[narrative events]

The boy and girl were told at the start of summer that they would face trials for admission to the Avon Tear Academy when they arrived home from Aeryn Tear. If they passed, they would begin their apprenticeship in the fall.

…

The boy and the girl had been engaged to settle a dispute over the inheritance of a title that a war had been fought over a few generations earlier.

…

The girl's anxiety about returning to the scene of her childhood trauma stirred up nightmares that tortured her at night and ambushed her during the day, sometimes causing blackouts. The girl had always been prone to nightmares and blackouts, but as they became more severe and traumatic, she became more afraid of confronting things that might set them off. When the boy saved her from drowning in the bath, the girl was forced to confess to her history of blackouts and nightmares.

…

Part of the history of that tragic night was public knowledge. What few people knew was that the attack had been led by a demon. Somewhere, locked away in her mind, was the memory of what happened to the girl and her mother. Even though she was constantly reliving it, her mind kept blocking the memory.

…

The girl and the boy had become lovers in anticipation of their eventual union. Having learned the truth about their true relationship, the girl faced some difficult questions. They had to be married, for political reasons, but the girl did not know if she could still be intimate with the boy, knowing who he really was.

…

The boy slipped quietly into the room, expecting the girl to be asleep. The boy seduced her out of the embrace of dreams. The girl woke up to confront her other self and discovered that they were both naked and aroused. It started as sex with her boyfriend, but somewhere in the midst of it, she remembered the truth and realized she was having sex with the male version of herself.

…

The boy had taken her off guard. The girl had not been able to really think about what she was doing until after the fact. Should she call what they had done incest or was it the ultimate form of masturbation?

…

The problem with attending the Avon Tear Academy was that it put them within reach of their underworld patrons and associates.

…

The girl was invited to a party and given a task by her mother's patron. She was supposed to help a boy catch a girl he was infatuated with. The boy, a virgin who had no experience with girls, had been so forward in his pursuit of her he had driven her to completely reject him. The girl was supposed to pose as his lover, teach him how to deal with a girl, build up his confidence, make the other girl jealous and then match them up. When the girl asked why, she was told that it was a favor for a friend, not to inquire any further.

…

The patron pointed out her target, one of the party guests, He was the son of a powerful merchant-noble. As a maiden, the girl had the training necessary to take the boy in hand, turn him into a man and then turn him loose, but to avoid arousing the boy's suspicions, the girl had to be careful to make the entire affair appear perfectly natural. That made the task more difficult, but that would only make the task more interesting.

…

The first part of her task involved studying her subject and devising a casual way to introduce herself into his life. The girl staged their first encounter, stumbling into him while overburdened by a hastily assembled travel kit and bedroll. Their collision spilled everything on the road, signaling the start of tears of frustration and hopelessness. As he helped her, she sobbed out a story of being kicked out of her home by her wicked stepmother, and he eagerly swallowed the bait.

…

Once her target had been lured to her rescue, it was easy to prompt him into taking her home with him. The girl continued to lead him on with her pose of defenseless innocence, silently inviting his advances and encouraging him with her responses. In spite of being restrained and intimidated by her femininity, he responded to her attentions without becoming uncontrollable.

…

The most difficult part of the contract was becoming his girlfriend without becoming his lover. Fortunately, he was firmly obsessed with his love interest, and she quietly encouraged him to pursue that interest over her. All she had to do was impose herself on him as his girlfriend and then educate him on how to be a good boyfriend.

…

The girl had accomplished the first three parts of her task over the space of a week and was looking for a way to accomplish the most critical part when her charge brought her to a party honoring the recent exploits of a young noble and adventurer. The girl had been worried until she noticed that the other girl, the one he liked, was present.

…

One look at the girl on her spurned admirer’s arm, and the other girl became jealous. With such a perfect opportunity, the girl began looking for a man bold enough to pry her away from her date, freeing her and her charge from each other.

…

The girl was surprised when the guest of honor abruptly cut into her conversation. The adventurer had overheard the girl telling her charge about the time she was trapped in the ruins as a child, and he wanted to know about everything she saw and experienced while she was in the ruins. Her charge slipped quietly away, once the adventurer had engaged the girl's full attention. Unfortunately, the girl’s ordeal in the ruins was a very painful topic for her. Her experiences in the ruins had been both terrifying and wonderful, but the way people had responded to her accounts of the ordeal had left her traumatized. Of course, the adventurer just thought she was being coy.

…

Unfortunately, the other guests had assumed she must be someone important if the adventurer was so interested in her. If she tried to slip away, someone would corner her, trying to figure out who she was or what the adventurer was talking with her about. The girl allowed the adventurer to occupy her attention until she caught her charge sneaking off with the girl he admired. Seeing that her mission was accomplished, she began looking for a way to excuse herself from the adventurer's company. Ever wary of being exposed, she was extremely sensitive to being observed. The girl picked up on the presence of someone studying her a little too intently and approached him.

…

Her mission had gone as planned, but as she slipped free of her charge, she became entangled with another young man. Unknown to her, there was a rumor that she had been an assassin in training and had finally been given a contract, and the young man who latched onto her had a contract on his head.

…

When the assassin spotted them together, he suspected she was working the same contract and he had been hired as back up in case she flubbed it. He probed for confirmation, but the girl did not grasp the intent behind his words.

…

In the girl's experience, a man who stared that hard at a girl in another man's company simply had to be willing to take her off his hands. To her surprise, he had not been interested in her for any reason she might have expected. His attention had been fixed on her out of irritation. He revealed that he knew what she was and insisted on knowing what her intentions were concerning the adventurer. Upset and angry at having been "made" she announced that she was going to encourage him to escort her outside, somewhere private, and then she would be finished with the task she had been given—and warned the assassin to stay out of her way and thanked him, in threatening tones, to keep what he suspected about her to himself.

…

The assassin read confirmation and intent in her response, so he backed off to see how she was going to kill the young man. It quickly became clear that whoever she was doing, it was brilliant and drawn out. The girl appeared to have tricked her mark into pursuing her, allowing her to wait until the perfect opportunity presented itself. Of course, the girl was not playing hard to get, she simply could not shake the young man's interest!

…

The girl returned to the adventurer, resolved to endure his probing in order to spite the assassin. At the same time, the direction the conversation was going suggested that the adventurer might be receptive to her tale in a way others had not been. He had been in the ruins and must have encountered some of the things she had. But, while she had resolved to indulge in a little recreation, her conscience kept summoning up images of the boy and their friend. Reminded of the unresolved love triangle she was in, she found herself spurning the adventurer's advances. Naturally, this only aroused his interest in her, apart from what he could learn from her.

…

The patron summoned the girl to his home the next day to issue a warning. He had learned that the adventurer had become infatuated with her, and urged her, for several reasons, not to become involved with him. In the light of a new day, the girl was more than willing to obey. The girl tried to discourage the young lord's interest, in part to honor the patron's request, but also because the situation was a painful reminder of her past. Growing up as the companion of a lord's son and being trained as a courtesan under the watchful eyes of another young lord, had taught her the danger of courting the attention of a noble.

…

Unfortunately, the adventurer simply became more infatuated with the girl the longer he pursued her for information about the ruins. The girl had cursed herself for being stupid enough to get involved with the adventurer in the first place, when she realized that the young lord had become completely obsessed with her. Her life was already complicated enough. Unfortunately, the adventurer seemed determined to complicate it further. He had gone to the trouble of having her followed and began showing up to confront her at all the places she usually hung out. The girl tried to drive him off, but often that just was not possible.

…

He did not just want her; he wanted her to guide him through the ruins on the quest that had gotten him marked for death.

…

The adventurer proved to be a genuinely nice guy. In spite of her resolve, his attention was hard to resist. When he managed to corner her, they talked about the ruins and the impulse to live a life of adventurer. Even the boy and their friend found themselves responding to his charm. The girl found her own resistance crumbling. Time and again, he had managed to get past her defenses, luring her into animated discussions about the age of gods and related myths and legends. Nothing really seemed to deter him, not even rivals for her affections.

…

The girl discovered that she had inherited a phobia as her mind assimilated the imprint of her alternate self. The traumatic ordeal the girl's alternate had in place of the massacre surfaced as she was exploring the ruins with her friends. Her alternate had lost a close friend when they fell down an airshaft into the depths of the ruins. He died in her arms, and she was forced to find her way back to the surface alone and in the dark.

…

The unintended consequence of the boy's transposition of the girl's alternate was that she received an imprint of the boy while she was locked in his body. As a result, she assimilated his memory and the ability to teleport across the rift—arriving in the girl's realm unexpectedly and stumbling into the girl's life.

…

Their friendship almost did not survive the first night. The alternate had undressed and slipped into the bed before realizing that there were already two bodies in that bed, and that they were wrapped around each other, oblivious to her intrusion. In the dark, the alternate assumed that the girl had noticed her and was thrashing about to make room in the bed. She discovered otherwise and stared in mute shock and disbelief as she realized the girl was having sex with the boy. When they disengaged, and one of them rolled on top of her, she suddenly snapped. She was out of the bed in a flash, but her mind was stuck in that eternal instant.

…

His body pressed hers down as he rolled onto her. She focused on the way he fit against her, the immediate response of her own body, his manhood brushing her thigh and dropping so perfectly between her legs. Stiffening as it sensed where it was, resting on the opening to her body, it pressed against the threshold, and teased her folds apart. He almost entered her as he pushed himself up in surprise to gaze into her face. The alternate had not even adjusted to the fact that the boy had been with the girl in bed, but at the sight of his face, she knew who he was, and she sensed in that instant that he did not know who she was. He was aroused and interpreted her flushed and anxious face as matching arousal—and she was aroused, no doubt, but aroused in fear as well.

…

As he gathered himself to thrust, she moved. As the boy fell back, he finally noticed that he was in bed with two versions of the girl. The girl sat up in response to the commotion and turned to confront her alternate.

…

In shock, in fear, she spoke without thinking. There was no way to take it back, and the girl’s pain was so obvious she simply slipped out of the room. As she stormed though the house naked, she calmed down. It had been a close call, but it was her own fault for going into a stranger’s bed naked. For that matter, she had gone in hoping to have sex—just not anticipating she might find herself in the receiving role. She thumped her head against the wall and went back to apologize. Slipping into the room, she found the girl alone, crying in her pillow. When she tried to touch her, the girl sat straight up and slapped her hard on the face. She stiffened and admitted that she deserved that. The girl almost told her to get out of her room but stopped as she sensed the alternate’s profound remorse.

…

When the boy went with their friends to visit their families, the girl stayed behind to confront her inherited fear of the underworld.

…

The paladin’s conviction that the boy could not assimilate the imprint of the girl’s memory proved unfounded when the boy unexpectedly turned into the girl's twin. The boy's first transformation into a girl occurred in front of two of his friends. The boy immediately sought out his mentor, a protégé of the paladin, in search of an explanation.

…

The boy went rock jumping with his friends. It was on a river tributary in the mountains near the town where his friends were born. They had made their decision on the fly, heading for their favorite spot, with the huge boulders and deep pools, without bothering to go back for towels.

…

Unfortunately, that meant his friends saw everything when he turned into a girl in mid jump. All three of them were stunned. To explain, all he had was the absence of the headache that had been growing worse each day. He could explain that he had unusual abilities, psionic abilities, and found that they worked better than ever, but he had no idea why he would suddenly turn into a girl.

…

He went directly to his mentor, on the edge of a screaming panic. His mentor was about to ask the two boys and the wild-eyed girl to go right back out the door and wait until the class he was working with was dismissed—when he recognized who the girl really was. This was clearly an emergency; he dismissed the class early, admonishing them to get in extra practice at home, and took the boy-turned-girl aside. She told him exactly what had happened and what she had already confided in her friends, and his mentor knew he had a serious problem on his hands.

…

In addition to handling her crisis, the other two boys were facing a crisis of their own. They had just discovered that the mind did possess the ability to alter reality, and it was sinking in. In a story, he could just erase their memories, but in truth, messing with their minds at this point would only guarantee that the potential within them would be awakened. They would be expecting it and would certainly try to fight it, and that was all it took. Instead, he invited them to stay and listen and learn.

…

After examining his protégé he confessed that there was nothing he could do to reverse the process. Because the boy had been sired by a female were, the potential to turn female had been part of the boy's infection. Secondary transformations were rare, and normally had to be cultivated deliberately, but the imprint had provided the perfect catalyst.

…

His friends asked in amazement if she really had turned into a girl, permanently. He answered, to her shock, that she had, and that it was already permanent in one sense. The mind had tremendous potential, and social and biological factors often cheated it of its full development. Once the mind began to open up, however, there was no way to stop it from exploring and expressing the potential it could apprehend. Now that the boy—tomboy, at the moment—had manifested it, his female form was as real and permanent a part of him as his male and tiger forms. The experiences the tomboy had in female form would be a girl’s experiences.

…

The tomboy was frantic, she had liked being a boy, she had been perfectly happy as a boy and could not stand the thought of losing that forever. Being a girl was sort of terrifying. She did not know the first thing about it, but she knew enough about boys and men to feel extremely vulnerable.

…

Her mentor held her until she stopped trembling and offered her one hope. The change itself was not that difficult, once the means to achieve it were in place. She could shift back to her male body at will—and stay that way for as long as she willed it. The only thing she could not do was change herself back into a boy. It took her a bit to understand the subtle difference. With great effort, she focused on being male again, and her body flowed back to its previous shape—and his headache came back.

…

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[integration from avatars arc—the suitor]

The patron called the girl aside once more and instructed her to stop flirting with the adventurer and just put him out of his misery. The girl understood what he meant, the patron was telling her to take the adventurer out, to give him the ride of his life, and then tell him what she had been paid to do it. To make it easier for her, he drew up a contract and paid her to get rid of him, for once and for all. The girl thought that was too harsh, but when the patron reminded her of her obligations, she relented. In her own mind, she decided it was probably best. If there was any hope of a real relationship with the adventurer, he had to know the truth and still want to be with her.

…

The girl prepared for her date with the adventurer. As she bathed and dressed, she reflected on the events that led to her involvement with the adventurer, in conversation with the boy. The date began with an elegant meal, followed by a show. At dinner, she noticed the assassin and the agent, the former sparking a recollection, the latter simply arousing her curiosity--there was something familiar about him, but nothing she could place her finger on. During the play, the girl found herself brooding on the events leading to her date with the adventurer, starting with his pursuit of her and her efforts to heed the patron's objections.

…

After the show, the adventurer took her to a gathering of young nobility for an evening of dancing, and again she spotted the assassin and the agent in the crowd. In a brief exchange with the assassin, she confided her plan to "put him out of his misery" at the end of their date and declared her work "very private". The girl carefully allowed things to escalate. By the end of the evening, he felt comfortable taking her to his suite in the most expensive hotel in the city. Too soon, her date came to its harsh conclusion, but things did not go as planned. After bedding down with him, the girl discovered that she could not complete the contract.

…

The girl gave the adventurer an encore in the bath, to buy time to consider what to do. Her life was already too complicated, so she dropped the bomb. The girl was surprised by his reaction to hearing what she did for a living. Instead of recoiling, he asked her if it was what she had wanted to do for a living. His sympathy and understanding caused the girl to panic. She emphasized that she had accepted payment to be his companion, and in specific, paid to end it by driving him away. She was professionally obligated to have nothing to do with him beyond that evening. She strained to convince him they had no future together.

…

Unfortunately, the adventurer refused to let her go. He pressed her to explain why she did it and made a proposal. This was more than the girl could cope with, stunned by his acceptance, but frightened by what he demanded. So, she fled. Unable to explain herself, she simply put on her dress and left, chanting apologetic denials. This was too much for the adventurer. He raced out after her, naked and wet, desperate to catch her and force her to explain. Racing out after her as she fled, skidding on wet, soapy feet, he crashed into her as he caught up to her at the stairwell landing.

…

The collision sent both of them over the edge of the balcony, and she barely managed to catch the rail and grasp his hand. Unfortunately, with the film of soap covering his body, she could not keep her grip, and he fell seventeen stories to his death. There were hundreds of witnesses, and not a single person would have suggested that the tragedy had been anything but an accident. As the girl reeled from the tragic accident, she spotted the assassin and the agent once more in the crowd. The assassin, in particular, waited late into the night to approach her and deliver a parting remark, "So much for privacy.".

…

A few days passed, occupied by investigations, interrogations and the girl's exoneration, before she heard anything from the patron.

…

In their versions of reality, the girl and her alternate converted their demons into angels. In his version of reality, the demon's invasion of the boy's mind unlocked potential the boy used instinctively to annihilate the demon's host, opening a rift in the process. The demon had probed its way deep enough to latch on and survive in the shadow of the boy's mind, but it was in too weak a position to successfully dominate the boy from within.

…

When the girl's imprint began to undermine the boy’s identity, the demon recognized the opportunity to displace his psyche and claim the boy's body for its own. Essentially, all the demon had to do, once the boy began to struggle with his identity, was wait for the girl to let down her guard and then drive the boy's psyche out of his body and into hers, taking advantage of the rapport that had been created between them during the mental displacement trial.

…

He was not comfortable putting himself in such a position with another man. The girl had been taught how to swap bodies with the boy, so the girl confronted him with the man he's most comfortable with—himself. The girl confessed that she had always wondered what sex would be like as a man. She proposed an experiment to satisfy her curiosity and help the boy find out if he was capable of intimacy with a man, as a girl.

…

When the girl opened herself to trade places, the demon thrust the boy into her mind and claimed his body for himself. While the girl was incapacitated by the confusion of forced psychic fusion, the demon raped and then killed her—unaware that she was immortal because she had not been aware that she was immortal.

…

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[undefined]

[comments]

[establishing events]

[viable threads]

The ideas that are being tapped for this project have been in development for decades and each concept has many variations.

[inspirations]

Andrea Morgan.

A girl haunted by a childhood demon.

Vaiel.

A girl who is also incarnated as a boy.

She is orphaned and raised by the founders of two different arts.

He is raised by his family and trained in one of the arts.

A girl is haunted by a childhood trauma—ariel.

She is driven to seek out her brother.

Her quest leads to a deadly ordeal.

She is killed and resurrected in him.

Her new life in a different realm is shattered by the exile.

Her quest continues, as a search for her mother.

Andrea Kinkade.

A girl with a childhood trauma.

She confronts her fears on an outing with two of her friends.

They become trapped in an underground bunker during a storm.

A girl hunting the murderer of her twin [or older sister, or mother]

She follows in her sister[mother]'s academic footsteps.

At the art academy she investigates the murder.

Caitlyn.

A girl who studied swords and sorcery.

Used her magic to turn into a tiger.

Avonlea.

A girl raised as a circus acrobat.

Born a were-tiger.

A girl blamed for the death of her lover.

Her persecution ends with a taste of death.

Sent to her grandmother by her mother.

A girl named the heir to an empty title.

She is the mistress of a haunted manor.

She was courted and challenged over her title.

She recruits help to explore the manor.

Dark and powerful things reside in the manor.

A girl transported to a fantastic realm.

Lauren Sinclair.

A girl intrigued by the powers of the mind.

A girl with a dual major in physics and metaphysics.

A girl confronted by the reality of mythos creatures.

Dark young, in the redwood forests of humboldt county.

Deep ones, in lake merrit and the san francisco bay area.

A girl slain in combat with the deep ones escapes death into the dreamlands.

A girl who dreamed herself back into existence.

Recruited into an order of mythos investigators.

She was infected with the life program [a demon].

Morgan Wildmuir—Abyss.

A girl haunted by a childhood trauma.

Her family was wiped out in a massacre.

The manifestation of her powers trapped a demon within her mind.

A girl confronting her past.

To claim her inheritance she must visit her childhood home.

She explores her powers as she confronts her past.

She learns what her parents were part of and begins to follow in their footsteps.

A girl confronting other powers.

Morgan Wildmuir.

A girl who restored the power of a psionic exile.

And had her own power locked away.

A girl who had insight into the mystery of existence.

A girl who pursued education and enlightenment in spite of social obstacles.

She found her way into the company of radical thinkers.

Her intuition and pursuits caught the attention of an unusual patron.

A girl turned into a vampire.

Her sire, unknown to her, was an angel.

Her sire isolated her from other vampires.

Her sire drove her beyond the limits of her sanity.

A girl who wanders for a hundred years.

Her isolation ends when wolves destroy her sanctuary, driving her into the city.

She becomes a pawn in the bloody politics of the vampire underworld.

She survives the coup and is placed on the throne of the city.

She discovers that she is the fount of a new bloodline.

---

[inspirations combined]

A girl haunted by a childhood demon.

Andrea Morgan.

Morgan Wildmuir.

Morgan Erin Wildmuir—Abyss.

Her family was wiped out in a massacre.

The manifestation of her powers trapped a demon within her mind.

Her normal life is shattered by the threat from within.

A girl who restored the power of a psionic exile.

Morgan Wildmuir.

And had her own power locked away.

A girl who is also incarnated as a boy.

Vaiel.

She is orphaned and raised by the founders of two different arts.

He is raised by his family and trained in one of the arts.

A girl haunted by a childhood trauma.

Ariel.

Andrea Kinkade.

She confronts her fears on an outing with two of her friends.

They become trapped in an underground bunker during a storm.

A girl raised as a circus acrobat.

Avonlea.

Born a were-tiger.

A girl who had insight into the mystery of existence.

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A girl intrigued by the powers of the mind.

Lauren Sinclair.

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A girl hunting the murderer of her twin [or older sister, or mother]

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At the art academy she investigates the murder.

A girl named the heir to an empty title.

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To claim her inheritance she must visit her childhood home.

She explores her powers as she confronts her past.

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Morgan Wildmuir.

She is the mistress of a haunted manor.

She was courted and challenged over her title.

She recruits help to explore the manor.

Dark and powerful things reside in the manor.

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A boy turned girl, as a demon's familiar.

A girl blamed for the death of her lover.

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Slain in combat with the deep ones.

She escapes death into the dreamlands.

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Dark Young, in the redwood forests of Humboldt County.

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She was infected with the Life Program [a demon]

Vaiel.

Her quest continues, as a search for her mother.

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Morgan Wildmuir.

Her isolation ends when wolves destroy her sanctuary, driving her into the city.

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She survives the coup and is placed on the throne of the city.

She discovers that she is the fount of a new bloodline.

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[series—major threads]

Aeirn.

Perhaps the greatest oversight in the development of this project has been a tendency to overlook one of its earliest inspirations. Aeirn began as the setting for a story in which, among other things, the male and female incarnations of the same person meet and merge into one. The mechanism for this was a manifestation of paradox, the rift. Instead of pondering how those two ideas disintegrated, it is time to look at the ideas that have emerged to see how they are affected by the restoration of that inspiration.

The Rift.

The rift is the manifestation of the shattering blow that splintered reality. The cataclysm and the creation of the rift have been tied together as the climax of the purge, a conflict among the gods that marks the end of the age of creation and the beginning of the age of ruin. In short, the demon that is the host of the realm was drawn into the conflict by the destruction of the soul that was its focus.

Splinters of reality.

The splintering of reality provides an explanation for the existence of different versions of the same people. In particular, it allows the vampire and were-tiger threads to be isolated yet based on the same character. It even works out that the game construct exploits the splintering of Aeirn, which is potentially infinite, as if the splinters of reality were different servers.

…

The gods, by chance and choice, were scattered among the splinter realms. They had the ability to cross the rift between splinter realms, and used it to hunt or hide from each other in the contest that followed the purge.

…

It was always part of the initial inspiration for the boy to be a rift walker and the development of the story established a point where he and his father crossed over to a splinter of reality where he was born as a girl. Initially set when the boy is seventeen, it also works to have the boy and his father to have crossed over when he is seven; the father ending up in a triangle relationship with the native version of himself and his lover. The girl's mother was originally depicted in such a relationship.

---

Demon within.

A girl possessed and eclipsed by a demon.

When she is seventeen, the girl returns home and is forced to confront her childhood demons. Among the obligations she faces are the duties to her house and an arranged marriage. The boy to whom she has been engaged is the son of the man her mother was supposed to marry, a pact between houses that had been put off for a generation. The girl's childhood trauma has long been a cause of nightmares and blackouts triggered by random flashes of memory. The details of her ordeal return to her as the demon strives to overcome her from within. This struggle for possession presents an opportunity for the boy to gain the girl's form by becoming a familiar—it can also serve as a motive for rival immortals to cooperate to destroy her.

A demon within—variant.

One approach for establishing the demon within hails back to the war of the gods and incorporates the exile thread. The exile thread is the original inspiration for the demon within thread, featuring a demigod who was banished to the abyss, the deepest depths of the soul of creation. In the revision, he is not the only entity imprisoned there. The demon and the exile could actually have become trapped in the abyss together, the one used as a weapon against the other. In the original version, the exile was slain, hiss physical access to the realm destroyed, and its spirit bound or banished.

…

In addressing the demon's origin, this approach would most likely involve the demon claiming a host soul originating in the realm of aegis. By claiming the soul of an outer god, the demon would have been marked in the eyes of the inner gods as a deadly threat. This alone is cause enough for it to be exiled to the abyss, but there was more. During the war of the gods, the demon collected souls aggressively, and those souls became trapped in a dream-like realm, where they were immortal, and had offspring who, by virtue of being born native to that realm, were mortal and helped to give the realm more reality. The aspects of both worlds are engraved in the host's mind, providing a template for the world within.

A demon without.

This variation of the demon within works with the thread where the girl takes possession of the demon she confronted during the massacre, turning it into her angel and saving her parents by turning them into vampires. The integration of the angel makes her an avatar of the goddess, bringing her to the attention of the demon of the realm.

…

The demon originated in the domain of Aegis and the souls it captured gave rise to the domain of Aeirn in the demon's shadow. The point of collecting souls was to find a soul of its own; unfortunately, the demon was intent on assimilating the soul it sought, instead of allowing itself to be assimilated. The demon incorporated part of itself into the net, using the system to screen and harvest souls of the Aegis. As players, souls of the Aegis unwittingly created new incarnations of themselves into which they are drawn at death.

…

The demon within thread is a key part of the story and is usually established in a childhood tragedy, at which time the girl managed to eclipse the demon attempting to possess her. It was always part of the girl's thread that she possessed and used her psychic potential to eclipse a demon, establishing the demon within thread. There are a number of explored options for defining the circumstances of her childhood trauma. What is certain is that the event happens when she is seven.

…

The specific events need to be retailored to support the current version of the story; for example, some of the integrated threads feature a strong and persistent relationship between the girl and her mother but the usual foundation of the demon within thread is the massacre of her family. This is tentatively resolved by having the girl resurrect her parents as vampires—which also serves to introduce her to the underworld they become part of.

Demon within—fragment.

Another option would be for the demon within to be a fragment of the demon of the realm, allowing her assimilation of that fragment to be a step toward assimilating the demon entirely, a credible threat—and opportunity—in the demon's point of view.

…

The point of allowing the demon to take possession of the girl's body is that it allows the boy to be turned into a familiar, thus gaining the ability to assume the girl's form. In addition, the girl’s ordeal triggers his; turning into a girl is his half of the demon within thread. The fact that being possessed can allow the girl to experience life in another realm, and thus a completely different environment, is a bonus. The method used to restore her to her proper self is a method that could be used to liberate aeirn from whatever intelligence had harnessed it to exploit it as a game. Or, looked at from the other side of the threshold, it could arguably destroy the entire world.

Avatars.

A significant amount of the avatars story arc fits directly into working designs, up to and including the possession and eclipse of the main character.

A boy-turned-girl.

This thread has evolved as the complement of the demon within thread, exploring the boy's ordeal of gradually assimilating his female counterpart.

…

Her assimilation leaves the demon in possession of her body, until her body is slain and the demon takes possession of his body. Another benefit is that the demon within and the demon of the realm are separate entities. The demon within would have originated in the mind of an eclipsed soul of the aegis and most likely would have fallen during the purge or the age of ruin. The world within this demon is still taking shape, inspired by the dreams and memories of souls native to both aeirn and the aegis.

A girl confronts a boy bitten by the demon and turned into her twin.

The problem here is that this is essentially the establishing event in the demon familiar origin of a person who is divided into male and female incarnations; in order for this boy to be the girl's counterpart, something of this nature has to have already occurred.

A girl helps the boy cope with being a girl.

This was an original main thread—a boy-turned-girl—and can be adapted to resolve a childhood division or merge two splinter incarnations.

A boy-turned-girl is raped by the demon.

This is the crisis point of the conflict and the opening part of the climax of the demon within thread. As a singular duality origin, this rape would result in the conception of the main character. A conception under the present circumstances would be parthenogenic.

Accidental assassin.

The girl fell in with the wrong crowd while growing up. Her amazing agility earned her an unwilling, streetwise apprenticeship in cat burglary, disguised initially as training in gymnastics, acrobatics and fighting known as shadow-dancing. She does such a good job of obscuring her life as a thief that she somehow ends up with a reputation in the underworld as an unusually competent young assassin.

Slain lover.

A boy-turned-girl slays the demon.

This is the turning point and escalation of the climax employing one of the oldest inspirations, the slain twin. When the boy-turned-girl slew the demon, its body automatically reverted to its original female form in a desperate attempt to repair itself, but the demon was still impaled.

A boy-turned-girl is possessed and eclipsed by the demon.

…

This is the revealed mechanism of the slain twin thread. As its host body died, the demon took possession of the only other body available, leaving the girl's corpse to be discovered.

A boy-turned-girl crosses the threshold.

This element has been developed in several forms, each suitable for the main story line. The ordeal she goes through here is potentially a book in its own right. It can easily be developed as a sequel, however. The original demon within thread involved a struggle for dominance; the girl's possession is intermittent, and the boy's transformation gives the demon a way to edge her out and force him to assimilate her.

Unpromised.

The unpromised arc initially featured background concerning her return home, an episode involving her education and household obligations passed on from her mother, who had fled from them. Even though there is an option to have the demon assimilated instantly, the experiences the main character has while eclipsed by the demon sheds light on how people from the realm of aegis gained access to the realm of aeirn. This allows most of the unpromised story arc to be resurrected, up to and including the preparation of the main character to confront the demon and face destruction.

Threshold, eve of paradox.

The follow-up to the unpromised arc is the threshold story arc, which is set up in the opening story. Some characters and elements of the threshold can be introduced in the first book, along with characters and elements of the accidental assassin.

---

[loose threads & variations]

The girl crosses the rift.

It is possible that it was the girl who crossed over with her father following the death of her mother. Her father was a rift walker, like his counterpart, and entered the rift to rescue his daughter when she fell into the rift to escape from the demon that was trying to possess her. This approach causes the girl's mother to be eclipsed and take on the role of the goddess of mystery in the unpromised thread. The girl's adversary is her mother's personal demon—her own is currently in possession of her body. Her mother's demon seeks to seduce her into embracing the demon within her.

…

In her own world, the girl and her father were the only survivors of the massacre that wiped out their entire extended family. In part, it was having nothing to return to that compelled her father not to try finding their way back home. In both worlds, the mother was the protégé of the father's mother. Officially, the girl is an orphan and a protégé of the boy's mother. Her father was presented as his counterpart's twin, at his mother's insistence—to claim the girl as her own heir.

The other boy.

The engagement the girl is thrust into does not need to involve her male incarnation; in fact, the engagement is a threat to her relationship with him, or more accurately, her relationship with him is seen as a threat to her engagement. The boy she is engaged to is actually a player character, as in the threshold thread.

…

The boy the girl ends up engaged to was introduced through the game as an orphan. Her father takes him on as his protégé and heir to establish his own tradition in the art. He employed the art and the skills of an assassin as a hunter of immortals and taught them to the boy. The boy took an interest in the girl when she became caught up in the world of assassins and immortals.

…

This approach also lends itself to a version of the wager, involving her in events that lead up to the ruins becoming the site for the trials, through her helping to reveal what is lurking within them. It would involve her in events that end in her death—or possession by her demon and complete assimilation by her other half, incorporating elements of his transformation. Both of them endure a trial of transformation as she struggles with being infected with vampirism and morphism, eclipsed by her demon, redeemed by her other half and finally merging with him.

Child of fusion: Familiarity variant.

The child of fusion impulse established a child of natural conception who, under normal circumstances, would have been born a girl. As a result of the demon’s interference, the child of fusion manifested in her parent’s generation, able to adopt male and female form. This approach was an alternative to using a time-loop or reality-split, when those options had been exhaustively explored without satisfaction.

…

The extraordinary aspect to the situation was the mother being possessed by the demon of creation early in her pregnancy. The most logical time for her possession to occur—at seventeen, an age when she could reasonably be pregnant—would be during an ordeal at the conclusion of her initiation that brings her to the attention of the demon of creation. The demon bites the father, while in possession of the mother—infecting them with familiarity.

…

The child’s embryo acted as a catalyst during the manifestation of familiarity between the demon and the father. The child’s genome served as the template for a complex fusion of the parents’ combined genome. As humans with Avon ancestry, the parents each carried the dormant genetic material necessary to resurrect the Avon sex chromosome. The child manifested in the Avon form, as the alternative to the male and female forms exchanged by familiarity. The demon escaped the consumption of the mother’s body by taking possession of the father’s body, which was also affected by the revised manifestation of familiarity. Apart from being displaced and eclipsed—a condition that places them among the inner gods—the parents remain present, and normal.

Child of fusion: Familiarity—splinter incarnations variant.

This approach takes advantage of the splintered realms to establish male and female incarnations of the main character, applying the child of fusion events to them. The concept was adapted as a way to merge the two incarnations but excludes the conception of a catalyst embryo. That element can be reintroduced, however, modified and incorporated into the hunger and thirst thread.

The cabal.

Originally envisioned as a group conspiring to raise a demon or god of death, it evolved into a faction of inner gods or lost souls collaborating in a plot conquer the demon of the realm. The cabal is a conspiracy of adversaries, each seeking to dominate and devour the demon in the hopes of becoming the soul of creation, each needing the help of others to make the demon vulnerable to such an assault. This makes for an unstable alliance of opportunistic rivals at best. They cooperate to create a situation to their advantage and then compete to exploit it.

---

[overview: clean breakdown of key events.]

A girl eclipsed a demon at seven.

A girl meets a boy.

A girl falls in love.

A girl returns to confront her childhood demons at seventeen.

A girl is possessed by the demon within during her blackouts.

A girl bites the boy during a blackout.

A girl confronts the boy bitten by her demon and turned into her twin.

A girl helps the boy cope with being a girl.

A boy-turned-girl assimilates the girl.

A boy-turned-girl is raped by the demon.

A boy-turned-girl slays the demon.

A boy-turned-girl is possessed and eclipsed by the demon.

A boy-turned-girl crosses the threshold.

Child of fusion: Demon within—splinter incarnations & familiarity variant.

The demon possesses the girl during her blackouts.

The demon bites the boy during one of the girl's possessions.

The boy and girl are infected with familiarity.

The girl's fertility is restored by the transformation.

The girl becomes pregnant.

The intimacy creates a telepathic rapport.

The girl is gradually absorbed into the boy.

The demon forces the boy to finish assimilating the girl by attacking.

The girl finds herself trapped within the boy as the demon claims her body.

The demon attempts to take male form to rape the tomboy.

The embryo acts as a catalyst for a metamorphic fusion.

The minds of the boy and girl are drawn along with their soul into the fusion.

The demon takes possession of the boy's lifeless body.

The spirits of the boy, the girl and the angel are fused.

The avatar manifests the true sex of the goddess.

The avatar caught holding the boy's dead body.

The avatar is mistaken for a demon and captured.

The avatar is blamed for the boy's death and threatened with destruction.

The demon is forced to use the soul of its focus to revive the boy's body.

The demon is now anchored to the body it claimed.

The demon rescues the avatar from prison.

The demon names her a goddess in her own right.

The demon explains why.

The demon reveals what it offers in exchange for her soul.

The demon is the one god—but not an entity in its own right.

Child of fusion: Demon within—first arc.

The demon of the realm plays a part in the manifestation of the child of fusion.

The mother was pregnant when the demon possessed her.

The father was bitten in a struggle with the demon.

The father is transformed into a twin of the mother.

The mother's body is consumed by the manifestation of the child.

The demon is forced to possess the father to escape the dying body.

The demon withdraws before the child is fully manifest.

The child of fusion awakes in a pool of blood.

…

The child of fusion sires a male incarnation of himself.

The child of fusion bears a female incarnation of herself.

The boy and girl are born to separate houses.

…

The child of fusion is possessed by an inner demon.

The demon is torn between the boy and girl when the child of fusion is slain.

Child of fusion: Demon within—second arc.

The rapport between the boy and girl gives the demon a way to restore itself.

The demon exploits the girl's trauma, trying to possess her from within.

The demon exploits their most intimate rapport to seize the boy's body.

The girl's attempt to recover the boy's body goes awry.

The demon attempts to rape her.

The demon is slain in the struggle.

The body shifted to female form, but it was not enough to heal the damage.

The demon escaped by possessing and eclipsing her.

Tripping the rift.

The boy and girl travel to the city to attend the academy.

The boy and girl are unwittingly following in their parent's footsteps.

The girl arrives at the manor on its estate outside the city.

The girl begins to have flashbacks to the night she was orphaned.

The girl's family was slain in an attack on the academy during the invasion.

…

The boy and girl are tested for rift-potential.

The trial involves visiting another version of reality.

The spell targets an alternate of the girl's reality where she was not orphaned.

The boy and girl switch with the same alternate incarnation.

The girl switches with their alternate first.

The alternate is held in stasis in the girl's body.

The boy switches with their alternate in the girl's body.

The boy is held in stasis in the girl's body.

The alternate is held in stasis in the girl's body.

The girl ends up in the boy's body on her return from her alternate's world.

The girl confronts the fact that the boy is a version of her.

The boy had physically crossed to the girl's world as a child.

The girl is shown how to switch with the boy.

The girl and the paladin decide not to tell the boy what they learned.

The alternate physically crosses over to the girl's world.

The boy's friends witness the boy's transformation into a girl.

The friends confront the female boy.

The boy confronts the prospect of being stuck as a girl.

As a girl, the boy is a tomboy.

The boy and girl contemplate experimenting with being the opposite sex.

The demon displaces the boy, forcing him to merge with the girl.

The demon rapes and murders the girl and escapes in the boy's body.

…

The tomboy returns to the alternate world to start a new life.

The tomboy gets in over her head at a party.

The tomboy gets swept into the tides of the alternate's life.

The tomboy is forced back into the vampire's household.

An attack on the vampire’s household is led by a rival were.

The tomboy becomes a casualty of their long, bitter conflict.

The tomboy is raped and murdered.

The tomboy escapes death by merging with her alternate, now part of the girl.

The girl crosses over to the alternate world to investigate.

The girl goes after the tomboy's murderer.

The girl catches the eye of an assassin.

The assassin guesses her intention and appoints himself her mentor.

The girl's pursuit of the rapist/murderer leads her into the underworld.

The girl is taken to be the tomboy, raised as a vampire, by those who attacked.

The girl catches the eye of the vampire.

The vampire learns her story and becomes her patron and ally in the underworld.

The girl comes up against a were-tiger, the vampire's ancient rival.

The were attempts to steal her away, biting her when she resists.

The girl flees into the vampire’s arms, bitten and bleeding.

The vampire cannot resist a drink, draining her to the brink of death.

The vampire is tempted to indulge himself and destroy her before she can turn.

The vampire decides that there is still a chance to turn her into a vampire.

The girl is overwhelmed by the conflicting interests and infections.

…

The girl returns to her world and retreats to her estate.

---

20081220—Key Impulses

Felicity: Okay, here's what I remember (sorry I didn't get to it earlier!):

• In this world everyone has angels and demons as a part of their soul.

• Gods are powerful beings who manifest angels and demons as other beings.

• There is a girl and a boy who are actually alternate versions of themselves, but the boy is in the girl's world and eventually she has to take him on to save him as part of herself.

• There's a struggle for identity.

• She becomes powerful because of this.

• There are vamp and were factions in the world.

• Because of her changing, both factions consider her on their side (however she is a vamp-that-is-not-a-vamp and a were-that-is-not-a-were) and want her support for things. There are magic users and psychics as two forms of power users.

• I also remember you talking ages ago about paladins.

---

[explored threads]

A boy, an accidental incarnation of the goddess conceived by the artist in an attempt to sire a redoubt, a parthenogenic reincarnation of himself.

Hunger & thirst arc.

He was assumed to have been conceived by the will of the goddess and was surrendered to his father at the age of seven.

He assumed that the girl was simply another initiate traveling with them to the academy.

He was initiated as an artist, the protégé of his father’s protégé.

He was angelic, adopting the male identity imposed by his father to protect his true identity.

The irony was that his previous incarnation was a nymph—neither male nor female but equivalent to both.

The ordeal he faces is confronting and embracing his true identity and choosing to become female.

He dreamed of being a girl and convinced himself that it was simply anticipation of the girl of his dreams.

He was astonished when the only girl he wanted proved to be the one girl he could not have—his cousin and foster sister.

The boy’s host father.

An artist, born in secret into the Ardoen branch of the phoenix house.

His mother faked her death when she discovered her pregnancy.

His mother assumed a new identity as a courtesan and he was officially born prematurely, presumably the son of her patron.

He was sponsored to the academy by his mother’s patron.

He was touched by the goddess—but raised in the tradition of worship of the god usurped by the church.

The boy’s host mother.

A muse, born into the Arden branch of the phoenix house.

Her mother was pregnant when her husband was assassinated—their previous child, a son, was safe at the academy when the purge began.

Her mother took sanctuary as a priestess and the goddess delayed her daughter’s birth to obscure her paternity.

She was sponsored to the academy by the sanctuary.

She was devoted to the goddess—but forced to worship in secret.

The artist and the muse were from rival branches of a house in exile.

Their lineage was concealed in the early years of the purge because children were being targeted to eliminate heirs.

They were sent to the academy for additional protection.

They became friendly rivals under the same mentor at the academy while they were initiates.

They became a couple during their final year of initiation.

A girl, an orphan displaced in time and adopted by the muse.

Accidental assassin arc.

She was found lost in the ruins by the artist and delivered to the muse when the artist arrived to claim his son.

She was the heir to her brother’s title and the only survivor of the attack upon his home.

She was fostered by her aunt and initiated as a muse.

She had a guardian angel, created to protect her in her first human incarnation as the boy.

The irony of her situation is that she dreams of the boy she used to be—and at the same time saw as her protector.

The ordeal she faces is falling in love with the boy and watching him evolve into the goddess.

She becomes intimate with him at the academy, in spite of the fact that he is the son of her adopted mother.

She makes his ordeal more difficult by being the girl of his dreams—and pushing him to the point of crisis.

The girl’s mother.

A tomboy turned courtesan with a hidden past.

Her arrival at the academy during a rift storm brought her to the attention of the mentor and master of the artist and the muse.

Her impeccable breeding was evident and her refusal to discuss her past was attributed to flight from the purge.

…

The tomboy became caught up in the purge as part of a house in exile.

The tomboy became a companion of the master of the artist and the muse.

She was confronted by the master and coaxed into confiding in him.

The tomboy became the paladin of the goddess.

She was seduced by the artist—unable to resist the affinity the led to her inception—and became his other lover.

She became an intimate of the muse—pursued by the muse as the lover of her lover.

She was introduced to the older brother of the muse, who pursued her hand in marriage.

The tomboy was caught in a paradox.

She married into the Arden branch of the phoenix house to ensure that the girl would be born into it.

She knew the attack on her home was coming but could do nothing to prevent it.

She knew the manner of her own death and had to endure it.

The artist and the muse became caught up in the purge upon completing their primary initiation.

The artist was chosen as the agent of the church assigned to spy on the paladin of the goddess.

He was instructed to maintain the appearance of neutral lineage and remain closely associated with the woman.

He was required to gain her confidence and report on her to his superiors.

He was to subdue, capture and or kill her on command.

The artist confronted the muse and confided his true lineage and commission.

The artist, the muse and the paladin became companions, mentoring initiates under the supervision of their mentor, now a master.

They became involved in the growing conflict between their master and his rivals.

---

20081226—Suspended Impulses

They became involved in the climax of the purge.

She was marked for use as a weapon against the goddess.

He was used to deliver her to the cabal.

She was possessed by a demon who used her to get to the goddess.

The demon expected the paladin of the goddess to be destroyed in its attack upon the goddess, so it maintained a link to its established host when it projected itself into the paladin’s mind. Once the demon possessed the paladin, it went dormant, leaving the impression that she had driven it out. It waited for her to go to the goddess, for the goddess to probe her mind for any lingering taint. To find the demon hidden in the depths of the paladin’s mind the goddess would have to create an opening in her own mental defenses the demon could infiltrate.

The demon had one critical advantage; the goddess had been its creator.

The goddess had been identified as the soul of creation. The attack upon her was intended to awaken the mind of creation, or rather, to manifest the Creator. The demon could not hope to possess the goddess, but it was capable of devouring her soul. Instead of dominating the mind of the goddess, the demon set about tearing her mind apart from within, consuming the pieces until the soul within was naked. This was what would provoke the demon that had claimed her soul for its focus; the mind was what demon used to grasp a soul. Without a mind, the soul slipped out of the demon’s grasp.

The goddess understood the implications of what was happening to her better than anyone. The threat of her destruction would cause her demon to descend upon her and retaliate with a power unlike anything imaginable. The dream she and her kind had woven into reality would be shattered. Nothing mortal would survive. The only way to prevent that was for her to embrace annihilation. The only consolation was knowing that her naked soul would survive, through a scheme she had set in motion ages ago to create a brand-new incarnation of herself.

The goddess embraced the demon that was devouring her, possessing it and imparting it with two imperatives. One ensured her instantaneous annihilation, the other ensured that her soul would be passed on to the child of her paladin, whom she had already prepared to conceive a child with her true love. For an instant, the demon possessed her soul and was possessed by it. Unable to stop itself, it thought the thought that turned that soul inside out and the part of the demon’s mind that had been the goddess dissolved into a mist of incoherent information.

They were at ground zero, cast in the rift on the eve of paradox.

In a realm where the child was conceived and born a girl, her father’s identity was obscured.

In a realm where the child was conceived and born a boy, his mother’s identity was obscured.

In a realm where the child was conceived and born able to turn into a girl or a boy…

The woman was possessed by a demon and bit the man, making him its familiar.

The demon turned male and raped the familiar when he turned female.

The familiar mother inflicted a mortal wound on the demon father, forcing it to possess her.

The demon bore the child to be its familiar.

The child was conceived with the ability to turn into a girl or boy.

The child initially turned into a boy when touched by a male or into a girl when touched by a female.

In each realm, the child was presented for initiation at the age of seven.

The girl freed her mother from demonic possession by converting the demon into her angel.

The girl resurrected her slain mother as a vampire.

The vampire mother struggled to raise her daughter in the underworld.

The vampire mother was forced to call upon her courtesan heritage to survive in the underworld.

The boy tore through the fabric of reality fighting to escape from demonic possession.

The man freed his son from demonic possession by banishing it to the depths of his psyche.

The man raised his son in the realm the boy tore through to—the girl’s realm.

The man took the place of his slain counterpart, presenting the boy as the son of an anonymous courtesan.

The child was presented as a ploy to get the demon inside to carry out its attack.

The child recognized what was happening and lead the children to safety.

The child did not deny being the demon’s familiar when confronted by the paladin.

The child was offered sanctuary as an initiate sponsored by the paladin.

In the version of reality where the boy was forced to kill the demon…

…his mother was eclipsed.

As part of the girl, the boy would encounter her again in the demon's shadow.

It was a realm too amorphous for a complete version of reality.

If anything, it was a world assembled from different visions of reality.

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[random details]

Morgan was conceived on the Eve of the Autumn Equinox.

Morgan and Logan were incarnations of the same soul.

MORGAN

Gender: Masculine & Feminine

Usage: Welsh, English

Pronounced: MOR-gən (English)

From the Old Welsh masculine name Morcant, which was possibly derived from Welsh mor "sea" and cant "circle". As a (possibly unrelated) feminine name it was used by Geoffrey of Monmouth for the Arthurian sorceress Morgan le Fay. Since the 1980s in America Morgan has been more common for girls than boys.