

*A Class dictates what kind of essence you have influence over. Everyone can affect Universal essence in some ways via their Aspects. You move relative to the world, you have a certain amount of energy you can inflict. However, where your class allows you control over certain essences, only with a Specialization will you be able to properly channel said essence and embody a certain **concept**.*

*For example, one can be a Pyromancer Dragoon—someone specializing in creating a flame-made construct they can fly on at high speeds while sailing across the battlefield, jousting with a spear or firing with a gun.*

*Through your Class and Specialization, you'll be able to start defining your own rules over aspects of reality...*

*As much as your System will allow you.*

-The Trespasser's Compendium

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Specialization (I)

As Wei blinked across the Moongrave to stand at the ramp leading out of the pit, he found the Collectors of Scars aptly named.

Everything about them was themed around harm. Scabs coated every bit of exposed tissue they had, and they stumbled forth with odd motions, stumbling and dragging their legs more than they walked. Their armor were pierced and rent all over, while their weapons fared no better, being outright broken most of the time.

However, the most peculiar thing about them were the animated tendrils of fiery essence sprouting free from the broken edges of their blades. Wei's interest was only magnified as his **Omniscience** granted him insight into the infernal architecture governing their bodies. These weren't humanoids at all. In actuality, a nest of writhing tendrils pulled flesh and broken metal together, hijacking the corpses of unknown soldiers to use as vessels.

**Omniscience Advanced > 19**

**[6/10] Aspect Advancements to Core Ascension**

Curious to see what these Demons of Wrath held in surprise for him, Wei created a **Vector Chain**, targeting each of their knees as he loosed his flowspear. His weapon shot free, one moment in his hands, the next a crack sounded, and three sickening pops followed thereafter.

The Eidolon punched clean through armor and obliterated three different kneecaps outright. But rather than gore filling the air, rather than chunks of naked bone being cast free, Wei flinched back as he felt an eruption of essence detonate forth from their wounds. More fiery tendrils

exploded across reality, burrowing through the air itself as they snaked towards him like incandescent whips.

Despite this startling display, they were but level 3 demon, and the young master's **Proximal Acceleration**, along with his vastly superior **Relativity**, made them move as if in stop-motion. They jerked towards him, managing an awkward inch in the same time it took him to achieve a full meter. At once, the young master knew they were no threat, but he warned his comrades all the same. Opening his chat, he sent Roggi a quick message. He considered Ellena, but the Oathbearer was likely the most versed in combat among all of them.

Most versed and trustworthy.

**[Chat]**

**Wei -> Roggi: "Engaged Collector of Scars. Best to take them down at a range. They have tendrils that sprout free from wounds. Sense a great deal of heat emanating from them."**

**Roggi -> Wei: "Right, right. 'Course they spray burning shite at you when you bleed 'em. Can't be anything normal in these parts."**

As the attacking demons grew closer, Wei noticed another group of four Collectors all up a distant trench, followed by another four, then six, and finally twelve. A long network of trenches extended far before him. They charted paths between collapsed fortifications, while the surface of the Moongrave was pocketed with depressions and what looked to be artillery scars.

Observing this, Wei questioned if the design was a thematic choice or if the reshaping of the terrain had been done through more practical means. Whatever the case, he'd be finding out soon.

But before that, his **Intent** snaked out, and though the tendrils tried to keep up with Wei, they were far wanting when it came to speed. **Constitutions** were seized, and blows fell thereafter.

Shattering the demons was a paltry act, hardly worthy of description. By the time Agnesia crawled out of the pit, over nineteen different Collectors lay broken before her. With their **Constitutions** shattered, their bodies began to collapse under the weight of their armor, the flesh worn by the worming tendrils sliding from bone, and the tendrils themselves struggling to drag their hijacked mass along the fractured metallic surface.

Wei let out a sigh of disappointment. Weak foes would never reveal to him his own shortcomings and strengths. He needed to find a stronger breed of foe to use as a sparring partner.

Comparatively, Agnesia's eyes were wide as she laid her axe upon her shoulders. "Well, you work fast," she said.

Wei's **Omniscience** noticed more demons moving within the trenches. There were many of them. A great many. Wei suspected that their strength came more in numbers than individual quality. Driving his flowspear into the skull of a downed Collector, he saw more tendrils burst free and then collapse thereafter, unable to even contend against the pull of gravity. So weak was their **Constitution**.

Roggi and Rafael arrived next, followed by Ellena. To Wei's momentary surprise, a Supplicant—a Demon of Pride—followed close behind them. Then he remembered the skill that Ellena selected and felt that faint chain of golden essence binding her to her demon. Right. She was going to be a summoner.

That would be best for her. More demons crawled out of the trenches behind him, and he looked to the distance, seeking the pylon that manifested the Specialization Rift. Two kilometers away. It was a massive object flanked by three dilapidated forts and an entire network of tunnels.

Wei could capture the distance between him and the pylon for immediate transference. His own Eidolon needed levels as well. More importantly, he wanted to sample what other threats this Moongrave had to offer while testing out his new improvements before securing his Class Specialization. More importantly, he wanted to ensure the path ahead was safe for the others before letting them walk into a den of wolves.

The sound of crackling fire caught Wei's attention as a sweeping tide of silvery flames tinged with darkness swallowed three of the demons. As it did, Agnesia frowned. "They don't seem to give much. It feels like just a trickle. But I got to level 4 with that."

Wei nodded in agreement before swinging his flowspear through the neck of the Collector writhing beneath him. As the head came off, a final spray of tendrils erupted, but then, like a candle caught before a drifting breeze, they all went out, essence fading from this realm. Correspondingly, he felt an increase of power drip into his Eidolon as well.

"These demons should not be of any threat to you, so long as you don't let them get too close," Wei said, regarding the dozen new demons that had crawled out of the trenches. "I'm going to survey ahead, see if there are any actual threats worth facing. In the meantime, you should all try to get up to level five, as suggested by the specialization rift." A beat followed as one of the Collectors flopped over, tripping on a discarded helmet in their path. "I will push ahead and make sure there are no surprises. Send me a message through the Chat if there are any issues."

"Bored already, huh?" Rogi said. "Don't want to play mother bird anymore?"

The young master gave the Oathbearer a slight smirk. "A chick that does not learn to hunt dies a slow death eventually."

Projecting his **Intent** beyond the trench line, Wei captured the concept of distance and broke it with a single jab. He shot forward about 100 meters and immediately broke into a sprint. He could have extended his **Intent** further, but he wanted to take in the area first, to discover all that

was around him. His aspect of **Omniscience** drank in every minute detail, letting his mind process so much information that Wei felt overwhelmed. His **Enlightenment** worked in tandem to process everything, but as it was lagging far behind his other Aspects, he found himself a bit slow.

He needed start doing more damned reading or something.

Passing over trench lines and leaping across pockmarked depressions dotting the alloyed surface of this Moongrave, the young master found the trenches manned with nothing but Collectors. There were hundreds of them, shambling and shuffling from place to place. As he directed his attention towards the distance, he wondered how the sinned incubators populated the demonic demographics of this Moongrave. The metrics here seemed to weigh heavily toward quantity rather than quality, as compared to the Path of Pride.

Just then, a deafening sound rumbled in the distance. Two more followed thereafter, and Wei saw three flashes of light flare from atop the outermost walls of the forts he saw earlier. A sudden shift of essence flooded the atmosphere, and three blackened missiles streaked high from each structure, their climb bathing the pylon in a dreadful light.

Wei narrowed his eyes as a dozen more salvos were fired from each fort's battlements. So far away, he could only see faint flashes of light painting the outlines of strange quadrupedal shapes. As the missiles reached the atmosphere, they suddenly plunged like a flight of arrows, accelerating toward Wei at startling speed.

Well, that revealed the mystery behind this terrain.

Extending his **Intent**, Wei solidified his source around the concept of distance. Rather than trying to travel a full kilometer to the nearest fort, he made quick skips across space as he darted across the air with thrusts from his spear. It was during this that he also gained another idea.

Soaring through the sky, he called upon his **Form of the Manticore** and saw if he could sacrifice strikes delivered upon a concept like with a foe. Stabbing into his Source, Wei's lips spread in a vicious grin as he consumed the blow, fueling his **Velocity Charges**.

**Velocity Charges: [1/40]**

**Enlightenment Advanced > 11**

**[7/10] Aspect Advancements to Core Ascension**

His spear spun and blurred, but the conceptual integrity of distance did not fall. Rather, after his storm of blows, his Velocity Charges were filled, and Wei felt himself shuddering with barely contained surges of speed.

**Velocity Charges: [40/40]**

At the same time, he felt a shift in the air currents—and the atmospheric essence. A series of booms sounded as columns of black fire rose from where he stood. Yet, not all the missiles struck his original spot. Some right themselves and curved away from the Moongrave itself, rising back into the air in pursuit.

“They can chase?” Wei said, surprised. Focusing on the projectiles, he also noted the somewhat wolf-like shape they took as they sailed closer. A series of thunderous echoes followed, and more hellish rockets rose into the air. Wei sighed as he extended his **Intent** once more.

He needed to resolve the source of the problem before one of his companions discovered the necessity of the trenches the stupid way.

Zippering ahead, he jolted to a halt just over the first of the forts. The structure was a kilometer wide and partially collapsed. Through gaps left in its exterior, Wei saw nothing but absolute darkness within, but felt a powerful flow of essence emanating from within. More pressingly, however, were the defensive walls surrounding the building, and the eight or so massive demonic wolves with equally large canons fused into their spines.

### **Warwolf (Artillerist) Lv. 6**

Now this was interesting. Wei's **Omniscience** took in these wolves and felt a projected trace of power leaving them. Their fur was composed of rising smoke, curling from their bodies like curling fingers of fading mist while a massive bone-shaped canon jutted from their backs. As he began to fall, he realized they hadn't noticed him yet, and the missiles chasing him were circling in the air as well.

The young master got a creeping suspicion that these Warwolves were mentally guiding their missiles—and were presently seeing from the perspective of the projectiles rather than their bodies. It was a guess of pure intuition and essence interpretation, but ultimately, the outcome was the same: Wei had an opening, and Wei had new demons to test his abilities on.

Expending a **Velocity Charge**, he exploded down from the sky and drove his flowspear through the right of a Warwolf.

With a sudden howl of surprise, it tried shifting back—far faster than the Collectors; far slower than Wei still. The young master thrust his arm further and felt his Eidolon tunnel through hardened bone and hellish tissue. Then, with a final twist, he tore through something vital, and the demon went limp.

### **Authority Advanced > 18**

### **[8/10] Aspect Advancements to Core Ascension**

### **Eidolon > Lv.4**

### **Allocatable Points [5]**

The other wolves cried out as they returned to their bodies. Wei sensed tendrils of essence collapsing back into them as spots of essence faded. In the distance, eight missiles ceased to be, and seven surviving Warwolves began to growl at the young master standing be