire's Castle' tourist trap. Investigating the scene of the crime, someone nearly kills Anton with remote-control gun turrets.

The head of the Edinburgh Nightwatch, Thomas Lemont, then explains that someone has robbed the grave of Merlin, and he fears took a key to a hidden storage in the seventh level of the Twilight where Merlin supposedly hid 'the Crown of All Things.' He doesn't have the faintest idea what it is or does, but it sounds terribly important.

A couple goons then storm the Nightwatch office, with amulets protecting them from magic and charmed bullets to penetrate shields. Eventually everyone just bails into the Twilight, where the mooks' hidden masters are, but they escape into the

sixth level of the Twilight. Anton does see they are one Light, one Dark and a muddled aura he believes to be an Inquisitor.

Gessar is pretty alarmed by events in Scotland, and sends Anton to Uzbekistan to question Merlin's last living associate, Rustam, about this Crown of All business. Anton is shocked and dismayed that the Uzbek Watches are neighbors in adjoining offices, separated only by a flimsy and unlocked door, so the Nightwatch can use the Daywatch's superior coffee machine. At least the Daywatch are useful when more mooks armed for fighting mages turn up.

Rustam says the Crown is a spell that will dissolve all the barriers between levels of the Twilight, and between the Twilight and the real world. He doesn't actually know what that's supposed to accomplish. Maybe it will end the world, or depower all Others. They get attacked, again, and this time Anton clocks one of the masters as his Inquisitor former pal Edgar. One of the Uzbek Nightwatch manages to slip a dire and complex curse through Edgar's defenses, but on questioning admits it's an impotency curse.

Back in Moscow, both Watches place full protection details on Nadya, Anton's daughter, being she is the sole Other capable of theoretically accessing the seventh and final level of the Twilight. Digging lets Anton realize the Dark member of the 'Last Watch' who keep attacking him is Gennady, Kostya's vengeful father who has also become a Higher Vampire.

Unable to get to Nadya, the Last Watch kidnap Anton to Scotland. Edgar has read secret Inquisition texts on the Crown of All, that say it will give the Others trapped in the Twilight (the deepest levels act as an afterlife for Others) their heart's desire. Which he interprets as 'it will raise all our dead.' Easy to get Gennady, the grieving father, onboard for that. They also tell Anton they killed his daughter with a nuke, the sole manmade device that reaches all levels of the Twilight and can't be evaded by diving into the supernal realms.

That said, the person planting the nuke was their Light Other, Arina, who has changed her coat since we last saw her, and she says she lied about the nuke, no way she's gonna kill so many innocents just in the blast, nevermind the immediate aftereffects *nuking Moscow* would have.

The Last Watch take Anton to the fifth level of the Twilight, where they engage the guardian dragon Merlin left. Anton takes the chance to escape into the sixth level, where he is reunited with Kostya and Igor and all his departed friends who wish him well and urge him to trigger the Crown. Well, now Anton's stuck, backwards is danger, forwards is impossible and the mana drain at this level is impressive, he sure can't stay.

Fortunately, Nadya, his newly-initiated five-year-old daughter, appears, having been given a crash course on magic by her mom, she takes Anton through the barrier to the Seventh Level... which is the boring old mundane world. The Twilight is a circle.

And Merlin did hide the Crown in the Seventh Level, it's in the very stones of Edinburgh Castle. The Last Watch catches up in time for Anton to explain. Merlin was deeply skeptical of the Twilight as an afterlife, you just, what, exist forever in a pale and eldritch shadow of the world of the living? The Crown is an escape in case death proved the trap he feared, it will scrub the Twilight of souls, ushering them on to final death or reincarnation or whatever the hell happens to normal people when they croak.

Edgar and Gennady choose to die and be reunited with their loved ones when Anton pushes the big red button, Arina chooses life.

The New Watch:

Anton is at the airport when he overhears a ten-year-old boy, Kesha, begging his mom not to take a plane because it will crash. A quick aura check and, yes, uninitiated Other with the gift of prophecy. Anton arranges for the woman to miss her flight, yet the plane doesn't crash, which is weird. Most Others can predict probable futures, Prophets say what will definitely happen.

The Twilight spawns another Mirror-like entity, which they call the Tiger, for the purpose of silencing said prophet and any Other who hears his words. Gessar musters the very cream of the Watch, all their first-level and Greater Others, to protect Kesha while the boy is initiated into the Light. The Tiger is able to fight them all to a draw, quitting the field only once Zabulon appears and the boy prophesys to

an empty room (only valid when a mortal hears it) though Anton was able to get the thing on a recorder.

Of course, the Tiger is still out there, waiting.

The greatest living prophet is Charles' Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin.

Gessar sends Anton to London to ask Erasmus how he escaped the Tiger, back in the day. Erasmus says he shouted his prophecy into an oak tree while Zabulon held the Tiger back. He also gives Anton a wooden goblet, carved from said oak and implies it contains a record of his prophecy, but doesn't tell him how to hear it.

Arina sidles up next to Anton in a pub, and all casual like mentions she once averted the prophecy of Russia's destruction, though that led to the Civil War and the Soviet years and all that. She begs Anton to accompany her to Taiwan and meet her friend, Fang Wan-Yang, who heard a prophecy but earned the Tiger's mercy.

Fang is only so much help, he killed his prophet friend to prevent a more grisly fate and swore himself to secrecy on his friend's memory, and that seemed to satisfy the Tiger. Meanwhile, Arina pickpockets the flash-drive with the prophecy on it off Anton and escapes into a portal.

Arina finds Anton later and tells him the prophecy is about his daughter and he *really* needs to hear it. She also gives him her portal device.

Erasmus calls and says he listened to his own prophecy via a second goblet, and the Tiger kills Erasmus while he's on the line with Anton.

While terribly aware of the risks, Anton listens to Kesha's prophecy on his reliable now mp3 player (he still calls it a discman). Kesha says that Nadya can destroy the Tiger but if she does it will be the end of the Twilight and all magic. Anton decides to burn Erasmus' goblet, but it turns out that's *how you make it talk*, and Arina, Nadya and Kesha arrive just in time to hear a slight variant on Kesha's prophecy, Nadya *will* kill the Tiger and end magic. The Tiger shows and Anton barely gets everyone out through a portal, though it drains Arina's orb.

They arrive at Arina's newest hidden cabin in the woods, and she's gone full Kreia and believes magic should be ended.

The Tiger arrives and Anton calls a quick truce to try and talk things out. Since only Others have heard the prophecy, it isn't fixed in stone yet, but will be the moment

anyone in their circle of trust blabs. So you know, not ideal. Like the Mirrors, the Tiger is the Twilight's last resort to defend itself. So! Anton swears his daughter and Kesha to strictest secrecy, literally everyone you know will die if you talk, then casts the Sarcophagus of Ages spell to lock himself and Arina in a little box forever. Well, the Tiger manages to yolk Anton out. Says it will take his word over the risk that Nadya grows up to kill it anyways in the hope of freeing her papa. Mission accomplished, the Tiger peaces out.

Sixth Watch:

Confession: I've never read the final book in the series, anything I know is pure online osmosis.

It's at least nine years since Last Watch, as Nadya is now fourteen. A bizarre chimera attacks her school, Kostya is back from the dead, and Kesha says the world is ending in five days.

The Others have forgotten the Paleolithic compact they formed with the Twilight, the purpose for their powers. To reclaim what was lost, Anton must reform the original Watch, a council of six who governed the Others before writing. One representative each of the Darkness, the Light, the Witches, the Vampires, the Weres, the Prophets and the Form-Takers (potential host bodies for Mirrors or the Tiger).

Or the Tiger's bigger, meaner cousin as Avatar of the Twilight will destroy them all.