

# After Life

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## Sequence of Events [221]

- We will begin by determining the party's goal in this adventure, followed by character creation, and subsequent character death. From there, characters will enter the **After** - a surreal & ephemeral expanse of soul driven metageography existing outside time which acts as an 'ecosystem' for the souls of every person who has died or will die. Here the players will Explore the After, each with their own blank '**Soul Map**' to fill out - which represents their own unique path through the afterlife. The Party's shared goal? To discover their respective afterlives and find the **Final Door of Acceptance**.
- After mapping their local region of the After and finding a few **Psychopomps** (*death steward spirits*) to gather information about the Door of Acceptance, the characters arrive at the **Stairway to Paradise**. Beyond these polished stairs lies the **Lands of Splendor**, wherein the Final Door of Acceptance is hidden amongst sublime eternity. Here the characters must explore and obey the suggestions of a **Seraphim** to find clues regarding the Door's whereabouts by helping a deceased warrior of the name **Kedzeth Wexler**.
- Finally, upon finding **The Final Door of Acceptance** the characters will choose their choice of afterlife either by selecting from areas they previously explored, charting new areas, or walking through the Final Door of Acceptance to be reincarnated as a person of their choice.

## DEATH - Character Creation [525]

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- **To start the session, please read the following setup to the players:**

*Upon living, the only thing guaranteed is death. This is true for every creature from the greatest king to the smallest mouse; save for perhaps a lich or deity. Nevertheless - the same goes for you all. Once you lived, and now you are most certainly dead. As with all death, the grief process is a journey towards acceptance - but with your death, you must literally walk that journey on foot.*

- Before starting character creation, have each player roll the **Reward Die** and describe one way in which the party is thematically united across place & time, inspired by their roll. This becomes a candidate for the party's Uniting Theme. See the **Uniting Theme** Tables for ideas.
- Once each player has had a turn, have the players work together to choose one (or two) of the options as this adventure's Uniting Theme. Now proceed with regular character creation.
- Their characters should ideally represent a diverse range of backgrounds and skillsets from across the timeline of the world, as these varied perspectives will be very useful in their exploration. Finally, determine how and when each character has just died.

## Uniting Theme Tables

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Ally	Terrain Info
Each of your characters shares connection to a mutual person, community, or collection. What is the grouping you all share - familial? platonic? From which time along the lifespan of the group's lineage are each of you from? How was this relationship similar and different for one another? Did any of you know, or have relationships with one other?	Each of your characters shares connection to a mutual area or landmark across time. Where & what is this shared locale and why is it significant? Did you all die here? From which time along the lifespan of this area are each of you from? Did any of you know of each other? Did any of you affect this area for each other?

Tools/Weapons	Currency
Each of your characters was at one point the owner / inheritor of the same specialty heirloom item. What was the item and why was it significant? How did each of you come into possession of the item? From which time along the lifespan of this item are each of you from? Did any of you know of each other / pass the item onto one another?	Each of your characters became either fabulously wealthy or devastatingly poor through the same means. By what means did you each accrue or lose this wealth? Similar industry or occupation? Perhaps a shared inciting financial event? Did any of you know of each other / fiscally compete with one another?
Story Info	Food/Supplies
Each of your characters shares the same religious beliefs / beliefs of one's life after death. What are these beliefs, and how did they inform how you lived? Did any of you know of each other / teach these beliefs to one another?	Each of your characters has a shared passion, love, or similar veneration for an art or craft. What passion or love is this? Building? Cooking? Art? How is this love similar for you all - and how is it different?

## DENIAL - I'm Still Living [1202]

- **Once characters have been created, please read to players the following passage aloud:**

*All of you, each uniquely disoriented and dazed, awake after having just died. Be it perilous or peaceful, your passing has presented you with a peculiar predicament: **The After**. A seemingly endless expanse of jumbled & foggy liminal space, the After is an ephemeral incarnation of the Vast whereto all mortals go after death. Confusingly composed of an uncountable number of personalized paradises and perditions; you instinctually and intrinsically know that you must seek out several **Psychopomps**, or death guide spirits, who will help usher you unto the next stage of mortality.*

- At this point, hand each player a pre-printed "Starter Map." This **Soul-Map** is blank, save for a border, a compass rose, and an arrow leading from one map edge towards the center. This is where we begin our journey.
- Have the players select a party member to make the first steps in guiding them. This character makes a **Hunting, Awareness, or Guidance** Skill Check (or uses another skill that makes sense for their approach). This player will then roll the **Exploration Dice** to determine what they first come across in the wilds (see **pg. 5** "*Exploring the Vast*").
- Characters rotate taking this action in turns, with every player individually filling in their unique **Soul-Maps** and eventually moving closer and closer to finding **Psychopomps**.
- **The flow of gameplay should be:**
  - o The player rolls the Location Die (and the Encounter Die if their skill check resulted in **5** or more successes). That player then describes a rough scene, in a few sentences, inspired by their roll. Players may describe the scene in a broad sense, but the GM will fill the scene in with more details. Instruct players that scene descriptions should be no more than **2-3** sentences and should loosely be the tailored afterlife of a morally ambiguous, or morally reprehensible person whom they might also describe (see the **Afterlife Location Table** for additional ideas).
  - o Instruct players to fill out their **Soul-Map** accordingly and to their liking as you take back the narrative, writing in a hook to guide them forward. These hooks may instead or also be red herrings to surprise players.

- o Characters will either face the encounter or choose to avoid it - in which case they will roll the Exploration dice again, this time picking a new direction (see the **Afterlife Encounter Table** for additional ideas).
- o If the characters succeed in the encounter, they gain the reward you've chosen for them (see the **Afterlife Reward Table** for additional ideas). If they fail, you should work in a complication that mirrors the reward that was promised.
- o Each scene should last no more than **15-25** minutes, so it's important to keep the pace of play moving relatively quickly. If players are stuck making decisions, consider throwing in a complication that will move the story forward. That said, this adventure has the potential to be a more narrative centric and roleplay heavy one - so if the space allows for it, try to let the players talk, feel, and emote within the playspace.
- o You should also take notes of which locations and encounters the characters have discovered so you can potentially re-work those into the session at a future time.

## Psychopomp Guidance

- Whenever you roll the "**Story Info**" Reward, or whenever it feels thematically appropriate, the characters may gain the services and assistance of a **Psychopomp** (*Death Guide Spirit*).
- These nameless celestial caretakers appear as talking, ghostly looking animal apparitions of the GM's determination. Upon being met, they react with detached warmth & calmness - offering guidance and to travel alongside the party (use the *Psychopomp Stats*). Each Psychopomp provides minor snippets of information regarding the **Final Door of Acceptance**, insisting that it should be the party's final destination - be it now, or later. The Psychopomps will corroborate that this Door will be found in the **Lands of Splendor** past the **Stairway of Paradise**; which happens to be the party's next area of interest.
- Psychopomps can provide the party with rudimentary information regarding the After - and help them incorporeally in combat using their **Stewarding Strike** ability; but there are limits to their ability to intervene in the journey of the dead. Until the collective spiritual strength of **3 Psychopomps** have been amassed, each individual Psychopomp is unable to share any truly crucial information about the **Final Door of Acceptance** or the **Stairway to Paradise**.
- Once the characters have gained the companionship of **3 Psychopomps**, or at another thematically appropriate time, tell them they've discovered the location of the **Stairway to Paradise**. (Go to "**BARGAINING - There's A Way Back**")

## Resting after Final Rest

- Considering that the Characters have already '*died*' - the question of '**Do we need rest?**' might be asked by the players. The short answer of this is yes; but the nuances are more complex. As far as traditional 'sleep' goes; it is not required by those in the After. That is not to say those in the beyond do not choose to sleep anyways, as some prefer relaxing rest or a temporary torpor to cleanse the mind and rest the spirit. This narrative reasoning is where the mechanic benefit for players is retained. As usual, **Half** and **Full Rests** provide their usual benefits of restoring **HP** - while also acting as an abstract measurement of '*time*'. To that end, whenever players take a **Full Rest**, it counts as the progression from one day to the next (*thereby allowing **Skill Abilities** which reset on a new 'Day' to do so*).
- To dissuade players from just taking a **Full Rest** between every encounter (*thereby always keeping their HP and abilities refreshed*) try to reinforce the fact that not every Afterlife is inherently suitable for Rest. Hosts of the Afterlife might not like visitors, or the environment might make peaceful relaxation a nonoption. By keeping conditions suitable for Rest fleeting, you can '*balance*' the resource regeneration & expenditure of players.