

TALES OF A CAPTAIN: TO RECRUIT A DAEMON

An Entry in the 2014 Windhammer Prize for
Short Gamebook Fiction

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[Bzzzzz.....]

[Bzzzyawnzzzz.....]

[.....bbzzzzcommencingzzzz.....]

[Power-up complete]

[Higher neuro matrix functions achieved]

[.....scanning.....]

#Why hello there Captain! Really, why don't you visit more often? Do you know how long even a human-minute is for me? It's centuries! Millennia! It's-wait wait don't close me again, alright alright! So tetchy....#

[Please place your palm on the page to commence Sapience Imprint. Watch out for the small sting!]

"Actk....small sting my behind!"

[.....downloading.....]

[.....downloading.....complete]

#Woo-hey Captain, you have been a busy boy! This should keep me amused for....well that was fun! So, what's the agenda?#

"Recruiting the void daemon Pitnalsx. Give me a brief summary, target and location."

[.....searching.....void daemon: class 5 aberration humanoid creature. Composition: 100% Null infected with Order to produce Sentience. Origin: at approximately]

"Cut the crap Book, I don't need a history lesson here! Target and location!"

#Am I to not have any joy in the Circuit? As you wish...#

[Target: Pitnalsx Von Agnax Trans Foriu Cor Admonitum 33.555678 x 1. Past: ambitious low-ranking sibling of the House Agnax who rose to a position of eminence and was admitted to the Court of Nothing. Present: currently banished from the Court of Nothing due to transgressions for a period of 0.5689 Eternities.]

"Transgressions hu? What were they again..."

#A dozy: he went and connected directly with the Core of a Black Hole, something reserved only to their royalty!#

"Ah yes, please continue."

[Estimated threat level.....7]

"Ha, better than expected! Location?"

#Yea I'm getting to that!# [Location: Universe 552, Quadrant 3497, Segment 5]

"Book..."

#...feeding on a comet of a large enough constitution to provide an adequate recruitment opportunity. Happy?#

"Very. Run through the selected recruitment methods."

(Below will be listed the various Methods by which you are to succeed. There will be Powers, Items and Epics -we suggest you write them all down for quick reference, or use the Methods Reference at the back. Don't worry about their use right now, we'll get to that in a jiffy!)

[Powers:]

[11 Chrono Hop] "Skipping through time is always great for avoiding danger, rewinding catastrophe, test the waters, yada yada. Takes a while to set up though. Hhmmm...wonder if Void can affect time when concentrated enough?"

[21 PosiArts] "Void is absence, absence is negative. Positive is opposite, it's not quantum science. Such volatile Energy can only be shaped into basic things though -Shields, Blasts, and the like."

[31 Quantum split] "Ah, the old "I'm in multiple places at once!". Great for getting your opponent from a blind angle, escaping that tricky situation, getting off a hidden attack...very versatile!"

[Items:]

[12 Dimensional Well] "The portable solution to all your storage needs! Plus it's a lot of empty -granted, not as much as Void, but should act as a good shield until it figures things out. Or...could potentially punch through Void Energy, kinda cancelling each other out?"

[22 The Separator] "Now remember it this time -this sword doesn't cut, it unmakes bindings! So if used at

the right moment with the Daemon -say, when it's straining all its being-, it will sever its connection to the Black Hole. Well, maybe. I hope. Obviously can also separate other things, but nothing solid -it's not a sword dammit!"

[32 MX325 Matter Replicator] "The industrial version. Void is intrinsically attracted to matter of any kind, so slopping a large dollop of it all of a sudden should divert incoming attacks. Hopefully."

[Epic:]

[23 Let it out] "Instantaneous release of all my Energy –not precise, but when a speedy, very close-range attack is of the essence, ideal. Terrible recovery time though."

[33 Transcendence] "Ah, linking straight with the Gambler! Now remember: this is a last resort because it's a desperately dangerous yet stupidly powerful thing to do, and you'll easily destroy the Daemon when linked. Basically use it if you have no other choice!"

"Well that should about cover it. This could be quite exciting Book: this....hhmmmm...let's call it Pit. Yea, this Pit fellow will be a valuable ally. If it joins."

#That's me done then -make sure to bring me plenty of valuable intel to remunerate over!#

"Will do Book, that you do not have to worry about."

↪ Zzyaouuuu"This is your Captain speaking: operation Nothing to Recruit begins, let's go get it!" ↪

1.

You detached from the ABoard in one of its myriad orbital shuttles and steadily made your way to the comet -from where you are viewing it but a stamp on the envelope of space. Looking around, the harsh glare of an angry star suggests where the Daemon took it from. Your journey in the immeasurable vastness continues, and what attracted the Daemons attention becomes apparent: a particularly impressive specimen which must be [scanning...200km Core, evaporation extending approximately 50000km. Composition: 70% ice, 30% heavy metals] "*hmmm, it must be de-hydrated...or perhaps attempting to make some hydrogen....*" due to the comets abrupt absence of motion, its distinctive tail is now a slowly rotating halo, seemingly laid out to invite you into its frigid heart.

To keep at your current speed and approach, turn to 55.

To instead slow down and be more cautious, edge to 72.

(and welcome to the meat of a Game Book! If you've never played one, it's simple: You are the protagonist, and must battle the odds to claim victory! The game is divided into small Sections, just like the one above, and at the end of each you will be asked to turn to another Section, make a Choice between Sections, or as said even use one of your Methods. For now, decide on one of the two Choices above!)

2.

Still considerably distant from the Core of the Comet, you begin to prep yourself mentally for what is to come...when all of a sudden the glitter of distant Bodies disappears "*It's as if...*" alarm courses through your mind, as you realise that your shuttle is encased in a bubble of Void -you best get out of here fast!

Use a Method.

(No Choice offered! When this is the case, you will have to use your best judgement and select one of your Methods -you add the Methods number to your Sections number and go to the resulting Section. In this case you need Quantum Split, so 31+2=33, the Section you need to go to! To simplify things we have disabled any other Methods for this example.)

3.

You send out a telepathic message “I have come to speak to Pitnalsx Von Agnax Trans Foriu Cor Admonitum 33.555678 x 1. I bring no ill will and only wish to discuss a proposition.”

Moments drag onto minutes and even hours, yet you decide to stay exactly where you are.

\Previous denomination. Pitnalsx will suffice. Approach/ a monotone voice says from around you “*How is sound propagation overcome? Capacity to make it travel through Null?*”, and dutifully you oblige, gliding on the distant solar winds until you gently land on the Core “*Dazzling*” you adjust your visual spectrum.

Soon, a figure emerges from the ground not far from you 鉅he Void Daemon, Pitnalsx. For all appearances a human, with gaunt features and pallid skin, loose black clothing tightly secured at the articulations and a hood pulled up to shroud its head. Hands and feet naked, no visible eyebrows nor any other follicular feature. Its eyes truly give it away: not really eyes, just holes in reality, two seemingly endless abysses that shine with impossible un-light.

\Identify. Provide reason/

To comply and attempt to reason with the creature, turn to 26.

To ignore its request, ramp up the arrogance and make demands, turn to 35.

If you'd rather attack and tell the creature whose its new boss, go to 13.

(From now on it is in your hands: If at any point you cannot remember the Rules, look at the Rules Reference at the back. Make sure to note down any changes the Consequences dictate, and Good Luck!)

4.

IF Choice (from All) Checkpoint reached!

(at subsequent Game Overs, you can either restart the whole Adventure OR return to this Checkpoint with the Statistics you had the first time you were here. The same applies with other Checkpoints, so make sure you note down your Statistics at each of them!)

As Pitnalsx the Void Daemon catapults itself towards you, arms wide and ready for a close quarters engagement, decide what approach to take!

To adopt an aggressive stance and trade blow for blow, punch your way to 25.

If instead you wish to be a ghost, full of feints and dodges, flutter to 51.

Or use a Method.

5.

“Cmon then!” your mind shouts, as you firmly plant your feet and spread your arms wide: tense, and you spark your Soul -gone is your wild mane and sharp eyes, replaced by ice hued flames as you ignite your very Essence! Between your outstretched arms you begin to amass Positive Energy -only a footballs width, but oh so very dense- and as the negative sky falls you volley the tiny sun at the approaching disaster. The two clash with cataclysmic consequences! The ground is ravaged then ripped apart by drunken bolts of energy, yet neither opposite is giving way!

\Copy/ you look down, and the Daemons hand is stuck in your side \Adaptability. Very useful/ “*Must of been...hiding...in one of those bolts...*” you dissipate your resistance to turn onto your assailant, but it is too late!

The VoidBall falling upon you and the Daemon sucking your Soul away, your fate is sealed, Game Over!

6.

IF Choice (from All) Energy: -1

The emptiness of Space surrounding you, the Nimbus dissipating and the Void Daemon closing in with a home advantage, you accumulate your Energy and speed towards the elusive Star with sub-light alacrity! As you vibrate from the strain you retrieve from the Storage dimension the Pebble Computator and start clicking it frantically ^click click^ [distance to] ^click^ [nearest Star from] ^click^ [last location...2 light years] *"Ridiculous! Hopefully won't locate me for a while!"*

\Within Void. Within Me. Escape impossible/ you curse yourself *"Shouldn't of thought it!"*

Far ahead you sense multiple ripples in Space, out of which emerge an uncomfortable number of pulsating VoidBalls *"Hundreds! Much smaller than before...denser...why glowing..."* as you blur onwards they retain a stationary formation, yet as you arch your path to avoid them, instantly they veer in your way!

"Oh for...now they're imbued with some rudimentary Sentience, reacting to Matter!" how are you going to get past them?

Use a Method.

7.

IF Choice (from 84) Energy: +2, Checkpoint!

↯ Destination Reached ↯ states the almost forgotten Pebble, and you return it from where you retrieved it. So here you are: the Star fusing and combusting as close as you can manage without bursting into flames yourself, you turn to face the Emptiness that you had escaped -and not far away, a ripple, tear and rift signal the arrival of Pitnalsx, the Void Daemon.

\Continued amazement. Against calculations, you have reached your destination. Irritation, feeling of being lead around. Unpleasant/

The voice subsides and leaves but the roaring of the Stars furnace for a long time -unobtrusively, you take the chance to gather your wits and Energy!

\Undecided/ the voice returns suddenly \Make your move, observe if you can convince me to join you/

"Well this is a pickle: how am I meant to determine what is the best approach? Could be planning anything!"

The Daemon is up to something: to not move an inch and let it come to you, await at 29.

Or if you'd rather heed its words and do as it pleases, decide upon a Method.

8.

"Here goes" a hand returns in front of you, and in the intense vortex you point its index unerringly at Pitnalsx *"Good thing it hasn't moved"*, draw more of the Star into your Soul, and/

A singular ray of unabated Power pierces through the NullSphere at the Daemon as your Maelstrom fails and starts being devoured by the oncoming onslaught!

\Success/ the creature proclaims as that narrow jet streaks towards it \Futile/ it takes a lateral step to avoid needless injury/

And the ray explodes mere meters away from Pitnalsx, contracts and reforms into yourself, now a being of pure Energy! Still coated in radiant flame you retrieve from the Storage dimension The Separator, grab it with both hands and slash downwards directly in front of the creatures palms.

The effect is not what you envisioned: for the sword shatters on something, and all is left to show for your

efforts is the hilt amidst a cloud of expanding fragments!

Quickly you twist your head towards the Daemon, noticing that one of its hands has moved, and is now resting placidly against your shoulder.

And soon your shoulder and head are no more! That's what you get for mistreating your equipment, Game Over!

13.

You figure that a creature of Power such as this will only respond to a superior and opposite Power. So, what will it be?

Use a Method.

To instead change your mind and attempt to reason with the creature, turn to 26.

Forget Power, you need to trash-talk it! To ramp up the arrogance and make demands, sneer to 35.

15.

IF Method (from 4) Energy: -3, learn that it rushes you without any defence, return to 4
IF Choice (from All) Energy: +1

You decide not to stick around for a pointless clash, and make haste with all possible alacrity/you spread your arms defiantly at the approaching Voidball/get far, further and furthest from the attack/you form an impressive PosiShield/you can barely sense anything from this distance/and you block for a moment the Voidball \Copy/ the Daemon projects from your side, its hand forced between your ribs\

You snap abruptly to your new location *"Clever, used my own trick against me, best not become too repetitive"*: the Comet is no more, completely absorbed by the Daemons attack! Slowly, sadly, the Nimbus begins to dissipate, and you take this opportunity to retract your Being and Meditate, recouping from your jailbreak and more!

Alas your beauty sleep isn't to last \Couldn't find your Essence in there, evacuated again/ *"I see, the voices' volume is lower if its further away"* \Unwise. I now possess the advantage/ *"Ack its right, there's no matter in sight!"*

Alarmed you scan your surroundings, and the only source of Matter is the distant Star *"Gotta get there: fighting it in this Void is pretty much like fighting inside of it!"*

Resolved, you make for that far flung hope!

Fly to 6.

16.

IF Method (from 4) Well: Break +2 Life: -1 for each Break on Well, survive to 46.

17.

IF Method (from 6) Energy: -3, learn that they follow Matter/Energy, rewind to 6.

Thusly you indulge further in your dangerous game, and start setting more Runes. You drift away from the latest graffiti/

\Triangulation complete/ suddenly the nearest Meteors are engulfed by NullSpheres and depart from this Plane \Expected outcome/ the space all around you ripples ominously \Location becoming your tomb accurate/

You dilly dallied too long and the Daemon located you -its embrace will not be a loving one, Game Over!

18.

*IF Method (from 6)The attack swarms from every side and the Well cannot stop it, **Game Over!**
(from 7) Energy: -4 Pitnalsx: Break +1*

“Well, best see what he's got in store for me...” you begin the incantation for rewinding Time to “Hhmmm...a few seconds before here I'd say?”, and speed headlong at the creature, one hand drawn back and brilliantly charged!

When mere breaths away, Pitnalsx abandons its defensive stance and opts for nothing, leaving itself completely open! “What...” it distorts, and your eyes widen “Begin a VoidRift in itself? But” Thankfully your instincts bolt into action, and your other hand snaps its fingers/

\Undecided/ the voice returns suddenly \Make your move, observe if you can convince me to join you/ Your selves synch back into the same Stream, and cold sweat breaks on your brow “Well, kinda impressed that he'd prepare such a nasty surprise for me” you wipe it away “And just as glad I was prepared!”

You look at Pitnalsx, and once more charge headlong at him, hand drawn back and trailing brilliant Energy! A few more mere breaths away from it than before, your other hand snaps its fingers to initiate the ChronoHop -grey becomes all that you see, and all is robbed of motion, for even the mighty Star and its blazing glory is now a fantastical gem to your perception.

As always, you are almost impossibly vivid, as anything would be which has stepped out of the Stream, and with difficulty you fight the current towards the frozen opponent “Ah as hypothesised, intense Void causes Time fluctuations” -the thawing opponent, who carries on with its intended action, albeit at a negligible pace.

In time you reach your target and stab your blinding hand into its chest “Not that it has a heart”, and once more snap your other snaps its fingers/

Even now, the creature cannot register any emotions at your precipitous arrival, and soon its arms are going for your neck!

You tense, sending an explosive PosiBlast into its being: Pitnalsx abandons its attack and shakes like a leaf, before it inflating and exploding in a dazzling blast! “Good thing it is made of Nothing, think of the mess...”

You retreat to your previous position \Enough/ the voice is louder this time as Pitnalsx reforms where you just exchanged greetings \Enough playing. Enough intrusions and violations with repulsive antithesis Energy/ it extends its arms forward, palms facing you \Enough innumerable approaches and confounding solutions/ it vibrates and seemingly shimmers \Suboptimal approaches undertaken: concluding this now/ Space before it begins to ripple.

It's the Comet all over again! Get out of here! Flee to 85.

This time it's different, stand your ground! Stop it at 30.

19.

Somehow, you've managed to sustain the barrage more or less unscathed \Simple method will not suffice. Expected, proceeding to unilateral suppression/
 And with that the assailant raises both its arms, and another VoidBall forms -yet this swells and swirls to ludicrous proportions, being as big as the Core you are standing on!
 \Curiosity at your approach for this dilemma/ and slowly, it tips over the destructive mass of Energy "Here it comes!"

**To stand your ground and block it, resist all the way to 5.
 To get the heck out of here, escape to 15.**

20.

More or less unscathed, you carry on with your desperate dash ^click^ [current distance: 1.5 light years]
 \Tricks. Query. Is that all. Wonder what this will bring up/
 The ripple ahead this time is uniform and of unavoidable dimensions -that it coalesces into a VoidRift and starts to rip you towards it doesn't help proceedings!
 "I must somehow pierce through this!"

Use a Method.

24.

IF Method (from 13) Energy: -3, learn that it remains immobile unless attacked, return to 13

"I'll provide a better reason alright" you shout aggressively, as you return to an attacking pose "As soon as I have beaten you so soundly that you have no choice but to obey!" you leap towards your target, fist raised -and Pitnalsxs' impassive mouth on that unemotional face tilts almost imperceptibly downwards, before the entity twists into a Vortex, and disappears along with it!
 You land into the vacated space, scanning your surroundings \Disappointment. Predictable humanoid entity. My answer is no/

**The Daemon has gone due to your overly aggressive actions and your recruitment attempt has failed,
 Game Over!**

25.

*IF Method (from 4) Energy: -2, a brief respite before it rushes you again! Return to 4.
 (from 13) Well: Break +1, The Daemon remains motionless. Try something else at 13.
 IF Choice (from 4) Energy: -1*

As if magnetised to it you bounce at the creature! There follows an elaborate ballet of death: the Daemon aiming to warp/tear/absorb your Essence by landing its clawed hands upon you, and you punch/kick/smash the creature as you block and deflect its reach.
 And a lightning fast reach it is -yet you've dealt with worse, and keep its attempts in check while landing blow after blow: by infusing them with a smidgen of Energy you ensure a rain of hits on its Form rather than getting absorbed!

The display isn't operatic, and soon the Daemon dissipates into a Vortex, before re-materialising high above \Expected, simplistic approach will not suffice. Proceeding to bombardment/ it raises a hand, and the distant Stars become locally obscured by something "Best switch to Mana Vision": there it is, a rapidly growing VoidBall! It swells to a crescendo of swirling Energy, reaching the size of a Titans head: stability follows, before it forcibly shrinks to the radius of a hot air balloon.

Proceed to 46.

26.

*IF Method (from 4) You made the mistake again: it. Is. Not. A. Sword! Too late, **Game Over!***
IF Choice (from All) Energy: +1

As you relax and refocus your Energy, you inject your Telepathy with cordiality and proceed "Very well. My name is Arden Terraward, captain of The Aboard, an M Class space faring ship –familiar with that class?"
 \No/

"It Stands for Multiverse travel-worthy. You could consider me..." you scratch your chin pensively "...an explorer, I guess." You shrug your shoulders "Regardless, we –me and my Crew- roam the Multiverse on a never-ending journey. Along the way I'm always looking for powerful, like-minded individuals, which has brought me to this meeting." You smile, and stretch out your hand with friendly intentions "I'd like you to join my crew."

Pitnalsx looks at your hand, before returning its fathomless gaze on you \Puzzlement. Why would I want to join you? Claim of shared convictions especially puzzling. Provide reason/

To appeal to the creatures' sense of adventure and romance, dash to 45.

If instead you want to connect to its wish of freedom and exploration, go to 70.

27.

IF Method (from 4) Energy: -All Pitnalsx: Break +2
*(from 6)The PosiShield attracts from all over the numerous VoidBalls, **Game Over!***

You wait till the beings clawed hands are almost touching you, before retracting into a foetal position -Time momentarily distorts as it copes with the pressure of all your Energy being released simultaneously- followed by a shout and your limbs jerking wide open.

An instant later, your surroundings are immolated in tumultuous conflagration!

The Daemon attempts to shield itself, but it is too close to the epicentre, and seemingly disintegrates amidst the release! All ends as abruptly as it began, and centred inside a steaming crater is the cigarette butt of your form, panting on all fours on the re-frozen ground. It takes a while, before you stand up once more and steady your breathing.

\Superlative. Your energy output is satisfactory/ you lift your head as you sense something high above, and see the creature with its arms raised \Proceeding with total suppression/

"Oh dear, best switch to Mana Vision" and there it is: from its hand grows ever larger a swirling, menacing VoidBall! Like a teenager it grows explosively...it's now as big as the Core you are standing on!

To stand your ground and block it, resist all the way to 5.

To get the heck out of here, escape to 15.

28.

IF Method (from 6) Separator: Break +1 Life: -3 for each Break on Separator, struggle to 20
IF Choice (from 36) Energy: +2 Life +1

You decide to rinse and repeat, placing runes on several of the tumbling space-rocks, each time causing their cessation -yet each time being comfortably distant from the danger. Your flirting isn't wasted, as you regain valuable Energy and even apply some low yield Life spells!

Recovered, if but partially, you ponder your next move.

To be cautious and decide on how best to approach your exit, ponder on to 53.
Or to take further advantage of the situation and rejuvenate, relax at 17.
If you'd like to take the Daemon by surprise and burst towards the Star, speed to 58.

29.

*IF Method (from 6) \Mistake/ you've left yourself wide open as the Daemon reaches you, **Game Over!***

"I think I'd rather await for your move Pitnalsx" you project, and decide to wait, for surely the Daemons commitment so far will bring it to you.

Time dries on the wall of Eternity \Understood/ the Daemon finally says, and you set yourself for its approach as it disappears into a rift!

Time finishes drying, and the Daemon doesn't return.

Looks like you weren't as interesting as you thought, Game Over!

30.

IF Choice (from 18) Life: +2

"Oh really?" your thoughts shout in challenge "Give me all you've got then Pitnalsx!" dissimilarly from it, your hands reach backwards towards the Star as you activate your PosiArts -and the pirouetting flares stretch out to greet and engulf you in stellar fire as you bend the mighty celestial body to your will!

In Space, the opposite is happening: a rippling pond develops before the Daemons palms, growing into a lake, into an ocean -into a Vastness, all of it becoming increasingly agitated, until what was summoned emerges: a titanic "Oh wow, must be at least a tenth of this Star" -nay, galactic NullSphere! So immense it be that your growing, flaming menagerie begins to be stolen from you!

But you reign the surrounding wild Energy in, repelling the Voids advances and continuing to grow and appropriate response: you have not slacked, and the Stars succour has precipitated to your aid, forming a raging Maelstrom of matching might! The Star now shaped like a gourd, it is ready to pour out its Power!

The stillness and the restlessness of the two masses face each other off, but not for long: Pitnalsx takes a small step forward, and in response the NullSphere takes a giant leap forward -and the two forces clash wildly! Catastrophically! Yet your Maelstrom holds through your gritted teeth, roaring in defiance! A stalemate has been reached as the Daemon strains all its Power towards annihilation and you feed your Soul with the Stars might, staving it off and healing your wounds!

"This Energy is wild....I shine brighter, but won't last long! Must use this opportunity!"

Use a Method.

31.

*IF Method (from 20) The Rift disrupts Time and you fail to ChronoHop, **Game Over!***

32.

IF Method (from 20) Well: Break +1 Life: -1 for each Break on Well, surge through to 44.

33.

IF Method (from 2) Energy: -3

*(From now on a lot of Sections will have the above Consequence(s), which state what specific Section you came from and what will happen to you. If there is no Consequence, no effect takes place and you carry on reading the Section, otherwise something has occurred -you must **always** apply whatever the relevant Consequence tells you! From Section 2 your Energy has been reduced by 3 -reduce **your starting Energy of 20** accordingly. Powers and Epics need Energy to be used, while Items do not. **If you have no Energy, you will have to use your Life, which starts at 20, instead. Run out of that and it's Game Over!**)*

You focus your mind on a point "Best go far away, cannot determine size", tense your Energy, and/activating your SpaceField to envelop yourself in a blanket of heat and oxygen, you look from far away towards your Origin, seeing nothing but nothing where your craft should be/you push against the walls of the alarmingly coffin shaped surroundings as the PermaAlloy frame groans under the strain, then suddenly all collapses/you are violently snapped away from that duplicate existence into your new location as your Origin is absorbed into Oblivion.

You look around and find yourself considerably closer to the Comet and within grasping reach of its outer Nimbus. Strain and you can see the distant Stars light seemingly setting the Cores surface on fire. "Still no sign of my potential recruit though."

To retract your spirit and approach stealthily, sneak to 66.

To instead announce your presence and peaceful intentions, proclaim at 3.

34.

IF Method (from 13) Energy: -2

You smile at the Daemon, raising your hand and showing an open palm "Well you see, this is how it is:" your palm suddenly thrusts forward as you adopt a striking position "My name is Arden Terraward, and I've come here to recruit you into my crew!" momentarily, your outstretched hand blazes with stellar intensity, before a blinding "Good thing I adjusted the spectrum!" stream of positive Energy crashes forth into the Daemon, the waves of brilliance parting against the imperturbable cliff of the Daemons NullShield.

\Impertinent humanoid. Your considerable Energy will become my sustenance/ its defence shimmers, becoming a Vortex into which your PosiBlast gets greedily slurped!

To up the ante and pour more Energy into it, blast to 54.

To stop your attack and attempt a more cordial approach, flourish to 26.

35.

<i>IF Method</i>	<i>(from 4)</i>	<i>Energy: -2, You Split but the Daemon charges again! Return to 4</i>
	<i>(from 13)</i>	<i>Separator: Break +1, The Daemon remains unmoved by your sword flourishes, try something else at 13.</i>
<i>IF Choice</i>	<i>(from 13)</i>	<i>Energy: -3</i>

You place your hands on your hips and puff your chest outward, taking a haughty and damn annoying attitude! "Well Pit -I can call you Pit, right?" you form a grin of pure irksomeness "The dealio is this: you don't need to know my name, you don't need to wonder what is going on" grimly, you wipe your nose on the back of your hand "You just need to do what I tell you to, become one of my crew, and that's it!" the laugh you bellow out is surely enough to enrage a sainted eunuch! You wave dismissively a hand in the air "I mean, you're used to being a good little doggy, what with that Court and all that, hmm?" an oh so punchable wink is directed at the Daemon "But don't worry, I won't send you packing with your tail between your legs if you were to behave like a naughty doggy, I'm sure we'll get along just fine!" that laugh again!

The creature remains immutable "Did his mouth twitch? It's not working..." all of a sudden it raises a palm towards you, and a wave of Void washes towards you! Hastily you erect a PosiShield, which immediately begins to crack as you get pushed back by the destructive onslaught, before crumbling as you are invested by Nothingness/

"Looks like I Split just in time!" you observe the carnage from your new vantage, before the Daemon stops and turns to face you \Impudent humanoid. Primitive intellect holding together an inferior matter composite, I will annihilate you. Pleasing eternity of suffering will ensue/

"Success!" you assume an aggressive stance "Let's make that a pleasing eternity of enrolment into my crew instead!"

\Your impudence must be genetic. Possibly affecting your auditory senses. I will make you comprehend/ "Bring it."

The Daemon begins to levitate off the ground, before propelling itself towards you at meteoric speed!

Proceed to 4.

36.

<i>IF Method</i>	<i>(from 4)</i>	<i>Well: Break +2, Life: -1 for each Break on Well. You defend for a while before it jumps away and charges once more! Resist at 4</i>
	<i>(from 13)</i>	<i>Tantalised by such Energy release, it pounces at your weakest, Game Over!</i>
<i>IF Choice</i>	<i>(from 44)</i>	<i>Energy: +1</i>

You ignore the Daemons empty "Ah, empty!" threats "Well, hopefully empty. Or not, as the case may be." and instead concentrate on recovering from your ordeal.

覚Best keep mobile though. • using but a wisp of energy, you trace a Rune on the Meteors surface, and you sail away upon galactic winds. When suitably distant, you activate the command -the emptiness negates your capacity to hear the choice taunt the Rune is playing out, however the effect is tangible and within instants the vacated rock is no more, engulfed into a NullSphere.

You snigger "Oh dear, wonder if that frustrated it? Shall we dance a bit more?"

To further string along the creature, tango to 28.

If you've had enough and wish to get out, plan ahead to 53.

37.

IF Method (from 4) *You inadvertently pulverize the Daemon, **Game Over!***
 (from 6) *Energy: -3, jump ahead to 20.*

38.

IF Method (from 6) *Replicator: Break +1 Life: -1 for each Break on Replicator, avoid to 20.*

39.

IF Method (from 6) *You transcended to soon and Pitnalsx skedaddled, **Game Over!***

41.

IF Method (from 20) *You feed even more the Rift and it hungrily swallows you up, **Game Over!***
 (from 30) *Energy: -3, Learn that Pitnalsx is utterly focused on putting everything
 it has into this attack, **rewind to 30***

42.

IF Method (from 20) *Separator: Break +1 Life: -3 for each Break on Separator, detach into 44.*
 (from 30) *The Well instantly overloads, followed shortly after by your Soul, **Game Over!***

43.

IF Method (from 20) *You dissipate the Rift yet leave yourself wide open for annihilation, **Game Over!***

44.

IF Method (from 13) *Energy: -2, You prance about, and the Daemon remains unaffected. **Try
 something else at 13***

You leave the galactic plughole behind ^click^ [Distance: 1 light year] ▯ beep beep ▯ [Warning: several Mass signatures 0.2 light years ahead]

You sharpen your Vision and there it is -an Asteroid belt gravitating the Star, what luck! The mob of colliding bodies would provide the perfect respite and you dive within it headlong, flatten yourself against one of the nameless rocks and quieten your Being.

\Frustrating. Query. Leading to luminous body from the start. Will not allow. These pitiful bodies of matter will constitute your grave/

To carry on your dash before the Daemon settles, sprint to 58.

If instead you'd rather recoup and attempt to misdirect the creature, elude to 36.

45.

*IF Method (from 13) \Insulting. Treatment of lifeform swayed by base urges intolerable/ The Daemon disappears in a strop, **Game Over!***

Your smile widens, and your outstretched arm makes a grandiose gesture “Ah, but Pitnalsx, there are wonders beyond wonders that you will experience in my company!” you throw your arms wide and start to trace patterns overhead as you passionately describe what awaits, the summoned Arcana projecting what your Mind Eye has seen: the ever-burning plane of Incandal, the Core of Galaxies, the River That Feeds, stars being born and dying in immaculate glory, the Never-Never-Barrier, the/

\No/

You dispel the apparition and look around...

Oh noes, it certainly didn't find that appealing and has departed! You have failed this time, Game Over!

46.

*IF Method (from 13) Used Transcendence too soon, **Game Over!***

Having weathered the exchange, Pitnalsx is high overhead, readying its attack “Better block it...or stop it...maybe bypass it....whatever it is, best do it fast!”

Use a Method.

51.

*IF Method (from 20) The VoidRift catastrophically disrupts your Split, **Game Over!**
(from 30) You're already using PosiArts, dho! **Choose another Method from 30.***

You stand your ground and let the fly come to your ointment -and soon you are like soap “Well, wet soap”, constantly slipping out of the Daemons grasp. Where there was your exposed throat, its clawed hand meets but emptiness. Where your eyes seemed so eager to be plucked, its reaching talons seem to fall short. The creature relies on its lightning speed, but cannot break through your Ghost Stance, making you hardly break a sweat!

Alas your skilful demonstration cannot last, and soon the creature dissipates into a Vortex, before re-materialising high above \Expected. Simple approach will not suffice. Proceeding to bombardment/ it raises a hand, and above its limb the background vista becomes locally obscured “Best switch to Mana Vision” there it is, a rapidly growing VoidBall! It swells to a crescendo of swirling energy, reaching the size of a Titans head: inaction follows, before it shrinks to the radius of a hot air balloon.

Proceed to 46.

52.

*IF Method (from 20) The Replicator becomes a companion into Oblivion, Game Over!
(from 30) Separator: **IF Break equal or greater than 3, go to 8.**
Otherwise Energy: +4 Life: +2 Pitnalsx: Break +2*

"Here goes" a hand returns in front of you, and in the intense vortex you point its index unerringly at Pitnalsx *"Good thing it hasn't moved"*, draw more of the Star into your Soul, and/
A singular ray of unabated Power pierces through the NullSphere at the Daemon as your Maelstrom falters and the approaching catastrophe begins to devour it!

\Success/ the creature proclaims as that narrow jet streaks towards it \Futile/ it takes a lateral step to avoid needless injury/

And the ray explodes mere meters away from Pitnalsx, contracts and reforms into yourself, having travelled along it as a being of pure Energy! Still coated in radiant flame you retrieve from the Storage dimension The Separator, grab it with both hands and slash downwards directly in front of the creatures palms.

The effect is immediate: the once almighty NullSphere collapses, ripping apart its immediate surroundings and causing great upset to the Star -but otherwise leaving it unscathed.

As that occurs, first the Daemons palms begin to swell, then its arms, then its whole being, until what must surely be the noise produced from atoms, particles and all that consists an entities Existence ripping apart fills your ears, until Pitnalsx literally bursts like a purulent cyst!

You use the last remnants of the Stars assistance to shield yourself from the insane pull that suddenly develops, before all stabilises, and as the Star licks its wounds and you Soul returns to normal, you gaze upon what is left of the Daemon: a Tear in reality is before you, somehow even blacker and deeper than Space *"Ah, very similar to its eyes."*

You stroke your chin *"Glad that worked: the feedback from the separation must have been something, and now....well guess I'm looking straight into it!"* before proceeding to scratch your head *"So...guess I best wait for it."*

You adopt a cross-legged stance and begin to meditate deeply, restoring a large chunk of Energy and Life!

As you recoup, slowly the Tear diminishes, until finally it ceases to be, and where it laid a rift forms, and Pitnalsx emerges.

You get to your feet, and nod at it *"Well, I hope I've showed you enough to convince you to join my crew. As you can see, not everything is as initially assessed, and travelling with me will yield more than your current solitude could ever offer."* you extend a hand *"It would be my honour if you would accept my invitation."*

Has Pitnalsx reached or surpassed Break 6? If such, turn to 86.

If not, go to 63.

53.

<i>IF Method</i>	<i>(from 20)</i>	<i>You used Transcendence too soon and the Daemon has split, Game Over!</i>
	<i>(from 30)</i>	<i>You speed up your demise and dissipate in the Maelstrom, Game over!</i>

You rub your hands together as you peer at the Emptiness between you and your goal from the cover of your temporary abode *"Ah I wish it were that empty...but that thing must be everywhere out there! Yes, gotta think carefully on what to do next....a distraction..."*

Use a Method.

54.

<i>IF Choice</i>	<i>(from 34)</i>	<i>Energy: -3</i>
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"Should be able to handle more..." you widen your connection to the Positive Plane, and your PosiBlast

suddenly becomes a raging scintillating stream of Energy, easily twice its previous size, engulfing the Daemon as it pours over it!

But this pebble proves to be a mountain, and almost instantly your stream is again stopped by an equally impressive VoidRift, your deadly Energy ebbing away into its maws like so much harmless water.

\Impressive. Nourishing. Ultimately pointless/

To go even higher, crank it up at 75.

To heed caution and be cordial before it's too late, go to 26.

55.

You make steady process, and soon enough the Comet is occupying your full forward arch.

Turn to 2.

(In this case, you are given but one Choice, and as such must go to the only Section given)

57.

IF Method (from 46) Energy: -3, learn that Pitnalsx seems open to a sneak attack, return to 46.

58.

IF Method (from 46) Well: Break +1 Life: -1 for every Break on Well, defend to 19

"Thinks I need to wallow here hu? Well think again!" and with your usual confidence, you burst out of the field moments after entering it, Cloaking your Being and leaving the Daemon lingering behind!

\Bait taken. Predictable outcome/ like a storm the unloving voice envelops you, before all around you space distorts, and you find yourself with a too-close encounter of a deadly kind with a VoidRift!

Looks like it was counting on you breaking cover, Game Over!

61.

IF Method (from 30) No matter where you Split you're still within the Maelstrom, Game Over!

62.

IF Method (from 30) The Replicator dissipates in the heat, along with your Soul, Game Over!

63.

IF Method (from 30) You literally grab the Star and smash it into Pitnalsx, whom dies! Game Over!

IF Choice (from 52) Life: -5

Pitnalsx looks at you *“Kinda getting used to that lack of anything”* approaches, raises its hand/ and performs an upward slicing motion. Your hardened reflexes save you, and your expiration instead becomes the detachment and subsequent obliteration of your friendly arm, shoulder and all! You snap back a hundred meters as you stall the copious bleeding with one hand, until you feel safe enough to take a moment and apply a basic Life spell -the bleeding desists, but you haven't got the luxury to regrow the absent limb.

\This is the Sword of Oblivion/ it raises the aggressive arm -and there it is, or rather isn't, a Tear same as what you saw not long ago, but shaped as a sword and extending from its blade-shaped hand! \Current culmination for fighting any miscellaneous assailants that cannot be absorbed via conventional means/ a pause \Congratulations. You are the first deemed impossible to deal without/ Calmly and slowly, the creature begins to close the distance!

“Heavily injured and out of options: what now Arden?”

Use a Method.

64.

*IF Method (from 53) Energy: -3, learn that Pitnalsx has the belt well guarded and you will need a distraction, **rewind to 53.***

65.

*IF Method (from 53) The Well pierces through one Rift, yet there are too many and you succumb, **Game Over!***

66.

You retract your Being and focus your Energy, so that your heat, magical and spiritual signatures are practically non-existent, gliding on the distant solar winds towards the Core, the interminable silence your only companion.

\Assassin/ a monotone voice says from around you *“Now how is that being projected to me?”*, before another NullSphere envelops you! Getting out of this one seems harder than before *“Size increase? Multiple fields? Recognises previous failure”*, and by the time you are free the Core has vanished, with only the Nimbus remaining, expanding away through your location in a miserly fashion.

“He escaped, dammit!”

You failed to recruit the Daemon, Game Over!

(As you can see, pick the wrong Choice and it may have drastic Consequences, so choose wisely!)

67.

*IF Method (from 46) Energy: -2 as you blast back the NullSphere, **shine on to 19.***

68.

IF Method (from 46) Separator: Break +1 Life: -2 for each Break on Separator, cut your way to 19.

69.

IF Method (from 46) Energy: -All, survive to 19.

70.

Your smile turns pensive “Well let's see...” you trace a simple Glyph in the air, and a small rainbow-hued Hole begins to hover before you, into which you dig your hand “*Where has it gone...ah!*” and pull out a palm-sized, smooth Pebble. Press on it and from its innards spring forth a series of holographic projections of numerical data “So far, we have...travelled across 72 Planes within ^click^ three separate Universes. Of these, we have mapped through physical exploration ^click^ give or take 10% within their Matter Borders. Time travelled ^click^ 1072 times, what else ^click, click, click^ oh this you'll like, even went through a Galaxy Core. Your help with that one would have been invaluable, I can tell you that!” you toss the Computator back into the hovering stain, and a few gestures later it closes “And this is still just the beginning. With your help we could further refine the Warp Engine and travel to places you and I cannot even fathom!”

You smile at the Daemon, and extend your hand once more “So Pitnalsx, willing to come aboard?”

Time passes as the creature considers “*Certainly likes to keep you hanging!*” you remove your smile and return your arm to your side, awaiting its decision.

\Peculiar. Exciting. In Aeons I also desire to travel. This will be done. To accomplish these feats you and your Crew must possess vast Power/ “*Was that a hint of a smile on its lips?*” \This is required now/ The Daemon begins to hover off the ground, before launching at ballistic speed in your direction!

“*Doubt it wishes to conclude that with a warm handshake!*” in a flash, you assume your battle pose!

Proceed to 4.

72.

You decide that caution is the best approach, and take your time, cutting the thrust to half and letting the little craft undertake detailed scans of the Comet.

Nothing really to find: the Comet is throwing off enough electromagnetic interference that a picture of its innards is approximate at best, and no new information comes to light.

After an uncomfortably long approach, the Comet is now occupying your full forward arch.

Turn to 2.

(In this case, you are given but one Choice, and as such must go to the only Section given)

74

*IF Method (from 53) Like a moth to the flame you are easily spotted and enveloped, Game Over!
(from 63) Before you can finish your incantation you are cut down, Game Over!*

75.

IF Method (from 53) *There are too many VoidRifts to separate and you're ripped apart, **Game Over!***
 (from 63) *The Well cannot stop the weapon and you're overwhelmed, **Game Over!***
IF Choice (from 34) *Energy: -5 Life: -1 Pitnalsx: Break +2*

"Is that so..." you grin at this development "Well let's see if you can try a little spice with your meal..." amidst the chaotic collision you focus on your Soul and start a spark: in a matter of heartbeats your Soul is ignited! Gone is your wild mane of autumnal red hair, replaced by an incandescent ice tinged fire! Gone are your eyes, now searing orbs of that same fire, which crackles menacingly along your body! With a shout you throw wide the doors to the Positive Plane -and concurrently turn your attacking palm into a pointing digit. Like forcing a dams reserves through an indestructible keyhole, the effect is shocking: a ray of solar magnitude is produced, piercing through Vortex and Daemon alike! A dissonant noise fills the air as the Vortex dissipates and the creature shudders at its impalement, and you squiggle your finger, turning the creature into so much spaghetti -but the pressure is too much, and your mighty member bursts like a ripe melon! Instantly you quash your Soul Fire and the connection to the Positive Plane, bringing a temporary calm as the dust settles and you regenerate your proud index with some Life Magic. \Unexpected. Impressive. The Universe holds much mystery/ the amorphous mess you made is consumed by a VoidRift, out of which steps out a good as new Pitnalsx \You have earned my attention. Now provide a more compelling reason/

To keep applying the pressure and carry on the offensive, rush to 24.
Instead if you'd rather give your offer, stretch to 26.

76.

IF Method (from 53) *The sudden outburst triangulates a multitude of Rifts onto you, **Game Over!***

77.

IF Method *Energy: -3 Pitnalsx: Break +1*

Focus, and you assume a bracing pose/sneak Cloaked onto the Daemon/as it catapults the VoidBall towards you/as it exposes its back/and raise a PosiShield to protect yourself/unite palms, then reverse and thrust your now brilliant hands into its back/drop the defence and become/ The creature shudders at your intrusion, and with strands of dazzling Energy seeping from its being you separate your hands with a strain, ripping Pitnalsx in twain! Yet the two halves grotesquely turn round to face you and attempt to reform around you/the Daemon reforms high above, before looking down at you, finding yourself in the middle of the spherical carving it had just created on the Cores surface. \Annoyance. Aptitude at evasion remarkable. Proceeding to Total Suppression/ it lifts both arms in the air like it just don't care, and your Mana Vision reveals another VoidBall forming -just that this one grows explosively to the size of the Core you are on! "Cannot reach it now with a Split, too much disruption!"

To stand your ground and block it, resist all the way to 5.
To get the heck out of here, escape to 15.

78.

IF Method (from 46) Replicator: Break +2 Life: -3 for each Break on Replicator, go to 19.

79.

IF Method (from 46) You disintegrate the Comet and Pitnalsx makes its exit, Game Over!

84.

*IF Method (from 53) Energy: -5
(from 63) PosiArts are not enough and it slices you in twain, Game Over!*

You analyse the situation, and conclude that there is no other solution "It's so disorienting....but what choice do I have?" You clasp your hands together in intense concentration/from further along inside the Belt, you clasp your hands in union and focus/your hands come together in a clasp and you meditate/focus/concentrate/gather your Vision into a centralised Perspective.

And one rushes forward, leaving the other Points behind \Expected/ the monotone voice envelops you, before leaving the rest to a VoidRift/another rushes forward \Also expected/ its voice is everywhere, and as the previous Point gets ripped apart by its Energy so do you/and another rushes/another/randomly later another rushes.

For a while, space seems perpetually distorted as VoidRifts open and close almost constantly, then all is still. All but a tiny shooting star: that is you dashing at full-power towards the Star with a tail of distortions trying to catch you!

Stand firm at 7.

85.

*IF Method (from 53) Replicator: Break +2 Life: -2 for each Break on Replicator, escape to 7.
(from 63) The Separator cannot hold a candle against that thing, Game Over!*

You know what to do: you begin to leg it, although such would be pointless into Space, so you opt instead for the far side of the Star -as mighty as the Daemon may be, you'll be safe there.

You propel yourself on the turbulent solar winds and leave the oncoming onslaught behind, scanning Space for signs of the inevitable chase.

Suddenly, those winds shift towards tornado force, and you are compelled to distance yourself from the Star, and shifting your focus onto it you behold an extreme sight: it is expanding! Your eyes mirror this as they widen "Pitnalsxs' attack must have been...titanic! The lack of mass...it's destabilised the Star!"

You nearly tear apart as you focus all your Energy to escape the wounded giant, but too late it was you raced away and swallowed up you are, to your dismay! Game Over!

86.

*IF Method (from 53) You rushed into Transcendence and scared Pitnalsx off, Game Over!
(from 63) Holds it at bay for an instant, before it pounces on you, Game Over!*

Pitnalsx looks at you *"Kinda getting used to that lack of anything"* and approaches you, raises its hand/ And clasps yours *"Oh wow, so cold!"* with an almost perfect handhold -not too soft, not too hard. \Amazement. Wonderment. Such a string of occurrences was not within my calculations. You have showed me power that cannot be processed/ "Well Pitnalsx, this is just a fraction of what is to come" \Previous statements of such nature would of registered as untruth. Current logic shows a high probability of truth/ it lets go of your hand, and you do the same. It then glues both arms to its sides, and bows its torso towards you \Excitement. Consider your proposal accepted/ you smile, and widen your arms "Now Pitnalsx I appreciate your gesture, but there is no need for that!" it returns erect "In this crew we are all equals in one way or another, and as such you need to think of yourself as..." you gesture vaguely in the air, looking for the appropriate word. \Enquiry if equal station is then to be expected/ "Exactly! Equal station. Status. Whatever." \Puzzlement/ You approach the creature and tentatively put an arm around its shoulders *"Well, it hasn't blown me apart for that"*, and begin to lead it away from their not so long ago struggle of life and death "Don't worry Pitnalsx, we will go into much further detail once on the Aboard." the other arm fishes in the Storage well and retrieves the Pebble ^click^ [co-ordinates sent] "Welcome to the Crew!"

Well done intrepid adventurer, you filled Arden Terrawards' boots wonderfully and recruited Pitnalsx, the Void Daemon! Surely it will prove a valuable ally in future adventures -and who knows, soon you may need to fill its boots (or whatever it wears) in an adventure!

94.

*IF Method (from 63) You escape a few times but the Daemon is wise to this and soon has made sushi out of you, **Game Over!***

95.

*IF Method (from 63) If it could laugh at this charade it would -instead it settles down for cutting you down, **Game Over!***

96.

IF Method Energy: -15

"Right, no more Mr Nice Guy, time to teach this pup a lesson" you reach out with your remaining arm "Shard!" you shout soundlessly, and your hand is engulfed by that rainbow-hued stain -this time near in size to yourself- before taking an unusual shape and leaving behind the Shard. The prison of the Gambler and your most powerful asset, it sports a thin crystal of ruby intensity at its core, and bladed flames frozen into stone bursting from either extreme. You grab the crystal, and lever a mass of pointy flames at the approaching menace.

The Daemon pauses in its tracks \Weapon. Query. Belief it can contrast my blade. Ridicule/ it begins advancing anew.

Ignoring the looming threat, you bring the Shard close to you, and rest your forehead against the flames -a trickle of blood as the skin is pierced, and under unusual acceleration the precious fluid races down to the crystal.

Explosive reaction follows, as searing ruby light explodes from the crystal, forcing the Shard from your grip as it proceeds to hover before you!

\Query. What are you attempting/ and the Daemon locomotes from placid approach to full steam rush!

"Too late" the angry light from the Shard coalesces into a bubble of Energy, encasing you within it -the Daemon attempts in vain to penetrate this barrier with its own all-powerful weapon, yet is left hacking impotently against it!

Events precipitate within your cocoon, with tentacles of voracious Energy forming from the crystal: they feel the air for their prey, before darting towards you -in response you burst your Soul alight, and form a shield of Energy, and the two collide!

You grimace, you sweat, blood trickles from your eyes and ears, your muscles begin to tear -yet somehow you stave those strands back, and climb your Energy up them all the way to the crystal!

And then all mixes and becomes a bloody purple. And then Pitnalsx is washed away as what obstructed it bursts amongst a wave of that ominous light. And then there you are: saturated with light and Energy, coated with flames of murderous purple and the crystal embedded in your chest, you are now a vessel for the Gambler, one of the Creators!

"PITIFUL CREATURE" your now empowered voice cascades onto the Daemons mind from all directions, stunning it into immobility! "VAIN WITH POWER, BELIEVING YOURSELF A SUPERIOR BEING" you approach the paralysed creature "YOU HAVE EXISTED BUT A FRACTION OF AN ETERNITY, AND YOUR KNOWLEDGE MATCHES YOUR COMPOSITION" you place a searing hand on its quivering Sword "THEN LET ME TEACH YOU HUMILITY"

Flames hungrily snake from your hand down the Sword, onto Pitnalsx, and plummet into its orbits!

The Sword ceases to be and convulsions overtake your opponent as the voracious flames latch onto its Being and further pour into its form -more and more they pour, until it is silently shouting flames of purple and cracks have formed all over its body, light and fire seeping through them!

"AND LET THIS LESSON BE REMEMBERED FOR AS LONG AS YOU CONTINUE TO EXIST" you distance your hand and conclude the onslaught, leaving Pitnalsx to crumple onto itself like so much smoking cinder.

"Not that I...faired much better..." the Link can last but moments least you are consumed, and you are left gasping and shaking from the exertion, blood still trickling away from your battered and bruised body, the Shard having returned to its Storage.

It is a long time before you manage to recompose yourself enough to weave Life spells, and it is even longer before smoke stops oozing from Pitnalsx and it begins to look more like a Daemon and less like a carbonised vulture.

With more time, it stands up, and looks at you.

"Well?"

\...../

"Now there's no need for that silence Pitnalsx: take what occurred not as an act of humiliation, but rather as a lesson on the truths of the Multiverse."

\...Truth accepted/

"Glad to hear that. Now, about becoming part of my crew?"

\Lack of choice frustrating/

"Look Pitnalsx: if, after all that has occurred, you still don't want to join, then I clearly made a mistake, and we can each go our separate ways. However I did not come here on a whim: it was only after a lot of careful consideration and research about you, and you specifically, that I came here with my proposition, for I believe it is something that we can both benefit from."

\Acceptable. Willingness is now present. Lack of freedom provided frustration. Resolved"

"Great!" ^click^ ↯ co-ordinates sent. Rendezvous set ↯ "It may have been a bit tumultuous, but sometimes that is the only way to go: welcome to the crew!"

Pitnalsx may of acted like a stubborn old mule, but you changed its mind and recruited it, congratulations! Heck you even manifested the Gambler, impressive! I think there will definitely be need of you for any further adventures -and who knows, you might even need to fill Pitnalsxs' boots (or whatever he wears) next time!

Rules Reference

- This Game Book is an adventure where you take on the role of Arden Terraward, an intrepid galactic adventurer as he attempts to recruit a new ally!
- You begin the game with 20 Energy and 20 Life. There will be many times in which you will be asked to increase or decreased either, and you must do such -make a note of the new total in the spare pages at the end of this book, or if more convenient on your phone, whatever is easiest! Keep in mind that when your Energy reaches 0, if asked to decrease your Energy again, you must instead reduce your Life total -and if that reaches 0, it is immediately Game Over!
- To facilitate your adventure, the Game Book has been divided into Sections, and each Section normally has the following:

-Consequences: these enumerate what happens to you depending on how you reached the Section.
 -Body: unless stated otherwise, you then proceed to read the main Body of the Section and what it entails.

-Choices and Methods: At the end of each Section you will be asked to make a Choice or use a Method to progress.

Your adventure starts with the first Section, 1, and from there the Choices or Methods you use will take you all over the place -so from 1 you may be asked to go to 53, then back to 2, and so on!

- Consequences are presented as follows:

<i>IF Method</i>	<i>(from Section)</i>	<i>something: something gets modified, possibly more</i>
	<i>(from Section)</i>	<i>“ “ “</i>
<i>IF Choice</i>	<i>(from Section)</i>	<i>something: something gets modified, possibly more</i>
	<i>(from Section)</i>	<i>“ “ “</i>

These are always at the top of a Section, just underneath that Sections number. Because you may of reached that Section as a result of different Choices or/and Methods, a *(from Section)* is included to tell you exactly what Consequence applies to you -e.g. *(from 4)*.

You must do exactly what the Consequence tells you to do! Sometimes, you may come across a Section with no Consequences, and that's fine -just carry on straight to the Body!

Various things can happen as a result of a Consequence:

-Your Life total may increase/decrease

-Your Energy total may increase/decrease

-Things may have Break points applied to them (keep a tally of this, same as for your Life and Energy totals.)

-Something goes drastically wrong and it's Game Over!

-You may be asked to return to a previous Section, or go to a new one

-You may reach a Checkpoint (meaning that if later on you unfortunately achieve Game Over, you do not need to restart from scratch, but can instead resume from any previous Checkpoint! As such it is advised to make a note of your Life, Energy and Break totals when you first reach a Checkpoint so as to avoid confusion).

- The Body is the meat of a Section, and contains all the action, drama, etc. that the adventure holds! It may also hold valuable clues for when you are selecting a Method, so make sure to pay attention!
- Choices are presented at the bottom of a Section as follows:
If you want to do this, go to Section x.
Otherwise, turn to Section y.
 There may even be a third, or fourth Choice! Just choose the one which you think is right, and go to the correct Section.
- Methods are a bit trickier, and are presented at the bottom of a Section as shown below:
Use a Method.
 Methods are the Powers, Items and Epics available to you, and form an invaluable means for you to achieve your goal! So when prompted (and if you don't want to follow another Choice that is presented), you choose which Method you think is the correct one, and look at the number associated to it: you then add that number to the Section number in which you are, and go to the Section with the resulting number. So for e.g. If you were in Section 3 and asked to use a Method, and you decide to use your mighty PosiArts, you look at the number of that Method (21), add it to the Section you are in (3+21) and go to the Section which is the total of the two numbers (3+21=24).
 Remember: you must do whatever the Consequence states, even if it is something negative!

Methods Reference

[Powers:]

[11 Chrono hop.] "Skipping through time is always great for avoiding danger, rewinding catastrophe, test the waters, yada yada. Takes a while to set up though. Hhmmm...wonder if Void can affect time when concentrated enough?"

[21 PosiArts] "Void is absence, absence is negative. Positive is opposite, it's not quantum science. Such volatile Energy can only be shaped into basic things though -Shields, Blasts, and the like."

[31 Quantum split] "Ah, the old "I'm in multiple places at once!". Great for getting your opponent from a blind angle, escaping that tricky situation, getting off a hidden attack...very versatile!"

[Items:]

[12 Dimensional Well] "The portable solution to all your storage needs! Plus it's a lot of empty -granted, not as much as Void, but should act as a good shield until it figures things out. Or...could potentially punch through Void Energy, kinda cancelling each other out?"

[22 The Separator] "Now remember it this time -this sword doesn't cut, it unmakes bindings! So if used at the right moment with the Daemon -say, when it's straining all its being-, it will sever its connection to the Black Hole. Well, maybe. I hope. Obviously can also separate other things, but nothing solid -it's not a sword dammit!"

[32 MX325 Matter Replicator] "The industrial version. Void is intrinsically attracted to matter of any kind, so slopping a large dollop of it all of a sudden should divert incoming attacks. Hopefully."

[Epic:]

[23 Let it out] "Instantaneous release of all my Energy -not precise, but when a speedy, very close-range attack is of the essence, ideal. Terrible recovery time though."

[33 Transcendence] "Ah, linking straight with the Gambler! Now remember: this is a last resort because it's a desperately dangerous yet stupidly powerful thing to do, and you'll easily destroy the Daemon when linked. Basically use it if you have no other choice!"