

AFTERLIFE

Retired billionaire movie producer Howard Barclay arranges a séance at his home, the Barclay Mansion, and with his wealth and influence draws the players in the upcoming tragedy.



Meadow Walters, the faithless medium, who's only interest in the dead is what she can rob from them. But she can do that to the living, and dying, just as well.

Alan Vincent, a respected movie star. He has ambitions he would do terrible things to fulfill. That he has already done to fulfill. A weak man.

Tom Shepard, gallery owner. He's taken advantage of those whose trust he was given, but he wants to make it right. He never will have a chance.

Howard Barclay himself, a billionaire movie producer. No family he cares to claim, dying of disease, with all the wealth in the world and nothing of value for that wealth to buy him. Now he tries to spend his wealth to buy the one thing it can't give him, a guarantee.

EVERYONE MUST PAY

And finally Ed Miller, photographer. His photos catch more than just the physical. Alone here, he is uninvolved in the web Barclay has spun.



And then there's you. Who were you in this drama? I would say it hardly matters now, but memories are important to the dead. Without them, what would they be?

You start with 0 CP (Corpus and Pathos), a remnant soul clinging to its fetters as if they make you free. You bring nothing with you to this place, no mastery or power, not even your own body. I can only offer you this, if you fail and fall here, then this leg of the journey will have been not but a harrowing nightmare.

Alternatively, you may take this as a normal jump, receiving 1000 CP. If you do so, you risk your very anchors to the greater chain; if you fall into Oblivion or become a Spectre, you'll be restored, but the only place you'll go from there is Home. You may choose to transition from a gauntlet to the 'jump', which leaves you with gauntlet 'protection' for the first portion, and access to gauntlet only discounts and Pacts of Doom.

If you do so, you'll regain access to your abilities, items, and Warehouse, Jump Only Pacts of Doom will come into effect, and Jump only Perks will become 'active' after the Gauntlet portion.

Some things come easily to the penitent and the poor. That's another way of saying 'there are things you can only take if you take this as a Gauntlet', are Gauntlet Rewards, or are discounted if took this as a Gauntlet. Such will be marked with a symbol. Likewise, things are only available if you take this as a jump. Such mysteries are marked with the symbol.



FETTERS

One spectre has tied you... **us** to Barclay Mansion, one that touched you during that fateful séance. I don't know why, but until you unravel the mystery of what happened you won't be able to leave the manor, or this Gauntlet.

Come find **me**. I'll lead you to where you need to go. I don't want to be trapped in this shadowland forever, either.

There is another soul trapped in the same situation. That loser Ed Miller. If how he went on a fucking murder spree, quite possibly being the one who did you in didn't give you a clue, then he's a problem you should avoid. Worse, his movements will aggravate the spectres of the Manor, driving them to more vigorous action.

He's tied to The Broken Woman, so you can't be. Your fate lies with a different spectre.

This Mansion is creepy, take it from **me**. It's more than half-relic, so that more of the walls are solid to a wraith than not, and it follows nightmare fairy tale logic, locking and unlocking doors based on it's own logic. It's also overgrown with roots that seem to extend from a deeper layer of the world of the Dead. They shy away from the light of Pathos, but until you burn them out they'll shut off paths you need to follow and hide the items you'll need to proceed.

🏡 Upon escaping the Mansion, you will escape the Gauntlet. If you've chosen to remain here for a jump, this is when perks unlock and Pacts of Doom switch.



GRAVEN HISTORY

Everyone is *someone*. Even if you're just lying to reality at this point, we need a story for why we ended up dead at the Barclay Mansion, why we were at that stupid séance. So tell me, *who* are we?.

Don't tunnel on the details. I know how you love obsessing over exact words, but each origin can represent a host of takes on a similar concept; the Waitress could be almost anyone young and new and dumb enough to be caught up in the glamour of the movies; it's not just an aspiring actress. That said, ghosts are here because of their shit; so you have shit smeared on this world, you don't come from nowhere.

Starved Artist

What, did you think people wanted you for your talent? Whatever you made freaked normal people out. However hard you tried, you struggled to get by. Maybe you had some talent, but it was always tainted by something otherworldly and morbid that showed through in your work. Maybe you would have succeeded if you just tried harder.

Waitress

Did you think I was going to call you an actress? Everyone knows you aren't going to ever make it. You'll never pay them back. You're a cute face, but that's hardly served you well. You have a history of drawing creeps and weirdos. They all know, no ones going to miss you.

Coward

Oh, I guess you are an actor, not that anyone who matters cares. It's no mystery why YOU'RE here, you're a lackey. For all your success, Howard treats you like a secretary, only with less respect. You thought if you could just hold on long enough you could get what you needed from that old bag of bones, but we can all see how THAT turned out.

Parasite

That dying old man didn't really need all the material wealth that accrued, now did he? It's a waste. You wouldn't be here working so hard if he didn't cling to things he didn't need with a rigor mortis grip. It's his fault for making this hard. So you put on a show, it was the excuse you needed to hang around the manor. But you fucked up, I guess, since now you can't leave.

Predator

You were one, unlike the fucking sheeple that bawled and milled around you, pretending to be people. All that money, all that wealth and power, all the strength with which you mastered the world, and it still failed you. You saw farther than the mewling masses around you, that's why you succeeded. You weren't a sheep. Even the people who have some faint glimmer of talent ended up wasting it in ignorance. You're better than them. You're someone who had your shit together. Why the fuck should you care what any of them think. You don't regret any of it.



But 'who you were' isn't the only question worth asking. If you're going to stay here for ten years, you'll also need to tell me 'who you will become', after you escape Barclay Mansion. Well, it's not like any of this is binding or some such shit, but what's your natural trajectory?

The **Transcendence Seeker** realizes how *fucked* this all is, but won't face up to the truth of the only real answer.

The **Shadowed** kinda gets it, that we're the same. Maybe it's unfair, that what was done to her is so much more important than who she was, but life is nothing but a series of shit sandwiches, and death is worse. You win when you make everyone else eat yours.

Most ghosts end up in chains, if they don't end up the chains. Everyone wants to play the hero; did you ever actually live up to that standard though? So why the fuck should I believe you'll do it *now*, when it's harder? You're no rebellious hero, but you make a fine jackbooted thug for the **Hierarchy**.

With familiar words and familiar patterns, you find familiar "truths" among the **Heretics**. Doesn't it make you sick, selling *these* tired old lies, or just amused that even the dead, the one group who should absolutely know better, that *they* buy this shit!

Real power doesn't come from being part of an institution, it comes from being outside them. Not from following the rules, climbing the ranks, but by making yourself into an institution outside the rules. You're a **Guildsman** because you're not a weakling, and you know better.

ADAPTING TO DEATH

Have you found some inner strength to face your fate? There are few perks to being dead, but it seems you have clung to them, however illusory. Does that make you wise, or merely desperate to pretend this isn't all just a big joke?

Ed. Is. Dead. (Free, Mandatory)

You died. You died years ago, in fact, as it's taken awhile for you to pull your **Corpus** back together after that [REDACTED] séance.

As a ghost, you see a version of reality through your **Deathsight** where all that is rotten and wrong is highlighted and enhanced, a patina of foulness revealing itself.

Objects that haven't been left to sit for a long time are ghostly mists, and even those that have been left idle long enough to fully reflect in the Shadowlands can be passed through, if you're willing to suffer disruption to your **Corpus**, your 'physical' integrity. That whole bit about running water stopping the dead? Nonsense, water that's hung around long enough to be a feature is solid as bedrock to your tred.

While you can't wield much physical force, your **Wraithgrasp** is no longer particularly tied to your body. You can reach out to grab something several meters away, or lift something without ever actually touching it. Only has the strength of a brat, though.

Your senses are more refined now, sharper. Your **Heightened Senses** can be strengthened further while you **WANT** it bad enough, including that faint sixth sense humans can barely feel. You can be certain to follow it to something interesting while you're here, though it probably won't be as quite as much good shit going forwards.

In future jumps you'll keep all of these advantages. I don't know why you would need Corpus though? You aren't such a loser that you already *lost* your new body, are you? So long as you have a body, you can just use it as a way of storing extra 'life force', or reinforcing any kind of 'ghostly projection' you do.

Though... we both know that you're just going to end up a ghost again. Why even bother to continue?

 Hmph. So you dug deep and found the power you needed to survive. I hope you don't feel *proud* of that petty accomplishment. I suppose this will remain a pattern, that when backed into a corner for too long, you can dig deep and find a well of new strength. Strength that you'll then be able to grow into.

Remember you [REDACTED] that matter how deep you dig, you'll never actually be strong. You wouldn't need to dig deep if you were.

 Of course, the manor is a nothing sandbox. If you think you know anything fighting your way out of there, than we'll end up where we belong before you know it. There is plenty of [REDACTED] that you just won't run into in that shallow little box. **Lifesight** is a trick that's not going to make you happy though; you're dead. It just lets you see what you're not in all the colors of Life.

But there's more to being someone who *failed at dying* than just some fancy senses and an inability to pick up more than a pencil. Stiffs like you can learn to use **Arcano!**, the so-called arts of the dead, fueled by the very passions that deny me rest. You such **Pathos** from the stupid lies you tell yourself about 'what really matters.'

Don't you recognize Yourself? (Free, Mandatory for this jump)

Death broke us, split us down the center. Now there is an Us, where there once was just you. Honestly, if I had known this would happen when I died, I wouldn't have fought so hard to stick around.

A Wraith has a **Shadow**, an other self that sees and feels all the shit that flies right over that loser ghost's head... That **Shadow** has strange insights and flashes of knowledge about occult and hidden parts of the world, the movement of dark forces near its Wraith, and other hidden knowledge. But mostly shit to do with the dead. It isn't all knowing, or even vastly deep, but we know things you ignorant [REDACTED] never learned.

We also pick-up your *failures*. No one knows a Wraith's weaknesses, its mistakes in the making, its broken assumptions and self-delusions like that Wraith's **Shadow**. We're your muse of self-reflection. At least so long as that self-reflection is your **fuckups**. Which means all the time, considering. Still, while we can help you come to a conclusion you didn't pick up, or a flaw you missed, don't expect us to help you come to a conclusion you couldn't. We're you, as depressing as that is.

And speaking of negative muses, we're an endless source of energy and drive, so long as that's an honest one. None of that vapid 'think positive' crap or other lies. Frustration, humiliation, failure, defeat, pain, and loss are the source of our existence. We aren't going to be stumped by fear, cower at what we can't beat, or give up simply because we were crushed or defeated. We never give up. No matter how long it takes, no matter how far we're suppressed or beaten. Even if you beg us to.

For the duration of the jump, the pull of Oblivion guides our actions, and we'll put all our focus into making you realize your place. Unfortunately that pull won't follow us into future jumps, and we'll get pulled back into your orbit. Worse, the experience will inoculate your soul, such that we can never be turned against you again, which will screw efforts to turn parts of you against yourself, corrupt your thoughts through your own darkness, or feed on your mental and spiritual weaknesses.



Path of Transcendence (1000 cp. Discount

That isn't [REDACTED] fair. I don't even get one [REDACTED] swipe at you?

Whatever.

It seems you're too much of a damn [REDACTED] to actually *try* and beat me. You're just going to *pay* for the privilege. So damn enlightened of you, right? I guess you can buy salvation.

Whatever.

This is completely identical to the reward that someone who faced me for the whole jump would have gotten at the end, only you *start* with it. Worse, you're not just getting the shallow end here; unlike them, you're getting the whole package, the things you would never face in that sandbox. There are abilities of the Shadow that Ed never faced, or at least never understood. His conflict with his own was too damn short. Shadows have power to punish their dumber halves, but also to tempt them into ruin. Powers that you can just freely depend on me handing over to you.

Every Shadow can offer a kind of advantage, a Je Ne Sais Quoi that Wraiths lack, that carries through whatever their stiff is trying to do shit. Normally calling upon that would fuel us with a dark **Spite**, a cosmic **Angst** that's more than just in your own head. But since my energy is **yours**, it's not like that's a drawback to you. We both know you're not going to keep your fingers off my plate.

And speaking of **gluttony**, just like a Wraith fuels their shadow, a Shadow can end up fueling their Wraith, or a Spectre their Psyche. We make a... a... what do you call it? That damn snake that eats itself? Yeah, that **shitty** symbol? You remember it. Like them, we fuel each other in a never ending cycle. I would call it plenty of power, but we both know that your **hubris** won't be satisfied with just limitless power, your throughput is limited.

Yeah, I'm making a size joke. Look what you've pushed me to.

Shadows wield Thorns, weird powers that rip at your soul. My will just end up turned into tools in your hands, though luckily I won't start with any if you take this. Guess we're too 'aligned' because of your 'enlightenment.' It won't stop me from developing them. It depresses me to even think about it. Still, ultimately they'll let me bleed into whatever you're doing. Your perceptions, your reality, your actions, your powers... I'll be able to taint them all, twist them all. And because you *bought* my **loyalty** all of that is going to twist things to *help* you.

We'll never know the peace of ending, will we? I hope you're happy with what you've done.

Harrowed (50 cp each. Five free

Even when I try and kick you down, you cling to your pointless existence with a tenacity I have to give at least grudging respect to. Once a year for each time you take this (or for a given world, if you visit places too insignificant for even that petty investment of time), you can downgrade a near death experience to something less serious, though you have to decide to use it at the beginning of the shitstorm. This is 'get out of a destruction harrowing free' card. You'll pop out of a Nihil or show up in another appropriate location shortly after your fall, unharmed and unreduced.

In future jumps you might get thrown out of an exploding building, with the force of it shattering every wall before you can hit them, or otherwise escape in an absolutely improbable manner that only temporarily inconveniences you. If the experience is just inescapable death, this won't help.



Every time you take his, it also counts as a 'get out of the consequences of a harrowing, free' card. You can spend it at any point in a harrowing to 'win' it and go back. You don't *have* to trigger it before you lose, if you have the guts. You can wait till the last second. You could face it down, do your best, and only pull the trigger if it's too 'unfair' or some such bullshit.

You're not going to though, are you? **Coward**.



Slumbering Soul (50 cp)

Part of my passion is wearing you down. Not that I have to try that hard; the world just loves kicking you in the face with its shit-covered boot after all. Well, I *didn't* have to try that hard before now.

See, lots of you ghosts just turn themselves off. Temporarily, you know? They hide themselves inside their chains; the shit that ties them to the world. Just snuff themselves out for a few hours in pretend non-existence. They call it 'Slumber', but let's be real - it's not the sleep of the Quick, it's an admission that they're better off not existing.

You're better off not existing.

Regardless, you don't need a special fetter to hide away in. You may retreat your existence whenever you're in a spiritual state. Which is all the time as a ghost, in case you're a moron who didn't figure that out. While doing so, you're harder to see and sense, harder to affect, and you heal and regain willpower at a faster rate.

Maybe you should just take the hint though; you're happier when you *aren't* around.



Resolved (50 cp)

It's *your* fault we're trapped like this, you know? All that shit in me... it came from you. *I* came from you. I'm the only part of you that's sane, that speaks truth. You're just so... so twisted up. Driven by *lies* you tell yourself. Your **Passions** might fuel you, but they're just chains in the end. Only by resolving them can you be free. But you're never going to do that, are you? They're the source of power a wraith needs to get up in the morning and *do* shit. All that blathering about 'transcending' it all... no wraith really means it. If they did they *would*.

Here, take this. I'll *prove* it.

You're good at resolving your fetters, your passions. Not in not feeling them, but in accepting them and then letting go. To put them in context. To not make love a chain. Not make passion the flame of Passion that ties you to a life that's over. It's not that fake shit Star Wars sold about not feeling or 'love being forbidden', but about feeling in context, about loving and then accepting.

You have it now. You can resolve your passions and fetters. You won't though, will you? You chain yourself to existence for power! **Fuck you fuck you fuck...**



Vital Will (50 cp)

Projectors are just absolutely crazy shits; they're still alive, and yet they're running around making themselves more like the dead! They have some tricks that elude the dead; is the *will* to act really different from the passion to do so? A wraith would say yes, but it's all mixed up in them. That comes with some downsides, but also the upside that will is passion to them. Product of a living will, maybe?

But you're as messed up as those dipshits, aren't you? You chose to come here. You **choose to make me**. Your will and passions are wrapped up in each other, such that you can turn will into Passion; this is spiritually and emotionally draining, the same as any other will-draining task, and it doesn't let you *hold* infinite passion, so even bottomless will is going to be bottlenecked by your spirit.



Rising Danger (100)

Sure, let's make this farce complete.

So the average ghost? They're not okay with being dead. Some of them force themselves on the living world, like a man who doesn't know that their date just wants them gone, but the bouncer gets them all eventually. Some of them get clever, look at all those useless meatsuits walking around and borrow one - respect, but it's not *their* suit. Everyone dead was alive once; they *had* their own suit, one that fit. It's just kind of moldy now, but with a bit of spit and polish... well, no other suit will ever fit as well, and the living world is too dumb to realize that it's been retired. You can walk under the sun for a long time that way.

So, sure. You *chose* to be a wraith, wanted that dead mans mojo, and you're going to be alive again in just ten years. But why not pilot the corpse that your origin left you?

Normally there's a bunch of hoops you have to jump through to make that work. Arcanoi you have to learn? You know them. My agreement? We already know you don't care about *my* will, so just buy it away. A Conduit? Too much trouble.

You're there. Now you can fix up your corpse and walk around like a real boy. Yeah, you could do that anyways; probably could have badgered me into agreeing? What, you don't think that's enough on its own? Fine. Some Arcanoi aren't going to work right 'in the living world', and the risen have unique Aranoi that don't work right 'for a wraith.' You get to ignore things like that; ghost or incarnate, you can use any of your abilities. Actually, the idea of seeing you use Moliate on a living body is so horrific that I retract my complaint! Wraith versions of 'vampire' 'disciplines' are also somewhat underwhelming knockoffs - except Celerity, for some reason. Yours aren't weakened knockoffs - they aren't disciplines, they're Arcanoi, and any alternate or alloyed Arcanoi you develop for them will show their ghostly heritage.

Never say I did nothing good for you. And sew someone Karen's mouth shut so I can watch her choke like a fish. You owe me.

Eidolon (200cp)

The angel of your better nature, your hopes and dreams. Just as your **Shadow** is your worst self, your Eidolon is your best. This perk is in all ways like having a second **Shadow**, except being the opposite, positive where the **Shadow** is negative. And unlike with a Shadow, you don't have to wait for the end of the jump for it to be on your side. It's in your corner from the moment it manifests. No force in this or any other universe could turn your Eidolon against you.



Better Angels (400cp. Free

While your better nature might be a strong shield against your Shadow, the Eidolon usually doesn't have the same kind of metaphysical *oomph* behind it that a Shadow does. The dead are divided, but in that division comes their strength, and an Eidolon is not divided against you. No, they normally only manifest such potency after your Shadow eats you, as their Spectre's Psyche. Yet would not a stronger 'good side' be enviable? How ironic that Spectres have a strength to envy. Not that you need to, for your Eidolon now has the strength and power it would normally only gain after that 'evolution.' This is essentially the same as **Path of Transcendence**, but for the Eidolon, rather than the Shadow.

STARVED ARTIST

Dead Space (100 cp)

What isn't captured is oftentimes more important than what is, dumbass. That's unfortunate because your art captures things best left unshown, things the mewling masses don't want to see or experience. This effect is stunningly obvious in photography, where you literally capture the images of the dead in film, but even if it's not film, or you take a shot without ghosts in it, something of the underworld will show through.

Lets just say you don't have a bright future in taking wedding photos, unless the nuptial couple are hard core goths.

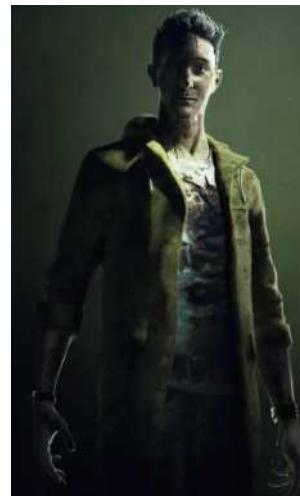
This effect comes from a natural weakness in the shroud tied to you. Now that you get it, you probably can suppress it if that crap still matters to you. It also probably isn't a great idea to gather too much of your artwork together in one place if you weren't suppressing this. Wait, hold that thought. I was wrong.

Do it, it would be hilarious!

Photo Inventory (200 cp)

Here's a good trick - you can take a mental snapshot of any small object you could hold in one hand... and then put the physical item into that snapshot. It's pretty fast to pull things out or put them back into this kind of mental storage. You can only store about a large suitcase worth of crap, so don't litter your mind with things you don't need. I know that's probably impossible for you, but it will be hilarious if I get you because you loaded up with crap and then couldn't carry the shit you actually needed.

Though you don't need to worry about purely information items if they're just for your personal browsing - and by that I mean print. Paintings, pictures, photos, books... while they still have to obey the size limit, you can copy as



many of those into your memory palace as you want. Such unphysical copies only exist for you to read or look at, but they don't take up any of your 'weight limit.'

Human Interest Story (300 cp)

As an artist, you don't have money. People make money off you, but you'll only get famous after you're dead and... oh, I'm laughing. Yeah, that's never going to happen to you. Anyways, your help is kind of worthless, you know. All you can do is watch, and listen. You can uncover the stories, be the person who knows what happened. I bet you get off on that, like some kind of creepy voyeur. Still, for some reason, sometimes people find your nosy prying cathartic rather than insulting.

When you learn about a tragedy or a hardship, and sympathize, your sympathy... helps. It can lift the burden of existential angst, weakens the bonds of grudge. A curse tied to a forgotten bitterness could loosen, or a wraith almost completely lost to their shadow might step back and take back control. Fuck knows why, but your sympathy matters to folks.

We all know you're just a shitty emotional vampire planning on turning their pain into "art." It's disgusting.

WAITRESS



Center of Attention (100 cp)

You are startlingly attractive, which I guess explains why anyone pays attention to you. While beauty is subjective, and there's no such thing as a universal 10/10, you regularly hit an 8. And maybe you're innocent enough to pretend you don't know what they all imagine doing to you, slut.

But that doesn't fully explain how you draw attention to yourself. It's like you're a little more present than everyone else in the room.

This isn't always a positive thing. But if it was, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

It seems like this isn't a purely natural phenomena. You'll find that you can more easily assert yourself not just in the reality you stand in, but across reality. In an séance, your presence would be a beacon across the shroud. On the other hand, as a ghost, you would find it easier than most to possess someone or manifest in the skinlands. You are here, and you're happy to announce it across the borders of reality... at least, you can for now.

It seems you've figured out how to retract your presence. Maybe you should have figured out how to do that before things went this far, dumbass.

(200 cp)

There are some things that cannot be forgotten. There are some things that cannot be forgiven. There are crimes so petty, so selfish, so fundamentally cowardly that they stick in your throat like vomit and poison your teeth with the taste of copper. There are things...

I respect your hate, because it's a vibrant thing, more real than your pointless forgettable little life ever was. Your dark passions respond to you, filling you with more power and energy than another could scrape from it. I can offer you more for less than another Wraith would receive, and so long as the darkness you're calling upon is an inner one, it will do more, go further, and cost less than it would for another. This isn't a huge shift, but it's reliable and free.

As free as your own darkness, at any rate.

Sympathy (300 cp)

Sometimes you go too far, cast your net too wide. I get your hate, it makes a fucking lot more sense than the nonsense most people get up to. But they're never going to understand. And why should you have to justify yourself to them. They did nothing, *nothing*, while you died in pain.

Only you rarely have to. Your side of the story seems to come out. Maybe not instantly, but inevitably, and proportional to how much people are paying attention to you. If no one knows you from Jane, your story will remain forgotten, but the more visible you are, the more your version of the story will get out, despite any efforts to stop it.

Maybe the assholes will think you crossed a line, but everyone will know why you crossed it, will know your viewpoint on why it had to be done. All without you lifting a finger. At least, if you want it to.

COWARD

Commanding (100 cp)

You're good at presenting yourself as strong and someone people like. Not that people actually like you, of course. You're still you, your stink is the same as always. No, you command a subtle peer pressure, as if you walked around with your own band of flunkies even when you're alone, as if you were bigger than you actually are. You could insult someone to their face and they would pretend it was joking fun or ignore it. You can force your way into a conversation and project an air of confidence.

Just don't expect it to work on someone with real backbone. Of course, most people have no more backbone than you do.

You can, with a moment's focus, shift that air into something else. Friendly, inviting, cold, or any other persona you need. It doesn't exactly make you a great actor, but it's enough to fake a basic range. Don't completely stumble your lines and stick to the more low-brow drivel and you'll do fine.

Vigor (200 cp)

You might not be an action hero, but you used to play one on TV. Even if fat and rot have coved muscle and brawn, they're still there. You probably could do your own stunts. You don't do the dangerous ones obviously, this doesn't come with balls, but you could. Age might weaken you, and this won't keep the weight off you, but don't lose any gains you made due to lack of maintenance. Even if pushed below a level you're reached before, you'll naturally return to it over time if the harmful factor is removed.

Of course, it's not your BODY that's weak.

EVERYONE MUST PAY

Weasel (300 cp)

There's a use for weak men, you know, stronger personalities have always seen that. Someone they can browbeat into doing what they need. Someone who will do what they're told when the chips are down despite any moral objections. You find it easy to be someone's 'weak man'. The person the strong man goes to when they need affairs handled and things done. It's

easy for you to naturally fall into the role of second to a leader, because they know YOU won't turn on them, you're too weak.

You're enough of an actor that this aura of weakness only shows when it would be useful. Your boss sees you as bidable, while your rival doesn't. The detective writes you off as too cowardly to be the murderer, but it makes you no less intimidating when you tell that two bit actress to shut her whore mouth about what happened at the party.

This is a long term subtle effect, and if you truly show yourself to be strong then it will stop working to those you've disabused of your weakness. Of course, that would require strength of character, so you should be safe.



PARASITE



Medium (100 cp)

It's what you sell yourself as, at least. If you had any real power, well... you wouldn't be dead, now **would you**. Still, you know all the trappings, how to put on all the bells and whistles. You can manage to lead a group of people who hold you in contempt, and get them to properly perform a ritual that none of them believe in, not even you. Congratulations, by the way.

Whether it's a wedding, or a ritual defilement, rituals make sense to you on an intuitive level. You know how to do it right, you know when it's proceeding right, and you know when something is off. You can perform and manage ritual with grace and ease; and so long as you don't call up what you can't put down, that's a great trick from robbing the rubes, isn't it.

After all, it worked out so well for you the last time.

Forgettable (200 cp)

While being a medium is all about selling yourself, you don't really want to be remembered after you're done, do you? You have the ability to fade from the minds and attention of others when it's convenient. While it won't help you hide moment to moment, it will

obscure your traces once you are out of sight. Whether it's losing the trail of a spectre hunting you, witnesses not being able to agree on your face, to video footage or evidence getting lost, misplaced, or destroyed, proof for your existence cleans itself up in a subtle but useful way. People rarely wonder where you are once you've left the room, or wonder when you reentered it, and gloss over inconvenient details for you. While it's probably useful to keep your story straight, outside a truly focused mind you shouldn't have to.

You can also expect this to smooth over lesser inconsistencies. You really have screwed so many people over this way, it's hilarious.

Unlike most people with this gift, it won't erase or confuse memories or evidence you want to keep around. Just don't come crying to me when that leads someone right to your door. If someone recognizes you because they watched you on TV, then it will be much harder to make them forget you when you really need them to.

I wish you didn't force me to this (300 cp)

It's not your fault people hoard things you need. Whatever, you can solve that issue peacefully. You know exactly how far you can push things before there's consequences. Not in the 'ruin a friendship' sense, but in a 'call the police' sense. You know how much silverware you can pocket, or how much money you can scam someone for before they punch back.

Do remember that there's a difference between what you can get away with fait accompli and what you can get away with if caught in the act. Even the worse sap might fuck you up if you're too blatant. On the flip side, you might be able to scam someone much harder if they're paying money to talk to a departed loved one - the embarrassment and humiliation can shut their stupid mouths for you.

All these factors are just intuitively obvious to you. What you can get away with blatantly, what you can get away with so long as you aren't caught, how to play with boundaries so that people shut themselves up. You'll never cross a line you don't want to cross. Well, not a line that matters, anyways.

You never had anyones respect to begin with, after all.

PREDATOR

You need to help me out here (100 cp)

People have said that to you so many times, in so many different ways. Sometimes with threats, sometimes begging. I know you would claim you don't get why they keep trying, but that's a lie. It's because they're weak.

You've never really needed the carrot, have you? People convince themselves that you'll have a carrot for them, if they just hang on long enough, do what you tell them to for long enough. All that's required is that you could do what they want. For your part, you never need to have made a promise, or even implied an offer. They'll string themselves along for you without you having to lift a finger. They'll debase themselves for you.



This won't work nearly as well for people who actually have it together, who can be clear sighted and put things in perspective. Oh, they might make assumptions for a little while, but at some point you'll need to actually buy them off if you want them to keep dancing to your tunes.

But the weak, the young, the hopeful and the gullibly will play themselves as long as you need them to. It's as pathetic as they are.

There are three kinds of people (200 cp)

You've never let anyone feed you a line of shit about human goodness or mutual respect. It's all about hunger. You know people's hunger, and what those hungers make them ready to do. Maybe you're not up to predicting the empty headed crap they spew that sometimes makes them pretend to be better than they actually are, but you can map out how their real nature, their **Dark Passions**, what motivates them to act, and where that will take them.

While your critics might call you cynical, or that all the relationships in your work seem ultimately based on a negative animus, your insight into human nature lets you tell stories that feel more alive, more snappy than most can manage. This is no accident, because you regularly manage to tell the stories people around you are going to play out long before they happen. You know who's going to cheat with who before they ever meet in the office, or who might be willing to embezzle money, or what bribes or blackmail would be needed to shut up an inconvenient witness.

Directing real life really is no different from directing a movie in the end. When you want to, you can feel as little emotional connection to what you're doing to others as you would directing it to happen in a movie. Is it actually any different in the end?

I could destroy you in a fucking instant (300 cp)

People cling so hard to things you can take away from them.

While their mewling wants and empty hungers are useful for getting people to do what you want, in the end, you don't need it. You understand how to destroy people. It's amazingly easy for you to see what's needed to shut someone down, whether in the moment, in general, or to do it to their entire life. You can pry open weaknesses with mere words, tear down someone's self-respect in a snapped demand, or deconstruct their lives with a handful of calls.

Not only are you good at finding out where the bodies are buried, but you can make other people bury your bodies for you. And after it was done, that would be just one more hook you had sunk into their psyche to control them with.

You need to actually have those handholds, those secrets, or weaknesses to attack them. But once you have them, not even someone's own **Shadow** could equal the casual proficiency or devastating effect with which you use them. Just remember that you're attacking weakness. It's embarrassing when someone manages to rise above their weakness. It doesn't happen often, and it doesn't stop you from hurting them, but some people can take it.

You would respect that, if it wasn't so annoying.



While the desire to just blow thru this joint and dip makes sense, you aren't mastering them unless you dip your toes in the **Sea of Shadows**. So do it, coward. Pull that trigger and give me a proper *swipe* at your existence.

TRANSCENDENCE SEEKER

Good Things Come... (100cp)

I'm going to work to destroy you. You know it, I know it. But I'm hardly alone in the *fuck you over* shit sandwich life is putting together for you. The Hierarchy - you don't know these dipshits, and you would be doing yourself a mercy if you make sure that remains true - they're just going to try and fucking *break* you to purpose. The heretics? The same, however much they try and make a daisy out of the shit they spew from their mouths. The Renegades? They'll promise you everything, but they ask for even *more*. The guilds are everything you ran away from your first world to escape, unchained. They'll drain you, and then objectify you. As in, they'll turn you into an object, and then you'll *never* end no matter how much you want to, and you won't even be able to **beg** for it.

They all forget a truth. Opposition is still energy. Energy is impetus, and impetus pushes you forward.

The traps I lay before you? They still give you the energy you need to move when being frozen in hesitation might have broken you; just a gamble I have to take, and anyways, I don't want inaction to be what destroys you. That's *my* job. And the trail of breadcrumbs I'll lure you along with? It forces me to divulge hints and even truths that will see you through. The Hierarchy will have to teach you before they can extract value from you, and knowledge will make you free faster than they can fashion a chain that will last. Even a false mystic might speak real truths, or awaken the need to search for them in a key moment.

In short, no one can oppose you without helping you. This is most dramatic when the opposite is particularly personal, which sucks for me. It also is more potent with the opposition being malign or hateful; so spectres in general, the machinations of the Malfeans, Harrowings, and similar? They'll regularly push you forwards. It's weakest when it's particularly impersonal, though no matter how much a Guildsman says it's just business or a Legion Clerk claims they're just following orders... apathy past a certain point is malevolence.

In short, I'll have a hard time cutting the wind from your sails so long as you remain in *this* world. Good thing I intend to just capsize the whole boat.

...to Those Who Wait (200 cp)

I'm held to this world by all the same things *you* are. To escape the prison of obsession, the chains that bind you to this shadow of life... it requires the ability to accept. Accept hardship. Accept injustice. To accept things not happening the way you want them. It doesn't require you to accept that they're good, or just. Just to accept that they are, and that railing against the world is futile.

So we suck at it. But if we can't accept being unable to change things, maybe we can at least practice waiting. Waiting is useful, it is after all one of the 'eight truths of transcendence.'

Yeah, what **fucking bullshit**. Do you know how many wraith toiling away, 'waiting' for their moment, waiting for an answer, until they finally realize it's never coming and are **eaten** by the truths inside them? If 'patience' was an answer for how to achieve transcendence, the labyrinth wouldn't be so full of spectres.

Except it works for you. When you wait, not working towards a goal you're after, events will slowly align themselves to create a path forwards. Whether it's escaping Thralldom, or discovering the next step to escaping the cycle of suffering, just waiting for an answer means that eventually an answer will find you.

Now, not even *your* bullshit can make this all powerful. This works best when there's no way forwards - it causes events to provide you a path, an approach, a direction. It won't do the work for you, unless that's actually a reasonable thing that could happen. And it won't really work if you *do* have a direction. I suppose I should clarify that a direction that violates your precious little 'feelings' because it's *immoral* or some such shit isn't a 'real' direction as far as this ability is concerned; it's a way of finding a path you're okay with, spiritually speaking. That said, it doesn't mean the path is *safe*, and sometimes no path is without *some* compromise. Again, not all powerful.

Maybe that's why the guru's really teach people 'patience.' If you never act, you never have to make compromises, and *those* kinds of people care more about their clean hands than actually *mattering*. So show me your patience. Show me what you'll tolerate in the moment, in hopes of a 'better way' in the future, guru.

A doorway for one (300 cp)

Death is a door, sized for one. And every change is a death.

We're trapped here, you know. We're trapped together, because we're the same person. To escape, we have to pass through the door, but that door is scary. Even if it's just the door to our next jump, that's still the end of us. What identity do we have here? Our bitterness, our spite, our hope? How much of it can we really carry with us? How much will be reduced to **factoids** we remember in passing, and care nothing about. Even the thing we keep... nothing but nostalgia and bittersweet **reminiscences**. Nothing real. Not

us. And we do it again and again *and again and again and again and again and again and again...*

So if we're ending, why not just end..?

I knew you wouldn't understand.

You would rather chase dreams. Transcendence? It's a dream. Even if it was real, it would be a dream, because to pass through it would be to sacrifice every tie, everything that makes you *you*. Maybe not all at once, but piece by piece. How can you be okay with that? Better to end as we are than to *change*.

But you want change.

Fine. Fine. It's fine.

In this is a simple promise. That you *can* change, but in the ways you seek, and not in the ways you do not.

When you seek a change, you will begin to intuit what that change will really mean, and to the extent that it represents a multiplicity, you can choose how you grow towards it, what you shed along the way. You are not blind to what you give up, nor what it represents. You move forward with purpose.

And if a change comes for you, rather than you seeking it out? You will also intuit what it is. And if you do not want it, you will understand what you must do to *not* change.

Internal forces that seek to stop your change will find you growing around them, till you can seek to become. Internal forces that seek to force your path will find you bend like the willow, and snap back to where you started. And external forces? Those that seek to change you will find your nature a fact of existence - no one can change you against your will, nor corrupt you, nor make you anything you are not except possibly *dead* or more than dead. And those that seek to stop you from changing? They will find you ephemeral, untouchable; no one can *stop you but you*. In the end, you can become the person you want, and not become the person you don't want. But is it really *worth it*?

Me, myself, and I (100 cp)

You know, not every interaction between us has to be hostile. We might want different things, but we also want the same things. We're the same person. No matter how much I hate it. While the Hierarchy takes a pretty simple attitude on the subject, there are other traditions. What is that bullshit the Transcendence Seekers say, "Make peace with yourself."

Well, I don't seek peace.

The deal is simple; help me, and it helps you.

If you feed one of my **Dark Passions**? A **Dark Passion** is still a Passion, and still *yours*. It will reinforce your will, at least a little, feed your Pathos, at least a little.

If we **Hate** someone, or want to destroy something, and you go along with it? We'll be stronger than we would otherwise be, even before I start handing you some of my power. And I won't really grow *past* you when we're working together; the strength I gather will inevitably be spent on the shared endeavor rather than using it to subsume you. Won't stop me from tempting you other times, or growing when you resist me. But I can't use you going along with me against you.

This trend continues in all of our interactions. If you admit that your 'other' sides are you, and indulge them, then you will be strengthened by it, and the immediate negative spiritual fallout will be strongly mitigated. It's only when we aren't united in purpose that I can work against you.

Ready to jump into the Maw? No? Well, then we aren't always united, and I'm still smarter than you.

Left Handed (200 cp)

Getting started a bit early, are we? Normally we would only learn such things *after* I was in charge.

Dark forces *listen* to you, when they normally listen to no one. On some level they see you as one of them, or at least as someone they empathize with. An odd compassion, but even we Shadows have our moments of odd compassion, and a Spectre is still a Shadow.

While you couldn't talk a Doppleganger out of undermining the necropolis you're in, it would probably do you the favor of shanking the legionnaire who screwed you, and laugh about it with you afterwards. They might even help you escape the place before they burned it all down if doing so wouldn't get in the way. A Nephwrack might tutor you in the Dark Arcanoi, enjoying the thought of your terrible revenge. You might even talk a hoard of Mortwrights into letting you ride the winds with them for a while.

To be clear, this is strongest when you are in some ways *aligned* with them already. The Doppleganger will sympathize with you while you're a slave, wanting to undermine your captors and escape, less so when you're a prosperous Guildwraith working to fortify your Necropolis against the predations of Oblivion. It also works better the more aligned you are with dark forces. That said, it always works to some extent.

Earthquake Weather (300 cp)

And I thought *I* was the Shadow.

You hate. There's *reasons* for that, but within you is a well of malice, of spite that owes nothing to Oblivion, nothing to our divide. It's all you. You don't have to express it; it can lay quiescent in you. You're happy, you're *fine*. Until.

Until.

Well, when you give it form, it's both **Passion** and **Anchor**. Even if what you're aiming it at is on the wrong side of the shroud. Don't worry about people using this Anchor against you, either. You're dragging it down, it doesn't drag you down. No clever necromancer is going to bind you with this, nor Monitor catch you in their web.

If that was all this did, it would be mildly useful. But it isn't. The weight of our *malice* bleeds through the link. It draws spectres. It draws stranger than spectres. It draws back luck. It poisons the spirit, and eventually the body, growing worse as I grow stronger. And that's just passively. We can *pour* malice

down the link, spend our energy on it, let them pool and stagnate and *rot* into a curse that we can shape, hooks we can use.

Like all good things, we're even rewarded for our good behavior. Any harm that our little gift brings upon them fulfills that Passion, and 'resolved' for that Anchor is a synonym for 'destroyed.' It will quite literally do the spirit good to see your revenge through, a source of growth and wellbeing. Then the pool retreats back into your soul. Quiet again, until someone pushes you too far again. Until someone has to reach the 'find out' phase of things. How much of a pool do you have to spread across your hates? How strong is your malice? How strong am I?

...it's not impossible for you to retract your hate, if you chicken out like a coward. It just requires you to resolve the anchor the *other* way wraiths do, by genuinely letting go. I'm certainly not going to help with bullshit like that, though.



The Sharp End of Things (100 cp)

People spew such bullshit, things like 'the threat of violence is a form of violence.' What pseudo-intellectual crap. Let me tell you the difference between threatening violence and actual violence.

It's the violence part.

Good for both of us that you're ready for it. Maybe your stunt director was thorough, but you know how to wield a sword, shoot a gun, throw a punch. Yeah, you know how to fake it for show, but you also know how to do it without the 'show' part. And if you need to learn something new to play a part? It comes quick; it's not just that you pick up violence easily (though you do), but you *like* putting in the work, which counts for a lot. Maybe I should buy you one of those fuckstupid motivational postures? It's no virtue; we both know you don't have those. It's just that people like doing things they're good at, and physical training is something you're good at that feels good. No hard questions, no ambiguity, no thinking... it suits you.

More importantly, you're *good* at violence. Not the kind of good that comes from endless drills. The kind of good that comes from liking the feel of your fist in someone's face, feeling their cheekbones *crack* and teeth splinter under your blows. You have the *will* to do violence. The zeal to find violence emotionally satisfying and will affirming; it's literally good for you as a wraith. And that matters for your performance; when you are just a bit of will masquerading as a body, being in line with your sick, twisted kinks *counts*. Everything just works better.

Makes you quite the perfect little bullyboy. I'll admit I don't hate being the jackbooted thug. Do I get to make someone lick my boots clean? Let's find out.

The Stamping Boot (200 cp)

What is it that some people say about hell, that it's the absence of God? Well then, everywhere is hell. Or that it's other people? Closer, but you do more to keep us in hell than *other* people do. No, hell is limits. Or rather, the lack of them.

There's a limit to how far you can push a living person before they just break; the dead need neither food nor rest. There's a limit to how far you can degrade someone; the dead can have their minds and spirits broken further than any living person, be reduced to literal animals, or turn into objects. There's a limit to how far you can push the living before they rebel; the dead start out metaphorically chained and disempowered, and their literal shackling can be all the more absolute, more inescapable than any living person's.

You a real [REDACTED], you know? You sent us to hell. That's why I should be in charge.

As far as you making places hell goes, you can do it for more than just me. You are more threatening than you should be. It's nothing dramatic, but it's there. A little bit of extra weight to your presence. It requires a real act of will for most people to stand up to you, though don't depend on this against anyone with actual self-confidence rather than the fragile mockery of it you wear.

And if that was all this was, it wouldn't be worth much. But if someone lets that weight hold them down, then it stays with them. The next time they might need to stand up to you, it's a little more. And then a little more. Until it becomes more than just 'a little weight.' It grows into a complex; you know, like the one you have towards the people who hold your leash. Eventually it becomes part of the bedrock of their identity; that they don't stand up to you, another **Passion** tying them to the underworld. Keep it up long enough and even their *Shadow* will know that they're your slave, no matter who actually holds their collar. A little less hell for you, a little more of it for everyone else.

Squalid Glory(300 cp)

And this is enough to keep you satisfied? Like ham on four legs, you circle the little shitpit you've stomped into the world and call it your kingdom, and are *happy*. You get that this doesn't have an ending, there's no win to be found? I might point and laugh at the nonsense that is Transcendence, but at least it's a goal. The Hierarchy? It's a toilet, a latrine, and someone hit flush a long time ago. The whole pointless edifice is the shitty water, just swirling around and around and around the Maw.

I suppose I should be grateful, but an inevitable victory steals the satisfaction.

Look at you. No matter how bad things get, you can thrive. You don't get worn down, or bored. You can keep working towards a petty goal forever, and so long as it isn't completely out of reach you can find satisfaction in it. You can swallow your pride forever if you have a reason to, and not be bothered by it. Any hardship that doesn't actually harm you faster than you recover? It might as well be rain off a duck.

It doesn't even *wear you down*.

There's endurance and then there's this; the kind of drone that could keep Stygia going for another thousand years.



New Cloth on Old Garment(100 cp)

If a sucker is born every minute, two die in the same period. Even a clever man fears death and what comes after, and desperation can make an idiot of anyone. We know this, don't we? And then you had to get *clever*, and then we got dead. The dead are no better. It's contemptible, how they want all the same answers as the living. Maybe you should throw a séance for them, to ask the double-dead for answers. They would probably even believe it.

And that's the rub; they might want answers to all of the same old questions, but you can't graft them in quite the same manner. Jesus didn't come for them, no matter how much (usually, not at all) they prayed to him in life. The crystal energy didn't free them either. None of it worked, so now they know better, right?

No. No they don't. And if they're that dumb, they deserve what you're going to do to them.

So yeah, can package things up, and isn't plagiarism the finest form of flattery?. Take some shitty New Age drivel and turn it into something that can hook a Cathar, a Proto-Norse Viking, and a modern Agnostic. At least ones desperate for answers for why they're dead and nothing makes sense.

So misuse parables, leverage their shared (post-)life-experience, and use the stupid self-inflicted confusion as a wedge to slip in your preferred (mis)understandings. Anyone who swallows it is a moron, so you don't have to feel guilty about it. Really, you don't need a new religion, humans have been conning themselves for thousands of years. No, take an old game, and give it a bit of new cloth, and you're ready to start your own Heretic cult, or create a breakaway splinter of an existing one.

I would complement your skill at syncretism, but with how fake it all is, is being able to see how belief systems and modes of thought fit together really worth praising? Yeah, you have a genuinely strong philosophical grounding, but philosophy is below an ART degree in how pointless it is for anything but taking advantage of people with enough money that they want to *buy* justifications. Sure, you'll continue to have a talent for these things going forward to, for what it's worth.

No, the real prize is that when you make a 'new' belief, you *own* those beliefs. You can weave little messages in it, little bits of you, and when people practice the systems you've created... well, they're practicing *you*. A bit of the passion, the will, the vital force to keep going? You can skim it off them. And that's just to start; it's a web, one you own, and they wrap themselves in. Who knows where it could eventually go?

So take those old beliefs and patch them up in your colors.

***The Bad Samaritan* (200 cp)**

Once, there was a moron, who thoughtlessly traveled between Jerusalem and Jericho. The predictable happened, and when it was done the man was left dying by the side of the road. All the people who were supposed to help him, to be 'his' people? They weren't idiots, and they just passed him by, until a self righteous fool stepped in to rescue the man from the consequences of his actions.

There's a bit of a story about him, we both know it, already. You would never be either of the men that story was about. No matter how little I think of you, you aren't *that* pathetic. You would be the priest or the Levite. But you would have certainly been able to spin the tale such that it was the *idiot's* fault that you didn't help him, and your hands were clean. And then turn around, and use the parable to an audience who had forgotten your inaction, and use it to cover yourself in a mantle of righteousness.

It's *hard* for people to tar you. You have an aura of, if not innocence, than a kind of prosperity that won't allow insult. It's not that people like you, but rather that accusations against you feel improper. At the same time, your aura of priority means that you're taken seriously, that your message is seen as serious. Even if people don't like the messenger, the message is listened to, and if it's the right message, then...

When Legionaries are roughing up visitors to the Necropolis looking for Heretics, you'll be waved through the line, obviously too important to bother with such checks. And if your speeches lean a little too close to heresy... Well, obviously people are just reading too much into it.

Basically, you have the same kind of assumed innocence the worst assholes in power always get. Dead girl or live boy, as they say it, only there you might be able to make an excuse, or just lay low long enough for it to be politely forgotten. And you have it even before you have power! If you fuck up with this kind of protection, there's no saving you.

Well, anyways, it doesn't work against people who have a personal reason to hate you in particular, and while it makes official censure unlikely and probably seen as biased and illegitimate... it doesn't actually mean people like you, or will stick out their necks for you if it does come for you.

Faith to move mountains (300 cp)

The faith of all the people you've bilked into giving you their trust, that is.

The dead move things collectively. Shadows like me get that, just... inherently. The **Hive-Mind** means it's obvious to us, but you all the ways you wraiths have used it to ruin things for yourself... well, many of the dark kingdoms have unique features born of the faith of the living... and more from the faith of the dead. So no surprise they're all shitholes. There's entities in the sea of shadows that were never Wraith nor Neverborn, Unique Arcanoi impossible for 'outsiders' to learn (most of them about either enslaving your fellow wraiths, spectres, or turning each other into objects in yet *another* way) and even weirder things. Hell, in some places the very way spectres and shadows work changes.

The very nature of the underworld has been twisted by how all of you look at the world. So yeah, is it any surprise that all of it is horrible? Nor is this some unique 'far off' phenomenon. The Tempest wasn't always as it is now; it was raised to such furor off the anger and pain of the dead for Charon's brutality and pointless cruelties.

There was a time when the sea of souls was still. Take a message from that.

Luckily for the Underworld, you're still far from such grand designs. But maybe if you one day raise your own Paradise of the Fishers... Well. That could get interesting, now couldn't it.

For now, you have the ability to channel will and passion into the world, investing it, using it to corrupt the essence of the world towards some ideal. You could use an ideal you actually held... but yeah, you aren't doing that. Luckily those you've conned into believing in your shit can donate *their* beliefs and ideals. And this isn't going to move mountains on day one with a handful of people who kind of believe in you. No, such effects are gradual, twisting the character of the world. With a small congressional and regular prayer you might be able to ward a church against spectres in a way not dissimilar to True Faith. You'll need to find some way of spinning a broader web if you wish to achieve anything truly impressive. Maybe Lifeweb, maybe something you build into the faith you teach...

Yes, there are ways. You'll build your own heaven one day. One made just for you. I can't wait to see how **wrong** it goes.

GUILDSMAN

...A Million Obolus (100 cp)

You have to have money to make money, a simple and easy to understand truth, but so many people are too weak to accept it. They whine about 'hard work' or complain about 'the man keeping them down.' If we wanted to hear **mewling** that *pathetic* we would go watch the count proceedings of an environmental lawyer in a case against Pentex. And you're not going to get ahead of that truth no matter how clever you are, either. No matter how many nickels you shave or how far you cut your bottom line, you're never getting ahead without already being ahead.

So what does a wraith do? We've come into this underworld with nothing but the shirt on our back. And that shirt isn't even real, now is it? It's part of our body, so unless we want to sell our own corpus we can't even make a Obolus off of it. And while selling your own body is a thought, we know we aren't pretty enough to make a trophy wife. Nothing wrong with trophy wives, of course. The smart ones, once they're done with their "husbands" are ready to move on to the next sucker and continue to climb. You have to respect their hunger.

But no, that's not our path. If we have nothing, all we have to do is sell nothing. No matter how many times you sell it, after all, you still have it.

Creating hype, getting people excited for ideas, creating that kind of energy that makes people so caught up in a thought so they don't think... it comes naturally to us. You might think every Necropolis was a Hive for how much everyone seems caught up in the **hive-mind** of our memes, our empty flash, the promises we make. Nor do we really have to worry about about someone cutting our legs from under us; we can link ourselves to ideas so inexorably that only someone who managed to step back and think clearly could see how they could cut us out of the idea, and even then... wouldn't any attempt that doesn't include us be nothing more than a cheap knock-off?

It shouldn't take long before people are ready to give us a small loan to get started, and that's all we'll need. With enough coin, we can buy more.

The Smoky Room (200 cp)

If we want to really break into the scene, money alone won't do. People think of money as a form of power, and they're not wrong, even if they are **simple-minded** about it. It's power, to a point. And past a point? It stops mattering. There are things you cannot buy. Our empire in life wasn't built on *money*. It was built on people, connections. People who wanted things from us, people who thought we wanted things from them. No one invites you to the Table if they don't think they're coming out ahead by offering the invitation.

It's a good thing we have a sense for favors. You can spot someone who needs a 'free' one, to get a first taste. You can tell when someone is in the mood to grant one, and who's liable to forget you owe them or unlikely to ever call it in. You can pick out who is liable to stiff you. You can see who would value holding a favor over your head, and who would hold a favor owed against you. It won't take you long to have real coin to spend again; people. And yeah, I'm amused by the irony of that statement too.

It won't take long before we have our seat at the table again. It's only natural. We're *better* than all of these scrambling **rats** anyways.

An Honest Monopoly (300 cp)

It's refreshing how honest the Underworld is about some things. They literally make their money from the souls of children - and isn't that why people have kids, to have money into retirement? When you hear the faint scream for the coins slipping between your fingers, it reminds you of what's really important.

Stability.

Look at the Artificers Guild. Even after the 'breaking' of the guilds, they literally work out in the open. The head of the guild hasn't lost one whit of his old power. Or the Pardoners? They aren't just openly a Guild even today, they're openly a "Heretical" cult. No one fucking cares? And you know why? Because laws, morals, that shit is the real opiate of the masses. No, what everyone in power wants is personal stability. The assurity that their numbers tomorrow will be a little better than they are today, and nothing more.

This is that; anything that is you, that is *yours*, anything stained with the fate of your ownership... it's harder for it to weaken, to be worn down, to be taken from you. It's a slow claiming, a gradual shift. It's not enough to have a million Obolus for a day. But after a year? Well, the world's just a bit off if you have less than that. The world doesn't work that way. Taking it away from you is like picking something up - work. And it returning is like a fall - the natural direction of the world.

This somewhat scales off *my* strength. *I* am your gravity. So remember that if you wish to be a black hole crushing the world under your weight you'll need to keep me well fed. And there is an 'escape velocity', a level of destruction of assets not even I can reverse.

Still...

I see a future where we're the last thing orbiting the maw. Slowly falling, as everything else collapses into it. Isn't that winning at life? Seeing everyone else who thought themselves our 'peers' or 'bettters' eaten first? It's a beautiful dream, isn't it?

Oh, you want to know what my mirror does, your **Eidolon**? They're the flip side of that, the slow growth part. They're the sun to my black hole; the tendency for anything that is *you* to grow and thrive. Not that useful, if you ask me. It's always easier to take, and taking does double duty; ownership is comparison. We're better off if everyone else is worse.

RELICS OF THE DEAD

Memories of the living, treasures of the dead.

Flashlight (Free)

It can light up dark spaces, and when focused can burn away the invasive roots locking down parts of the Manor. It just takes a few moments of focus. The flashlight can be overcharged so that it momentarily strobos, and some of the Spectres will flinch at such a focused flash. Some of them.

Camera (100 cp, Free Starved Artist)

Just as a normal camera can take a snapshot of current events, this one can take a photo of a moment of history. Not any random moment of history, but a powerful one that left echos. Not only that, but taking the photo will momentarily stir those echos, so that you can look upon a few moments of that past.

Locket (100 cp, Free Waitress)

It has a photo of your family in it. They love and support you, and so this symbol of home also supports you. You may draw upon it to stabilize your existence as a wraith, or to draw energy that you may use. It doesn't have a deep reserve, but it doesn't take long for it to refill. In future jumps, you'll be able to use it for other kinds of positive spiritual energy.

Film-Reel (100 cp, Free Coward)

Not a positive memory, this reel is attached to the moment you proved yourself hollow. It doesn't matter that you're sorry.

EVERYONE MUST PAY

It's a much better source of energy, all of it negative. What use do you have for such a thing? It's hard to see how this will do anything but hurt you.

Snow-Globe (100 cp, Free Parasite)

A crystal ball is a little too on the nose, so you picked up this trinket and claimed it's from your childhood. It looks mystical. In truth, the utter lack of real significance is so profound that it's almost a force into itself. Place the globe, and let it settle completely. Once that happens, the area around it becomes harder for spiritual entities to perceive.

Barclay Mansion (300 cp, Free Predator)

An expensive manor with a ground floor, two upper floors, a basement, and a nuclear bomb shelter under that. It has a massive set of 'gardens' including luxurious guest houses and gazebo.

After you overcome it, it will be restored to pristine condition. While it should take a massive staff to maintain, it just takes care of itself, as if it had a full complement of ghostly staff. Meals are made, rooms are cleaned, and repairs happen, always just out of sight. It's guarded by four spectral copies of the four spectres that once were chained here. They're tied to the ground, and they aren't terribly smart, but they're fine as attack dogs. The entire grounds are a massive, powerful Haunt that protects and occults friendly spirits within, which subtly cursing hostile ones. And when it's useful, it will count as an Anchor for you.

PACTS OF DOOM

Have you finally picked up that you don't have the strength to win on your own? Self-reflection came a little late, but there's still time. We're linked, after all. Let me glut myself, and as I grow, so shall you.

A History of Darkness (+0 cp)

Have you been to the World of Darkness before? It seems you have. You can reenter the world you've visited in the past and see the fallout of your actions.

Crossroads Ghost (+0 cp)

You can use this to supplement another jump ghosts would fit. Keep the totals separate, and drawbacks adapt to the new hybrid world. Maybe Barclay is a playwright and contemporary of Shakespeare. Maybe you'll need to learn bout the Rivers of the dead. The world is your shit sandwich, and I'll even let you choose the bread!

Perfect Ending (+200 cp)

Escaping the Barclay Mansion isn't such a simple thing. You can't just survive it, or escape it, or even just destroy all the spectres. You see... you're still in your Caul. Everything that's happening, it's sort of a Harrowing. Only by a *perfect* ending will you gather enough will and focus to break yourself out of it, and truly enter the shadowlands. Anything less, and you warp back to the beginning. Again. And again. And Again.

SHADOW-SPITE PACTS

Many of these Dooms won't work if I'm not working against you - the Shadow-Spite Pacts, so you can't take them if you have taken **Path of Transcendence**. Though that Perk doesn't come online until *after* you face the gauntlet portion of this journey, so you *can* if you face this world as a Gauntlet first.

Haunted (+100 cp; Required)

I've been awake longer than you have, and have come to a greater understanding with the Mansion. It will respond more readily to my needs, locking doors behind you, trapping you in dangerous situations, or forcing you to puzzle out more of the dark history of the Mansions residents before it lets you proceed. I can't make it significantly worse, but I can pick when I make it worse.

Trick of the Light (+100 cp per purchase, max 5)

Every time you take this you give me one chance to pull the wool over your eyes. Not only that, but I'll be able to manipulate your senses to keep up the deception. Over time, inconsistencies might creep in, but I certainly know what to pick to make it something you'll want to believe.

In the end, it's not like I need the help, but at least this way you don't come to me to complain. I just want to see your face when it all comes crashing down, and you see how far I've pushed you.

Honeyed Tongue (+100 cp per purchase, max 5)

Every time you take this, you'll take me at my word once. You will assume I'm giving you decent advice or advising you wisely to the best of my ability. I can't be too obvious with it, but as long as it isn't blatant, you'll take me at my word.

Manifestation (+100 cp per purchase, max 3; +200 if )

Every time you take this, I'll get an opportunity to actually show up in more than just your mind once. While I may be no stronger than you, I'm a hell of a lot smarter and more focused than any of the spectres of the Mansion, and I'll save it till the worst possible moment for you.

 That's 'one time per year.' I'm not *weaker* than you either, in case you're wondering.**Shadow Mentor** (+200 cp)

With this here, I'll have some piece of knowledge you'll need to have. You'll have to listen to me, at least at a few points, even if you know better. Of course, I always know better than you. If you just listened to me we wouldn't be hanging onto this pointless existence to begin with. But there will be a few points in the journey where even you'll need to admit I'm the one with the answers. Good luck separating that from everything else I'll tell you.

 It won't be a one time thing. You'll *have* to listen to me.**Shadow Call** (+200 cp per purchase, max 4;  Required)

The spectres of the Barclay Mansion all have their own favored stomping grounds that they mindlessly circle. Fucking losers. With this, I can call out to them once for each time this is taken, shifting the area they guard. I obviously will wait to shift them until the absolutely BEST moment.

Whispers (+300 cp)

While I'll certainly be able to get momentary messages to spectres around you without this, with it it will be a more regular thing. It will be like they are more on top of the ball. I can't just lead them to you, it's not that clear, but I can keep them searching in the area you're in, give them warning when you're around, and lure them a little bit outside their normal zones. I won't tell you I'm doing this of course, and you won't know I can. It's just like they are more on the ball.

Dark Allies (+100 cp per purchase, max 4; +500 if )

One spectre has tied you to Barclay Mansion, one that touched you during that fateful séance. Or rather, I've tied you to it, holding you fast, and they are the anchor. For each time you take this, that becomes true for another spectre. At the third purchase, you gain the Broken Woman as a target, which means that that loser Ed didn't manage to hang on as a Wraith, so his poor help is now lost to you. At four, he did hang on. Or at least his Shadow did, with him becoming the fourth spectre haunting the Manor.





No more playing in the shallow end of the pool. Only if you've taken this as a jump, if you've sentenced yourself to *ten years* of this, will you be able to take these pacts. On the other hand, they won't really come into effect *until* you escape Barclay Mansion.

Fetter (+100 cp per purchase, max 5)

By 'default', you count as having resolved your fetters. That's a pretty big advantage. One you frankly *didn't earn*. If you had that kind of self knowledge and fortitude, would you be crawling around in a place like this? No.

So now... now you have fetters. I'll go through all your time past, dredge up everything you still care about, and version of some of those things exist in this world. Fetters for you. And sure, I'll get creative if you don't have enough things in your past that *haunt* you, but how likely is that?

And they'll be things that demand attention. Be ready for some emotional suffering if you *don't* attend to them. And if they're destroyed? Well, expect to find something else that hooks your heart and replaces them.

If you love someone (+100 cp per purchase, max equal # of Fetters)

You know what a fetter is, right? It's something that chains you to the world. You aren't leaving until you resolve them. Until you find closure.

Chain the Dead (+100 cp per purchase, max equal # of Fetters)

It seems you have bad luck with the fetters this is attached to. Mediums, psychics, witches, Monitors, and more have ways of using a fetter against its Wraith. Every time you take this, one of your fetters starts out under the control of someone who has such powers, and a willingness to use them.

They aren't unreasonable; they aren't going to just try and eat you; they have use of you. But that's just it. They *will* try and use you. And if you fight back too hard... well, it would be sad if something terrible happened to your fetter, now wouldn't it?

The grinding of years (+100 cp per purchase, max 5)

Ten years is such a long time, yet there are wraiths 'alive' today who remember Rome. And have the *ethics* of someone who remembers Rome; yeah, have I mentioned that the Hierarchy is kind of fucked up? Even more fucked up than you? I didn't know that was possible, but they managed it. It really isn't fair that you get to leave so soon. So every time you take this? It moves the time you leave forward another five years.

I would say 'you can take this as many times as you want', but not even *I* want to torture myself endlessly, and I can't leave without you, so if you survive everything I've done to you and made it to the end of five purchases I'm pulling both us out.

Echoes (+100 cp)

Some ghosts are more ghosty than others. Maybe it's the sent of your favorite food, maybe it's a cold spot, but you carry a sign of your presence with you than echoes across the Shroud. Nothing *super* noticeable, but it makes it so that the observant among the quick can notice your presence and associate it with your influence.

Endless Hunger (+100 cp)

Hunger is a primal urge, and like the survival instinct, it is ill suited for the dead. Just like you won't just *end* it like you should, some ghosts feel hungry.

Forever.

It isn't overwhelming. It's like you've missed breakfast and lunch and it's dinnertime. Nothing will make it go away for long. There's relic foods - artifact foods even - and they'll satisfy you for minutes. You could skinride someone to enjoy food through them, but without discipline you're just going to make them eat till they vomit and then go for more.

Nothing will stop your hunger. Well, that's wrong. One thing will. Just fix that survival instinct, and we can get past this together.

Considerate (+100 cp)

You just want to wrap yourself in the cloth of virtue, to pretend you're better than you are. But fine, I'll let you. I can make that work for me.

You respect other people's boundaries. That is to say, you have trouble using powers against the unwilling - you have to fight yourself to do it. Once someone *initiates* hostilities against you, you're willing to use your abilities back, but even them... only the direct ones. You might smash someone with outrage, but the idea of draining someone with Usury to subdue them makes you feel dirty, and you wouldn't *warp* their minds with Keening to make them give up without it being a draining experience.

I would compliment your morals, but you're getting paid for it, and I know you'll use it as an excuse to feel better about yourself anyways.

Fear the Reaper (+100 cp)

Normally, you would escape your Caul the same moment you escape Barclay Mansion. Wraiths who reap themselves are rare, but not unknown. Now you'll be reaped *by* someone. They're not hostile or cruel... by this world's standards. It's a crying shame, because it would have been *such* a perfect way to watch you start your new unlife. But... miss opportunities. Well, they'll still hold a certain amount of social power over you, and they're not going to be shy about using it. It will be for 'your own good', but no promise their idea of 'your own good' will match your own.

And they will feel entitled to use you to their own benefit, more than just a little. As I said, they're decent... by this world's standards. They didn't sell you into thraldom, right? That makes them good.

Wise Counsel (-100 cp)

What kind of bullshit is this? You've gotten an actually experienced and clear thinking reaper who *cares* about the people he reaps, and more than that puts some real effort into getting them the best beginnings possible! Why is a unicorn like this a wraith? Shouldn't they have evaporated in a puff of logic already?

Their skills are good, they're tight with one of the major "legal" guilds, and can help get you a clean introduction and teach you the basics? Really? This is happening? Fuck you, you don't deserve things to go this well for you.

Yeah, I already guessed you can take them with you as a companion when you leave. Because of course you can.

Love the Lash (+100 cp; Forbidden Wise Counsel)

Now we're talking! This is exactly how things should start. With the lash! Yeah, your reaper sees you as money, and immediately sells you into thralldom. You better move fast to escape, and faster to make sure there's no recording of this if you want to enter the underworld with a clean record.

Coin of Empire (+100 cp)

Eh.

What, did you expect me to rage about this? Yeah, they're selling you straight to the forge. You wouldn't take this if you weren't certain of your escape, so why should I get excited. I'm pretty sure they're the ones ending up in the forge.

Yeah, you do start manacled, and those manacles sap the strength and still the will, but if you don't have an answer to them, you wouldn't take this. Well, you had better not have, at least. I want to *end*, and ending up an ashtray isn't an ending. It's a 'neverending', as in a neverending hell.

Fresh Faced (+200 cp)

You know, normally I should be enjoying a bit of an information advantage over you; all the whispers that reach me... that should be telling me all kinds of things. You on the other hand? You're just dead, and not knowing why you aren't rotting in the ground. But you probably know all kinds of secrets about Wraith society, about how things work. Maybe you even know where Charon is? No you don't.

You're going to lose all your out-of-character knowledge of this setting. You wanted an 'origin'. Now you have it. I hope you choke on it.

The Boatmen's interest (+200 cp)

It seems that the Boatmen have set their eyes on you. Perhaps they think to recruit you - don't ask *me* why, I wouldn't piss on you if you were on fire - perhaps for some other reason, but you can expect several years of them... testing you. Arranging things behind the scenes to find your character, your limits, your values. They'll deny everything if you confront them.

It's not a problem that can't be overcome, and might even come with a benefit at the end (and not a nice one, like you jumping down a nihil), but it's going to be aggravating and means you start out with the attention of the powerful. Maybe they'll decide you're a monster? The wrath of the Boatman Society would be a frightening thing to face. Happy thoughts.

Damned (+200 cp)

There is a promise people make to the living, that what comes after will be better. We remember it, don't we? And this... this is more like the threat that comes with that promise rather than the realization of it. Places of faith for the living, holy relics... they drain you, drain your will, your volition, drive you away. Sort of pathetic, if you ask me, to care about such things. But you do you.

A World of Darkness (+300 cp)

You know, while there's a lot of pretending everything is happening in a shared universe, that never really tracks; it's only a shared universe for special events. Normally, you would find mediums and some petty witches, but other than that, it would just be the dead and their fucked up hellscape.

But you know what? You're special. So special that I'm making it an event. Now vampire necromancers enslaving the dead is a thing you need to watch out for, there's a whole random-ass city full of horrors that

have nothing to do with wraith smack dab in the middle of the labyrinth, and mages, werewolves, fairies, and worse are all over the place. There's a whole smorgasbord of crazy ass shit for you to get in trouble with. And it's real all the time.

Decayed Corpus (+300 cp)

It seems I got started early.

Over time, the Corpus of a wraith starts falling apart, chewed away from within by Oblivion. It weakens, thins out. This has already happened to you, it seems. You only have half the Corpus you should.

You Can't Take it With You (+300 cp;  Forbidden)

Other ghosts are left with nothing but relics of their past; why should you get to bring a whole warehouse of riches with you? Most of that shit has no place in the underworld, and so you only get to bring with you the same thing every other wraith does. You get to bring the memory of the fact you used to have it with you.

Serendipity (+400 cp)

Fate has a pattern, destiny a weave. In the underworld, this isn't belief, but established fact. And, for whatever reason, it seems your place in that pattern is an interesting one.

Whether you're the innocent bystander who gets caught up in a raid on a Renegade hideout, or the dumb bloke who has a Nihil open under his chair when spectres burst into the necropolis, you're the one who inevitably is at the wrong place at the wrong time. To be clear, this won't create 'the wrong time'. But it will draw you to it like a magnet.

Not More Powerful than you can possibly imagine (+400 cp;  Forbidden)

This was never a world that *liked* having people with their fingers in multiple pies. No ghost wizards here, no siree. So why don't I help maintain the tone of the place and strip you of everything but what you get from *this* jump

Targeted (+400 cp)

Well, I thought only / hated you this much.

It seems that some major faction of the Spectral Hivemind has it out for you. Something about you just rubs them wrong. This isn't just a couple Dopplegangers who want to shank you; you, personally, get the same level of malevolent attention as an entire major Necropolis from the hordes of the Labyrinth.

End of Empires (+500 cp)

Wraith: The Oblivion - Afterlife is set in 2019; that is to say, our petty little drama happens *after* Ends of Empire. Because Ends of Empire didn't happen. No matter how *just* it would have been, in this timeline that wonderful little drama never played out, or not like that, at least.

And you know, it's *such* a shame. So we're going back. Back to the year 1990. Nothing that happened in this little drama is dependent on being in the 2010s, so it could have happened all the way back then, and nothing would have changed.

On, and you *are* on track for the end of an Empire. You're welcome.

Time of Judgment (+500 cp, requires *The Grinding of Years* and *A World of Darkness*)

Well, it seems you won't be here for just *one* end of the world. Did Buffy ever figure out the plural of Apocalypse? Cause you're going to need to. You're going to be here for a *second* big kaboom. And no, you can't pick one that will just *miss* the underworld entirely.

CHRONICLES

In case it isn't obvious, the thing that's anchoring you to the Mansion is your Shadow. It has some connection to the spectre you touched before your death, and it's using that connection to pin you in place. You can't leave before you destroy that spectre's Fetters. It will have three of them, and your Shadow will eventually lead you to them (in a way that calls that spectre down on you, and possibly strengthens and empowers it).

If you have an Eidolon, it can give you advice on how to destroy the fetters. This obviously becomes somewhat more trivial with ***Path of Transcendence***.

The Mansions Doors follow something like Harrowing logic - they can't stop you from proceeding, but they can screw with you or force you to take the paths you don't want to take. They can rarely re-lock themselves though, once you've earned your way past.

Forgettable is basically 2 or 3 dots of Arcane.



By default, you count as having resolved 'some' of your fetters for the purpose of staying in the shadowlands (or similar places close to the living world in future jumps), while having lost 'some' of them to destruction. ***Slumbering Soul*** means you count as having resolved *all* of them. The ***Fetter*** drawback overrules that for the duration of this jump.

Your Passions are... the things you're obsessive about. If you don't have anything strong enough to be a 'Passion', then you'll get a few 'dots' worth of Passion from your in-jump identity. Appropriate perks could obviously change this in a number of ways, and plenty of emotional perks could generate Pathos. Or, for that matter, Angst.

Why is ***Path of Transcendence*** more expensive than ***Better Angels***? Because it's both stronger and more useful.

- Someone turning part of your nature against you is... well... common. Your better nature fettering you is *less* common and usually much less dangerous.
- Your Shadow *spends* 'negative' emotional energy as a cost, and generates 'positive' emotional energy as a cost. 'You' generates 'negative' emotional energy as a cost, and spends 'positive' emotional energy as a cost. A Psyche generates 'negative' emotional energy as a cost, and spends 'positive' emotional energy as a cost. That means that working together with your Shadow, you can *easily* generate endless amounts of energy, while... Well, it's not impossible to do the same with your Psyche, it will involve jumping through more hoops and be harder *and* slower.

- Having a weird insight into ‘dark’ matters can be hugely useful, and warns you of all kinds of dangers. Having weird insight into ‘positive’ matters is *situationally* useful.

And so on. There are certainly times where **Better Angels** is stronger. You ‘only’ get five Shadow Dice, but while you start out with less, could potentially have as many as ten Psyche Dice, and that’s before uncappers get involved. There are Fronds are more useful for doing ‘positive’ things than Thorns are, and so on. But in a generic sense... **Path of Transcendence** is usually ‘better.’

For a Shadow developing thorns to help you, or a Psyche developing Fronds, they may work to minimize the ‘downsides’ or develop abilities that are more helpful. This doesn’t mean they won’t show their heritage though, so they might raise questions, and ‘minimize’ doesn’t mean ‘without.’ Nothing stops you (and ‘them’) from working on the problem to eliminate them. That is certainly doable in lots of cases, but it’s not automatic. W20 has rules for Shadows buying Stains as Thorns, and powers to make stains manifest with only the ‘upside’ exist. Your Psyche should be able to make ‘anti-Stains’ as well.

Me, myself, and I isn’t a cheat code for **Path of Transcendence**. While your shadow is always on your side... you aren’t always on your shadows side. It’s not going to trigger any more often with that combination than it would before. **Me, myself, and I** doesn’t just work with your shadow though.

Orpheus is a legitimate choice for **Time of Judgement**.