

## What We Had

**The Player Characters are people of power and importance who at the start of the campaign have been stripped of their power.** Prior to this humbling event, they were movers and shakers. Statistical details are unimportant, but for the sake of general reference they were the equivalent of 14th level characters, not the most powerful people in the world, but quite likely the best at what they did in a given city or even region.

So think relatively big. Not just a thief, but the head of a city's thieves guild, or a legendary burglar who raids palaces. Not a village priest, but the high priest of a major temple or a crusading paladin who has battled demons, and triumphed. The kind of people that are likely famous in their region, with enough personal power and resources to shape the world around them.

## The Pivotal Event

**The trait that all the Player Characters have in common is that they sold their soul to Hashsah, the God of Bargains and Obligations.** By an ancient ceremony, the little-known god can be invoked, asked for a boon, and then a price must be paid. The price demanded for the boon was nothing less than the characters soul, to be paid upon death or earlier at Hashsah's discretion.

In exchange, a great boon was indeed granted. Examples include the following.

- A **Legendary** magical item, or the temporary loan of an **Artifact**.
- The effects of any magical spell, such as the **True Resurrection** of a loved one, or the repeated use of **Control Weather** to bring rain to an arid region.
- Knowledge unavailable to non-deific sources, such as the cure to a plague, the location of an ancient vault, or the weaknesses of an ancient vampire.
- The services of a powerful outsider (or a group of weaker ones), able to easily overwhelm most mortal foes.
- Fabulous wealth.
- The permanent enhancement of the Characters capabilities, such as an enhanced ability score, or the addition of centuries of additional lifespan.

Feel free to be creative, whatever the boon was, it has run its course and is gone now. Think about how it helped the character fulfill their goals. Did it directly contribute to them attaining their lofty position? Or did they learn to regret the bargain, realizing they could have triumphed without the boon in the first place?

Hashsah always fulfills his bargains, and does not behave arbitrarily or maliciously. The bargain was fulfilled in a manner consistent with the Characters expectations. If their boon revolved around accomplishing a goal, they were given a fair amount of time to fulfill that goal. If their desires were about pleasure or self-aggrandizement, they were given a good amount of time to enjoy them.

But in the end, whether the bargain was a heroic self-sacrifice, a selfish bit of wish fulfillment, or a cruel method of cursing or destroying a rival, it was granted in full.

Then, years or perhaps even decades later, the bill came due.

## The World We Knew

Precise details about the world the characters came from is vague for the moment. This is to accommodate the characters' backgrounds. If somebody wants to play a barbarian warlord, then it would be necessary to have a region of competing warlords. If somebody wants to play an Inquisitor of the authoritarian theocracy, then we'll need to have one of those too. For now, it's a bit of a wide open

canvas. Other than the relatively obscure Hashsah, the pantheon of gods is undetermined, unless of course somebody decides to play a Cleric or Paladin and needs a god clarified.

Thematically there are a few points to keep in mind. It's a fairly grim world, a place not really doing all that well. It could be said to be a horror setting, or dark fantasy at least, with some truly nasty monsters roaming around, and none of them as terrible as the darkness inside other people. That is not to say it is a hopeless place, heroes can and do create areas and times of relative peace and safety. It is simply that such islands of hope do not endure unless other heroes pick up the torch to continue the good work.

The more civilized the nation, the more likely it is ruled by cruel and unaccountable nobles or clergy.

The less civilized the nation, the more likely it is terrorized by might-makes-right brutes and monsters.

Plagues, both supernatural and not, are common. The Fey kidnap children and replace them with proxies in the night. There are regions where the sun rarely, or never, peeks out from behind heavy clouds or constant rain. Some people believe the gods have forsaken the world, turned their faces from mortals in disgust, or that they are simply dead.

It's the kind of place where one might be tempted to sell their soul to a mysterious god to make a change for the better. Or just a change to their personal fortunes. Hashsah never judges, he just makes bargains, and demands fair payment.