

A woman with short brown hair and glasses is looking towards the right side of the frame. She is wearing a maroon t-shirt. In the foreground, there is a purple arrow-shaped banner pointing towards her. The banner contains the text "COMPILED DEMONIC ASPECTS" in white, stylized, all-caps font.

COMPILED
DEMONIC ASPECTS

Demonic Aspects

Aspect	Strategy	Effect
An Utmost Foulness	Cunning	Can manipulate physical form to gain weapon/tool Advantage for physical tasks (or mental/social where it makes narrative sense)
Cloven Hooves	Cunning	Make a pact with a mortal. When circumstances occur, mortal gains a Master Die for the scene. When scene ends, mortal loses one point from demon's choice of Strategy, demon gains a point in any Sinister Tactic.
Ghost Form	Cunning	Become ephemeral, capable of moving through obstacles. After activating, can toggle off <u>and</u> on once per scene for each point of Devious.
Legion	Cunning	Create a number of doppelgangers equal to Cunning.
Wings	Cunning	Gain wings and the ability to fly. Effectiveness scales with Cunning.
Darkness-Shrouded	Devious	Protect self and allies with cloud of darkness, gaining surprise Advantage and mitigating incoming attacks.
Flame-Wreathed	Devious	Attackers lose Courage when they hit at close range; add Devious to unarmed attacks (can raise pool above 10).
Glory	Devious	Increase Height of all social actions by Devious (can raise pool above 10).
Invisible	Devious	Become invisible, gaining Advantage on all actions where invisibility is a benefit. Add Devious to attempts to hide or move unseen (can raise pool above 10).
Non-Euclidean	Devious	Can use Devious or Cunning on any rolls that would require Sly.
Aqua-Form	Sly	Become an animate liquid, gaining several advantages against physical weapon attacks, falls, and more. Can move swiftly through water and flow through small openings.
Carapace	Sly	Reduce Height of all incoming Physical Attacks by your Sly.
Giant	Sly	Gain "That Hideous Strength" Power, except based on Sly instead of Cruelty. If damage targets Open or Sly, can choose to apply it to the other instead. (Plus narrative effects of massive size)
Hell's Engine	Sly	Transform a body part into a hellish mechanical device, designed when taking this power.
Horned	Sly	Close range physical attack, personalized to concept.

DEMONIC ASPECTS

Every one of the Hellbound has the potential to physically reveal his demonic nature, though this is not always a wise or subtle course. If you want people to help you out willingly, sprouting horns and flames may not be the best way. But if you want people to help you out *fast*, it can work wonders. Your mileage may vary.

Only the demon half of the Hellbinder pair can activate the Aspect, and then only at a dreadful (to the demon) cost, as described back on page 68. Short version: If everyone plays nice, the human slides a point off a Virtuous Strategy. If the demon does it without permission, like for a special birthday surprise, the demon rolls the relevant Strategy with no Tactic. No set? Slide a point off the Strategy, but the power activates. Got a set? Yay, it activates for free.

Something important to know about Aspects is that they come on fast. When a Screwtape announces that he's putting on an Aspect during the declare phase, it comes on during the roll phase, **before any other actions get resolved**. This can be especially important for defensive powers like Ghost Form or Carapace.

The Aspects for each Sinister Strategy are as follows.

Cunning

Cloven Hooves	An Utmost Foulness
Ghost Form	<i>Legion</i>
Wings	

Sly

Carapace	Aqua-Form
Giant	<i>Hell's Engine</i>
Horned	

Devious

Darkness-Shrouded	Glory
Flame-Wreathed	<i>Non-Euclidean</i>
Invisible	

CARAPACE (SLY)

This looks like Armor (see page 73 for its howling faces and swirling negative energy voids) but functions differently. The two powers are quite complementary, so if you want to really, *really* soak up punishment like nobody's business, Armor + Carapace is the way to go. Just stay clear on which hideous disfigurement comes from the power (suppurating pustules? gnarled scales?) and which comes from the Aspect (parasitic demon fetuses that jump out of enlarged pores to martyr themselves on incoming bullets? blizzard of wind and hail obscuring you and forcing back attackers?).

When your Carapace is active, every physical attack against you has its Height reduced by a number equal to your Sly. If Height is reduced to zero or less, the attack misses.

CLOVEN HOOVES (CUNNING)

You may have read the entry label and scratched your head. "Hm," you may have thought, "Baddass wings or goat feet? To soar above the rabble, or have limbs that look like they belong in some hideous soul-food stew? Kind of an easy pick..." *Maybe* you're not even reading this! Maybe you just skipped right to the wings! Well if you can't be bothered to read this, *screw you!*

Cloven Hooves don't mean you can walk on uneven surfaces with great confidence. They mean you're empowered to make *Faustian pacts*. If you're not familiar with the myth of Doctor Faustus, he's the guy who sold his soul for magic power. In this case, you're the buyer. Cloven Hooves means you can eat people's souls.

Who's eviler now, wing-man?

Here's how this works. You don't get to immediately take the whole thing, but you can offer humans a chance to succeed, guaranteed, at an action of their choosing. After that, you get a little something for you. It's the free market at its finest. ("Don't think of it as cloven hooves, but rather as the Invisible Hand.")

The market isn't open to everyone: People who are already Hellbinders are bad credit risks, since some other demon already has made its territorial pissings all over *their* souls. Similarly, you can't make a pact with the mortal who's your other half. You're already helping that ingrate, so he doesn't need or merit added help. Anyone with an angel in him is protected too.

You can have one pact active at a time for every point you have in **Cunning**. If your **Cunning** drops, one of your pacts immediately breaks, so it's advisable to limit them so that they end after a week or a month or by the next full moon. You have to manifest the hooves to complete the pact, though it's often a good idea to keep them hidden while negotiating—I recommend cowboy boots. Or just conducting all your bargains over the phone or through eBay. Needless to say, you need to get the mortal to agree voluntarily, but how hard is that? I mean, seriously. Half of them don't even believe they have souls.

When the circumstances agreed upon occur, the mortal gains a Master Die to one Strategy, which remains for the rest of the scene. At the end of that scene, the mortal who made the pact loses a point off one Strategy of the demon's choice, and the demon gains a point in one Sinister Tactic of the demon's choice. The demon does not need to be present for this.

Bonus? If the mortal dies while using that Master Die, his soul becomes your plaything in the afterlife and you get a free point in your **Cunning**.

Wings. Feh.

DARKNESS-SHROUDED (DEVIOUS)

You can summon a field of supernatural darkness, an inky cloud that descends like clinical depression and envelops you, your minions and any allies you graciously permit to shelter beneath it. It's selective. To you and a few people you approve, things just look a little darker, like wearing sunglasses. To everyone else, it's like midnight under a cloudy sky.

The cloud is about ten feet tall and radiates out ten feet from you for every point of **Devious** you have. If you get to **Devious** 4, you can stretch the shadows to cover a 40-foot radius, with you in the middle.

For every point of Devious, you can permit another person to see through the darkness. (If you



have **Devious** 3, you and three others can navigate the shroud unimpeded.) You and your allies get +1 surprise Advantage on any physical actions taken against enemies who are also within the shroud. No one can get a surprise bonus on an attack against you, or your protected allies, if they strike from outside the cloud. If they have no means of seeing through the darkness, their attack is against Difficulty equal to your **Devious**.

FLAME-WREADED (DEVIOUS)

When you turn this on, you're covered in fire. That's simple enough, isn't it? You can describe the flames as you wish—guttering orange flickers, bright green jets, surging tendrils of gusting red—it all works the same way. Anything you hit gets hurt, and anyone dumb enough to hit you

gets hurt. The only exception is other people who are Flame-Wreathed, or people who have some kind of fire immunity, but how often are you going to brawl someone like that?

Any time anyone hits you with a close attack, he slides a point of *Courage* away, except as described above. When you make hand-to-hand attacks, you can add your **Devious** to your **Open Cruelty** pool. If this produces a pool of more than ten dice, you are objectively awesome. Roll the engorged pool and enjoy your guaranteed success.

Note that the pool increase from being Flame-Wreathed is not a surprise bonus, a weapon bonus or any other kind of bonus. Effects that remove those sorts of bonuses do nothing against Flame-Wreathed.

HOST FORM (CUNNING)

You get a tiny bit transparent and a whole lot ectoplasmic. You can walk through walls or people, cross traffic without looking, and avoid all manner of physical hassles. It makes you immaterial.

The question of “wouldn’t I get pulled to the center of the earth?” is handled with a bit of selective finesse on your part. If you choose to allow an object to resist you a little, it resists you a little. So you can walk on floors and the ground. It even works on liquids, so you can walk on water. Gasses are out though, so this doesn’t let you fly. (That takes wings, described below.) Moreover, you can’t let an object resist and then pick it up. Anything stronger or heavier than a soap bubble or cloud of steam is going to fall through you. You can lean against that wall, but if you push it you’re



going through. You can grip that doorknob, but as soon as you try and turn it, your fingers poke through.

This brings up the drawback of Ghost Form. It's great for watching people and delivering spooooooky messages, it works a treat for getting out of prisons, but when you're in Ghost Form, you have no physical effect on the world. Often, you're immaterial in the figurative sense as well. That is, unless you switch off Ghost Form and punch someone when he isn't expecting it. Or unless you have a power like Telekinesis.

You can switch Ghost Form off and reactivate it once per scene for every point you have in Devious. It takes an action to solidify or to pass out of phase, though you don't need to roll anything. At the end of the scene, Ghost Form wears off even if you didn't use up all your changes.

Thus, if you have **Devious** 1, you can activate Ghost Form and walk between the bars of your cell and head into the evidence room, turn it off and get dressed in your costume, then turn it on and walk through the walls (and probably, the night-sticks and taser-lines of your pathetic captors) and away. But if you deactivate it to take a swing at one of those cops, you don't get it back. If you had **Devious** 4, you could go get your costume and a bloodstained bayonet from a murder case, turn immaterial, walk out, let the cops tire themselves swinging at you, turn physical, stab one, turn ghostly and repeat that twice more.

When you phase out, you can carry about ten pounds of clothing and gear with you, but nothing living. You can't use this to shred items by turning part of (say) that motorcycle helmet intangible and leaving part solid, either.

If you activate any other physical power that depends on making contact with a solid object (Summon, Banish, the Flame-Wreathed Aspect, That Hideous Strength), it doesn't work while you're ghosted. But if you come back into phase, it works normally.

Giant (Sly)

You get big. Really big. How big? For every point in **Sly**, you gain five feet of height, with proportionate weight and reach. You get the effects of That Hideous Strength, but it's based on **Sly** instead of **Cruelty**. (If you already have that power, base its effect on the larger of **Sly** or **Cruelty**.)

When you're Giant, if you take damage that would affect Open or Sly, you can choose which one it affects.

Horned (Sly)

Okay, so let's just take the "he's one horny devil" jokes as read and move on. With this Aspect, you can grow some sort of pointy natural weaponry, horns or tusks or fangs or a rack of antlers. ("Check out the rack on that one!" Sorry. Couldn't resist.)

What the horns (or claws or acid-dripping tentacles or whatever) do is make your hand-to-hand attacks that much nastier. If you have That Hideous Strength or some other power that gives you a weapon bonus on hand to hand attacks, that works just fine and combines smoothly with the horns. If you try to spear someone with a pitchfork or katana or boulder, you get the appropriate weapon bonus, but not the advantage of horns because (presumably) you're not holding the weapon with your gnarled antlers.

The Height of every attack you make using your horns is increased by an amount equal to your Sly. If this raises your Height above 10, the attack becomes immune to gobble dice.

INVISIBLE (DEVIOUS)

Moving about unobserved has a definite appeal, and I'm sure you don't need me to tell you about all the opportunities this provides. So let's talk limitations for a moment. Even when you're unseen, it doesn't mean you're inaudible, or that you won't displace smoke or leave footprints or exhale steam in the winter. It's a hell of an edge, but it won't stop people from shooting or swinging blindly, and it can be a surprising pain in the ass to get out of people's way when they don't know you're there.

On the plus side, anything you're wearing or carrying also becomes invisible.

When you turn invisible, you get +3 surprise Advantage on all actions where remaining undetected is a big plus—until people realize you're there. (Like, if you punch someone or fart loudly.) Then the bonus drops to +1. In addition, when attempting to hide or move unseen, you can add your Devious stat to your Cunning Greed pool. This is not a surprise bonus (which you also get), but a pool enhancement. If your pool is over ten, you still get to roll all the dice to which you're entitled.

WINGS (CUNNING)

Ah, flight, the dream of mortals and the majestic transport method of devil and superhero alike. Whether you want to dodge the slings and arrows of outrageous costumed angel-handlers, or to swoop down and bash the crap out of people, Wings can let it happen.

Given the loose and narrative nature of how events happen in *Better Angels*, there's no reason to get all hard and fast and miles-per-hour about how fast you can fly. While most Aspects are available for one scene only, Wings get a bit of a pass if you're trying to cover great distances in order to make the plot more convenient. Think of Wings as a narrative excuse to arrive where the action is and gloss over such annoying details as whether you took the bus or where you parked the Supervillainmobile.

Cunning 1: You can fly at the pace of a brisk jog, circling to raise yourself ten feet per action. You take no damage from falling if you have your wings out.

Cunning 2: You can fly at a sprinter's pace and gain fifteen feet per action in height, more or less.

Cunning 3: You can shoot straight up, thirty feet just like *that*, and cruise at about the speed of a car in light city traffic. You can hover in place, where demons with lesser Wings are stuck wheel-ing and circling like some manky bat.

Cunning 4: You can reach fifty feet in just moments and swoop down with enough force and precision to enhance hand-to-hand attacks. If you'd normally have no weapon bonus, the dive-bomb attack gives you +1 weapon Advantage. If you'd normally get a +1 or +2 bonus, it rises by a single point. If you'd have a +3 weapon bonus, it stays maxed out. That's just the way it is.

Cunning 5: You can zip up to the top of a ten-story building in a single bound, fly as fast as a speed-ing locomotive, and get all the advantages of the previous levels as you wish.

Whatever your **Cunning**, if you're flying and someone else is walking, he can't punch you. You're effectively immune to hand-to-hand attacks from earthbound people unless you make a close-up attack on them. They can still pepper you with gunfire, of course. Also, at the GM's discretion, someone with the Giant Aspect active might reach you, using increased reach and speed.

Once per scene, if your wings are out, you can arbitrarily declare that a physical attack hit your wings instead of your body. This breaks a wing and prevents you from flying for the rest of the scene, but you don't take damage, meaning you don't have to shift around any stats or erase them.

The next time you summon your wings, they're perfectly fine. You could even shut them off for the scene and re-summon them unharmed, if you feel like gambling and/or burning Strategy points.

AN UTMOST FOULNESS (CUNNING)

While many demons' heritage is reflected with traditional looks like horns and fanged maws and leathery bat wings, some are ugly even by Hell's standards. Those are the ones who can take Utmost Foulness as an Aspect. When relaxed, those with this Aspect look like the aftermath of a fire in a wax museum — melted forms with too many eyes, limbs and mouths, gooified and slagged together wrong. Except it's all moving, reforming, like a snail's eye times a thousand with half-recognized human organs and animal features, rising and falling, much of it stuff on the outside that should be hidden within. Never still, it's a stretchy, polyadaptive, gooey mess.

The advantage of being a plastoid mass of ever-changing limbs is that it makes you very versatile.

With Utmost Foulness in play, a character gets points of weapon/tool Advantage for any physical task, simply by making his body into what he needs. He can exude spikes for striking, make his body a slingshot to hurl a rock at someone, ooze away from injury or whip up a quick plastron to shed unwanted blows. The amount of Advantage is half his current **Cunning** score.

It's up to the GM to offer Advantage (or Difficulty) to social or mental tasks that might be helped or hindered by repulsive, seething mutation. Spotting that ambush might be easier if you can make your eye telescopic or turn a foot-square surface of your body into an exterior eardrum. On the other hand, seducing someone while looking like an animate offal pile may be impossible, no matter your Corruption score. Scaring the crap out of people is definitely easier, though.

AQUA-FORM (SLY)

You become a blue-green figure of water and ice, sliding and sloshing around the landscape.

Being made of living water has several advantages.

- Impact weapons like swords, guns, fists and SUVs no longer give any weapon Advantage against you.
- When underwater you can move at your running speed without effort, you don't need to breathe, and you get the advantages of the Invisibility power.
- You cannot be pushed or pulled.
- If you can make contact with a wall while falling, you take no damage from hitting the ground.
- You can pass through a hole the size of a soup bowl in one round. A hole the size of a dime? You can squeeze through that in about sixty seconds. Seeping through something like a door crack could take as long as five minutes, but if water can go through it, so can you...eventually.

That said, there are a few drawbacks.

- Weapons that explode use their full Advantage and, moreover, have the Height of their attack raised by one when unleashed against those in Aqua-Form.
- Aqua-Form is vulnerable to extremes of temperature. Attacks based on fire or cold also use their full Advantage and have the Height of the attack roll raised by one point.

GLORY (DEVIOUS)

This is not to be confused with Impossible Beauty (though they work really, really well together). When you transform into a form of Glory, you may look beautiful or terrible or, more likely, both. You become impossibly imposing, like a thunderstorm or an eclipse — something above human scale, beyond typical lusts. You become a figure that obliterates reason and self-respect, too vast and real, too much to be dealt with.

At least, that's the highest form of it. Demons shy of **Devious** may just be a bit more dapper.

When Glory is active, every social action you take has its Height increased by an amount equal to your **Devious** score. If the Height exceeds 10, the action becomes immune to Gobble Dice. (This is basically 'Horned' for persuasion.)

HELL'S ENGINE (SLY)

Hell has a lot of moving parts. Hell's Engine lets you borrow one of them.

Turning on Hell's Engine temporarily replaces a body part with one of the endlessly inventive torture devices from the pit. It's the same item every time, but the whoever picks this aspect (screwtape or human) gets to design it. The other party gets to decide what human body part is replaced by the infernal contraption. To use Headless Headsman from the campaign as an example, Donovan's player probably chose to trade a body part for a giant pair of body-cleaving scissors straight from the blackest pit of damnation. It seems like a pretty badass thing a human would want to have. His screwtape is probably the dick that decided the scissors should replace his head because, you know, demons.

The device never destroys the ability of the limb replaced. Headless Headsman can magically see out of his scissor head. Ro-borg Cy-man Manbot's bone gatling gun arm can bend its barrels to pick things up just like his hand would. If your character has a fire hose that shoots acid for a leg, it whips around in such a way that you can still walk on it. The device confers a weapon bonus in tune with the human's **Sly** (+1 for 1-2; +2 for 3-4; +3 for 5) and one tag from the Dominator Strike power (Better Angels, page 75). Decide at the start of play whether the torture engine described is melee (**Open Cruelty**) or ranged (**Sly Cruelty**). That's the roll required to attack.

Like the Wings aspect, players with Hell's Engine turned on can chose to take damage on their demonic anatomy rather than their fleshy bits. If this occurs, the damage from the attack is negated, Hell's Engine is teleported back to the nether-realm for repairs, and the hellbinder continues the fight with all human anatomy. The weapon is repaired once the Aspect is invoked again, even if it's only seconds later. Lotta mechanics down there, apparently...

LEGION (CUNNING)

Hell's strategy is all about superior numbers. Where do you think that mad jones for souls comes from? The devil is the General Custer of spiritual warfare: throw soldiers at it until something breaks.

As such, one of the most popular demonic powers is being able to quickly recruit allies in the fight against virtue. Even if those allies are all you.

If you take Legion as an Aspect, you become your own minion. Activating Legion creates a number of doppelgangers equal to **Cunning**. These doubles don't share the same fantastic abilities as the original copy, but they can follow orders and pass as the villain. It's really easy to escape from a crime scene when the police think they've already captured you, and beating up angels is way easier when you can use eight fists instead of two.

Legion can also be used defensively in the classic striking-at-shadows trick. For each clone you sacrifice, the player can totally negate one instance of damage as it smashes into a crude imitation of the villain. The only way to undo this defense is to destroy all the copies or beat the original's **Devious Deceit** with a **Cunning Espionage** roll.

The limitation of Legion as an Aspect is that the slightest scratch exposes the illusion. Doppelgangers explode into bloody goo or puff away in a cloud of brimstone whenever struck, meaning they fight just like a mob with a +1 advantage. Since they're lesser demon servitors masquerading as the hellbinder, they can't really talk either. They pull off a convincing silent treatment, but force them to speak up and all that comes out is goblin squeaks or white noise. Opponents can roll **Insightful Corruption** against the height of the Legion-user's **Cunning** to notice the slight differences in behavior.

NON-EUCLIDEAN (DEVIOUS)

Invoking this aspect doesn't allow you to map parallel hyperbolic or elliptical lines (though that could be useful for a young hellbinder on test day). There's just no better term for "scary geometry." Mortals like to conceive of hell in terms of historical representations in their art and theology, but the fact of the matter is that nobody actually comes back to report (except that Dante guy...boy, did Virgil get chewed out for that one). Hell, or at least parts of it, is a conceptual plane totally outside the realm of human consciousness, a place where abstract concepts such as guilt and regret are given physical form and sharp edges.

A hellbinder invoking Non-Euclidian uses the demon to temporarily transform into the hellish representation of their own soul: a floating cloud of impossible, omni-dimensional, eye-bending shapes that constantly congeals and divides. These shapes are physical manifestations of the character's personality. They can take damage just like a flesh and blood body, and they can teach people about geometry by carving it into them.

Since this aspect transforms intangible concepts into dangerously tangible flying death polygons, a character with Non-Euclidean invoked can roll **Devious** or **Cunning** on rolls that would normally use **Sly**. Is your bookish character getting his ass kicked? Turn on non-Euclidean and use **Cunning Cruelty** to cut some bitches with your rapier wit. Can't break down that door? Turn on non-Euclidean, roll **Devious Cowardice**, and convince reality it should break for you.

The only problem with Non-Euclidian is that demons don't want to completely divorce their hosts from the flesh or they risk losing a chance at their souls. Physical damage while in Non-Euclidean form can be taken on the **Knowledge** or **Nurture** Tactic (the player picks but can't switch mid-scene). However, once a Strategy has to slide or get erased, the Aspect turns off, the damage is taken to **Courage/Open** as normal, and Non-Euclidian has to be invoked again before the character can get all angular again.