

Tab 1

A Guide to High Fear - The Fundamentals

Hello everyone! I'm [Mininet](#). You may know me as the guy who keeps track of [every 50+ fear clear in the community](#). I have cleared every aspect on 50 fear in the underworld, and have cleared [Momus](#), [Thanatos](#), and [Mel Skulls](#) on 50 fear boonless with a failed attempt on [Artemis](#) dying to Chronos. After seeing so many different people play high fear and countless others asking for tips on clearing high fear, I want to give some of the most important fundamental concepts of the game to help you succeed. This is inspired by Lee Reamsnyder's Hades 1 guide.

The intention of the guide is not to be a build guide or a guide to playing aspects themselves. The intention of this guide is to inform you of the different concepts and fundamentals needed to **consistently** succeed at all levels of fear, but more specifically for high fear (Defined here as 32 Fear and above). This guide is made with the end goal of helping people push to fear levels beyond 32, such as 40 or 50 fear. As a result, what is covered here is a lot stricter than what is required to clear 32 fear and below. However, if you manage to get everything covered here down, then clearing 32 and below consistently should be an absolute breeze.

Important Concepts to Understand

This section will cover many of the important fundamental aspects to each run that you should always keep in mind as you play through each region.

Mastery of your Aspect

This section may seem very obvious. Of course you need to be able to pilot your aspect well in order to clear high fear. However, the mistake I see many MANY people make is not actually figuring out their aspect to a very high degree. Every single aspect can be played in different ways, and many people fall into the trap of trying to play their aspect in a very one dimensional way. Examples include people only using the Staff attack combo and never using their specials, and Thanatos players not canceling their attack 3 with a special when they do not need the third hit's damage.

Mastery of an aspect includes things like positioning, animation cancels, dodge timings, damage optimizations, and so much more. This concept is true for every single aspect in the game. By mastering the aspect, you are able to best identify the strengths and weaknesses of the aspects. By mastering the aspect, you will know the timings of when you are able to dodge and when you are most vulnerable to taking damage and can avoid those moments as much as possible. When you have mastered your aspect, your build becomes secondary and much less important as you should have the raw skills needed to clear each region without much difficulty. No matter how

much build advice, aspect tricks, or general tips you receive, if you don't have the fundamental intuition on how to play the aspect at a high level, you will struggle.

Momus, Mel Skulls, and Thanatos all have a boon-less clear on 50 fear, and a boon-less Artemis died on Chronos phase 2. Please do not underestimate the significance of knowing how to play your aspect at a very high level, and seriously dedicate time to practice it. Pick boons that aren't good or do very little to your run, and see how much you can get away with while still being able to clear. If you can clear with 3 damage boons, try to clear with only 2. If you were crutching on a specific defensive utility like Arctic Ring, try to clear without it for a couple of runs. Aspect mastery makes a world of difference in high fear. If you would like to watch videos of different people clearing 50 fear with every single aspect, my spreadsheet has over 100 vods you can check out and see how your play with an aspect compares to how a top runner plays,

Build Identity

Understanding how to develop a build for an aspect builds off of the concept of mastery. Yes, there are builds that have already been established for the aspect that you can follow. However, runs are all dependent on RNG, and you may not get a God that is required for a specific build (eg. No Demeter for a Freezer Burn build). This is where your mastery of the aspect comes in, as when you know the strengths of the aspect, then all you need to do is play towards it.

In high fear, properly understanding build identity matters a lot. Learn to identify what your end game win condition will be, and learn to play and build around it. If its a specific duo or legendary, how can you make it as buffed as possible (eg. Freezer burn wants high leveled scorch application, so poms might be more valuable than boons. Exceptional Talent might want Weedkiller over like a special boon). If its basic boons that simply buff your aspect, then try to maximize your base damage with global buffs like Origination. Your god pool should be reflective of this.

For example, Poseidon on Pan is one of the strongest builds in the game, but why isn't Poseidon recommended for an aspect like Thanatos Axe that also has a multi-hit special that doesn't require a channel? This is because the aspects fundamentally play differently. Pan's omega special fires many instances of blades/damage that each apply the special's boon. In this case, firing 10 knives with Pan's omega special means you are getting 10 individual hits of Poseidon's special, and this adds up quickly. Because you are firing multiple instances of low damage projectiles, Poseidon is valuable on Pan because Poseidon benefits from fast multi-hits. Axe's main strength on the other hand is its large AOE, high base damage attack. This attack is slow but hard hitting, so % damage boons like Aphrodite and Apollo benefit the axe greatly. Even Zeus can work on the attack because the Axe's high base damage means you can hit the Blitz

threshold very easily, compared to a weapon like the Coat who has low base damage but high strike speed between its attack and specials. See how everything is kind of coming together? Knowing the strengths of the different aspects and weapons leads itself into knowing which Gods are good for your aspect and your situation. You have Possessed Array on the Skulls? Then Hera is an insane option as the Skull's high base damage benefits more from % damage boons and Born Gain gives you large amounts of mana quickly instead of being a consistent regeneration. What do you build on Medea? Well the glass cannon aspect has incredibly high base damage, so having a strong % attack boon like Aphrodite is great, and the high base damage means Zeus special is fantastic as you can hit the blitz threshold very quickly.

This is why Hephaestus's core boons with his Blast effect is considered bad in high fear as a main build option. It contributes nothing to the strength of the aspect across the board because its damage is locked behind a timer. It does not benefit fast hitting aspects as the damage is locked behind a timer, and it does not benefit slow hitting high damage aspects because the timer duration can mean you actually lose dps in the long run since the blast is a flat damage number. It also requires heavy investment with poms to make the Blast effects semi useful, and that means you have to sacrifice gold, health, mana, and boons to do so. However, Blast is a decent option for sub dps options on things you don't normally use as a damage source because the cd is about the same frequency of when you would use it to deal damage. (Eg. on Thanatos Special or Mel Skull Special). However, with the release of Ares and the existence of Zeus, having either Wounds for the option of Grievous Blows or Blitz for the added damage is a far superior option.

Learning the strength of an aspect will naturally lead into understanding what Gods are good for your current run. Identify the main sources of damage in your run, and try to build around it and be flexible instead of trying to force a build. If you have a special boon and Shimmering Rockets on the Coat in Erebus but intended to play for an attack build, then be flexible and play for a special build instead and take whatever attack boon you can just to fill up the slot. Trying to constantly force a build in high fear will often lead to having incomplete and worse builds in the long run.

Brief Explanation about the God Pool

In every run, you can have up to 4 Gods in your "God Pool." This means as long as you do not have boons from 4 of the major boon giving Gods (ie. every Olympian/God outside of Athena, Dionysus, Athena, Hermes, Chaos, and Selene), any boon reward from mystery bags or location rewards can be from any God. The moment you have a boon from at least 4 gods, the only way to be offered another God is through their specific keepsake. Otherwise, any boon reward will be randomly chosen from the 4 Gods you currently have boons for.

How to Use Rolls

The Enchantress, The Boatman, The Fates, and The Champions are the 4 arcana cards that make up the bottom left hand corner of the arcana page, and they are a staple in the high fear community. They should, in no circumstance, be underestimated in their value. The ability to roll location doors means you are able to have more control over what Gods are added to your limited God pool, and being able to roll boons means you are able to hit the crucial components to your build as soon as possible. The value of The Boatman card will be explained in the “Value of +1 Boon” Section, but for the purposes of rolls The Boatman gives great value since it gives you access to 4 extra rolls via The Fates card. Rolls are the best way for you to control your RNG in the run, so use them wisely.

Location Rewards come in 3 different variants, those being minor rewards, major rewards, and miniboss rewards. Minor rewards come in the form of Ash, Bones, and Nectar. Minor rewards should never be rolled, and you should just look to grab whatever benefits you best. Major rewards include Gold, Centaur Hearts, Mana Pots, Poms, Selene, Hammers, and Boons. Major rewards should very rarely be rolled because you can very easily get unlucky and cycle between the non boon options before finally landing on a boon. Only look to roll major rewards if you are in desperate need of a boon (eg. You are coming into Encounter 5 without any boon because you took a hammer or hex as the reward in Encounter 3). Otherwise, it's best to leave them alone. Miniboss rewards are the rewards given for clearing a miniboss, and they will ALWAYS give a boon. These doors are the best to roll for the God you want to either add to your pool or get another boon from, as you are guaranteed a boon (assuming you do not have onion active). However, be warned that rolling more than 4 times can put the miniboss reward into a “God cycle,” where the only options given will be between 2-3 Gods. Rolling 10 times on the miniboss door will not guarantee you see all 9 available Gods. You will most likely only see 1-2 from your current pool and maybe 3 new ones if you are lucky.

Boons should be rolled using the same principles behind your build identity. If you are looking for a specific boon, then it is fine to commit rolls. If the God does not have any specific option you are looking for (eg. Hestia in a Pan Poseidon run), then it is best to just grab the best option and save your rolls. If you are looking for boons that are helpful but aren't crucial, roll once or twice and just grab the best available option. For example, if you are looking for Hephaestus's Trusty Shield for defensive utility, then roll thrice at most while also looking for other acceptable defensive utility options like Heavy Metal, Mint Condition, and Uncanny Fortitude. Saving your rolls will benefit you in the long run, do not commit all of them looking for a single boon.

Skip Rooms

Skip Rooms are a concept many high fear runners will talk about, but what does this actually mean? Skip rooms refer to any rooms where the encounter does not play out like a traditional encounter filled with enemies. These rooms include midshops, NPC encounters like Arachne, Narcissus, and Echo, and special encounter rooms where you are assisted by an NPC. These special rooms are Artemis and Nemesis encounters where they help you clear enemies, Nemesis “shop” encounters where she offers a trade deal, and Arachne cocoon rooms. These are considered “skip” rooms because they freeze the timer or allow for a very fast encounter. You may have noticed I did not list Hades as a skip room. This is because it does not fast forward the progression towards the end of the region, as Tartarus requires you to clear 5 chambers before proceeding to Chronos. Erebus for example always has an endshop on location 12 and Hecate on location 13. This means that getting Arachne essentially “skips” an encounter/location.

One very important detail you need to remember is that Skip Rooms only appear in non menu rooms. Non menu rooms are any rooms/locations/encounters where the reward brings up a menu option. These rewards are boons, hammers, Selene, and poms. This means that any minor reward room or major reward rooms that include Centaur Hearts, Gold, or Mana pots are all eligible to become “skip” rooms. If you already have a build strong enough to clear Erebus but are short on time, then look to take potential skip rooms. The exception is in the Fields of Mourning, where Nemesis can appear in any reward or just because. There is no consistent logic from what I can tell. The Surface works a bit differently but the principles are the same. Artemis can only appear in rooms where the reward is either a Centaur Heart or Mana Pot. However, Heracles and Icarus can appear in menu rooms. In fact, Heracles spawning in menu rooms is actually great as you can wait out his long time to leave in the boon selection screen, freezing the timer.

Value of +1 Boon

This is probably the most important fundamental aspect of the game that you as the runner should understand when you approach high fear. In high fear, it gets increasingly difficult to get a boon due to various purposes like the Vow of Debt and Vow of Forfeit. On average, most 50 fear runs clear with ~8-9 boons, and some have cleared with not even 7. What I’m trying to get at here is that boons are a very valuable resource, and should very much be treated as such.

Some of the most commonly asked questions regarding high fear builds are “Why does this build not work in high fear” or “Why is this boon considered bad in high fear.” The simple answer is that a high fear build should be functional and cover every ground with as little boons as possible. This is why simple builds like Pan Poseidon or Medea with Hera Attack and Zeus Special are considered so powerful, but builds that are very popular in low fear like Apollo

Legendary builds or King's Ransom builds are not recommended. When you have very limited options, playing for a specific legendary, duo, or builds that require a lot of boons to take off are simply too costly and require too much investment. If you watch high fear runners like Boated, most of their early game boon choices are for upfront damage without much consideration into legendaries or duos. Every single boon that you get should contribute something to your build. You cannot wait until Fields to get a functional build going, as you will time out more often than not.

This is also the reason why many hex builds aren't strong in high fear, simply because they require significant investment. Take for instance Lunar Ray and Dark Side. Lunar Ray when fully invested can absolutely melt bosses, and Dark Side can make you essentially invulnerable the entire run. However, they require at least 4 major rewards to really get going and turn you into that powerhouse. This means you are giving up 4 potential boons, severely limiting your combat power and defensive options while also adding the requirement of having to consume a lot of mana to maintain hex uptime, which means you need a gain, which means you need a boon. See the issue?

In the same branch of reasoning, Poms are also very suboptimal to the point where I would recommend rerolling away from a pom in favor of any other major reward. The value of a pom greatly depends on what boon you are able to pom, and 90% of the time getting another boon or any other major reward will give you more overall value than a single pom. The only times I would consider taking a pom as a major reward is to buff a Zeus blitz boon or a Poseidon Wave boon, but even then I prefer another boon.

Anything that can guarantee you even a single boon is incredibly powerful. This is why most high fear runners in the underworld take the Artificer arcana, as it has the potential to convert a minor reward into a boon. The Boatman arcana with the +300 gold guarantees you can get at least 1 extra boon in a midshop or endshop. Hermes's Traveler's Deal means if you have enough gold, you can get an extra boon from a shop before going into a guardian fight for example. Boons are an incredibly precious resource, and as you go higher into fear, you need to be approaching it with the mindset that you are not going to be getting many boons, so you need to make what you can get count. Your raw skills should be able to cover up what you do not have in terms of boons. You don't have defensive utility? Then look to improve your dodging skills. You don't have good offensive boons? Then look to maximize the windows of opportunity you have for damage. Mastery of your aspect plays a huge part in this area. The better you are at an aspect, the less impactful the lack of boons is, and the more impactful actually being able to get a good boon becomes.

Controllable Power

This section will cover how you should be approaching how you select keepsakes, arcana, and vows, and your mindset playing the run with them.

Keepsakes

I like to categorize the keepsakes into 4 categories; Direct Help, Combat, Utility, and Supplementary Keepsakes. Keepsakes are a very important tool in your run, and should never be chosen haphazardly.

Direct Help Keepsakes are keepsakes that give you any sort of additional help in the form of a boon, hammer, or hex. These keepsakes should be taken at the start of the run as they are meant to help shape your build immediately. However, there are the occasional times when you can take them going into another region as you may want/need a specific god in your pool, hex upgrade, or just want an additional hammer. Zeus's keepsake is used as a placeholder for all 9 boon giving Gods in the image below.

Combat Keepsakes are keepsakes that amplify any aspect of your combat power. These keepsakes should be taken into consideration if you are lacking damage because of the lack of boons. The most commonly used Combat keepsake is Metallic Droplet in the Fields of Mourning, as the movement speed greatly helps with traversal through the open area and the strike speed helps to minimize moments of vulnerability since you commonly get attacked from all directions in the Fields.

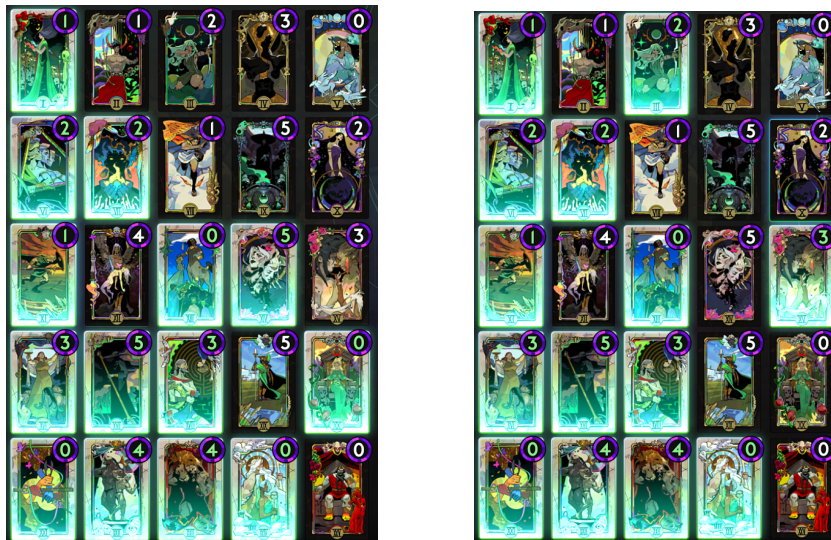
Utility Keepsakes are keepsakes that help you in a run dependent manner. These keepsakes should be used if you want/need their effect to make your run easier. These keepsakes should only really be taken if you desperately need their effects to survive (eg. Lucky Tooth) or already have a good enough build where you don't need any specific boons and just want to have an easier time surviving (eg. Engraved Pin and Fig Leaf).

Impractical Keepsakes should very rarely be taken because they contribute very little to the success of your run. I never take any keepsakes from this list because their effects are very limited and can become useless very quickly. I recommend avoiding keepsakes from this list when running high fear. The only small asterisk is Silken Sash, as you do have the potential to carry over a powerful Arachne dress. However, the changes to armor interaction with Strength means it is significantly harder to do so and you may be left with a wasted keepsake. Only take Silken Sash if you are completely cracked at the game (like Foolish or Boated).

Direct Help	
Combat	
Utility	
Impractical	

Arcana

Recommended Underworld Arcana Page



Recommended Surface Arcana Page



If you do not have Scars 3 enabled, trade The Swift Runner for The Wayward Son for either page. Healing is incredibly valuable and should not be underestimated.

You may have noticed that all of those pages share very similar cards, so let's break down the cards into why certain ones are nearly always taken and why some are not taken.

Strength vs Death

Probably the most common debate in the community regarding arcana. So what to choose?

Strength gives you 50% damage reduction, which gives you about the same amount of effective HP (eHP) as death but with the addition of 25% additional damage. Without Scars 3 enabled, any source of healing also gives double value due to strength giving damage reduction compared to Death giving Death Defiances. It is the preferred option for top runners as they would rather have the damage over the higher eHP and potential to refresh the DDs. You are also able to instantly run Athena's keepsake for one of her powerful deflect boons or, for non mana hungry aspects, Stalwart Stand, giving you a free revive in every single room and allowing you to have the incredibly powerful Stalwart + Pin combo. This combo lets you have 10 seconds of free invulnerability unconditionally (outside of mana priming) every room to deal damage, and if you do not manage to clear the room within that time frame, you still have strength to play with.

On the side of Death, the value of DDs have fallen pretty hard in high fear especially since Strength gives damage and is more efficient with healing. In addition, refilling a DD means you have to get it from a source like Echo, Athena, or by buying a DD refill from a Well or Shop. This means you are losing out on potential boons with the gold spent. Refer to the value of +1 boon for why this is bad.

Does this mean that Strength is always better than Death? No

The moment you enable Scars 3, the conversation changes. Without any available healing, DDs become a source of pseudo healing because you are able to “replenish” health by buying another DD. Meanwhile, the greater efficiency of healing in Strength is removed as an advantage simply because there are no healing options. In addition, Death is significantly safer on the Surface because there are so many sources of small damage. A fire tick that you can accidentally take on the surface may deal 1 damage to someone running Death, but someone running Strength will effectively take 2 damage. The more tiny sources of damage there are, the worse Strength is because those tiny sources effectively deal double damage. Death also provides the new benefit of being able to run Engraved Pin off the bat. In addition, if you have lost all of your DDs, you can use Athena’s keepsake for a boon like Renewed Faith to replenish all your DDs at higher efficiency. 3 DDs replenished with Epic Renewed Faith gives you another 180% eHP, and any replenishes afterwards gives another 60% eHP.

TLDR: Learn to play Strength over DDs for all fear levels if you do not have Scars 3 enabled. The moment you have Scars 3 enabled, it is personal preference for whether you want the added safety of DDs or the added damage of Strength.

Commonly Taken

The Sorceress	30% Channel speed is great for just about every aspect. Being a 1 grasp cost as well makes it essentially an easy pickup for every arcana page.
The Wayward Son	Healing with Strength is incredibly strong, and if you don’t have Scars 3 enabled, is probably the strongest arcana in combination with Strength. Being 1 cost makes it incredibly free.
The Huntress	On aspects that don’t really use omega moves, huntress is just free flat damage. Make sure to get it active as much as possible if you do decide to enable it.
The Furies	30% global damage on a cast is insane, especially considering you should be using casts as frequently as possible.
Persistence	40 max health and magic is just solid. For 2 grasp as well, it gives you a lot of early game stability.
The Swift Runner	10% movement speed can go a very long way, especially in the Cerberus and Eris fight. Do not underestimate the value of movement speed.
Origination	One of the common sources of damage amplification. Especially since most of the strongest gods involve a curse (eg. Zeus Blitz, Hera Hitch), it is very easy to proc.
The Lovers	It is an immense amount of protection during guardian fights, and can save you

	80-100 health if you use all 3 shields. If you find yourself struggling in either the underworld or the surface, don't be afraid to drop a damage arcana to pick up lovers. It is recommended that beginners drop Origination in favor of Lovers + Huntress for example as most of the time damage is not the limiting factor as to why people do not get clears. If you still want Origination, then drop Artificer. Do not underestimate the value of Lovers.
The Enchantress	Part of the Reroll Corner. Explanation above in the "How to Use Rolls" Section
The Boatman	Part of the Reroll Corner. Explanation above in the "How to Use Rolls" Section
Artificer	Artificer essentially gives you 3 additional major reward rooms, making you significantly stronger in the early stages of the game. However, in Surface where Ephyra is all major rewards, the value of Artificer significantly decreases as by the time minor rewards appear in Thessaly you should already have a build set up.
The Champions	Part of the Reroll Corner. Explanation above in the "How to Use Rolls" Section

Alternative Options

Eternity	You should be at a skill level when you approach high fear where you do not need the time slow on omega channels to not take damage. However, for aspects that are reliant on their omegas like Pan, Charon, and Selene, the slowdown is a massive safety net, so don't feel scared to use Eternity. Nothing is a "crutch" if it gets you the clear.
The Messenger	The movement speed on cast drop can be nice, but the effect of both the movement speed and the brief invulnerability is far too short to get real value.
Unseen	For 5 grasp, it gives you less magick than even the weakest gain boon. If you need mana regeneration, then it is better to use the grasp on an offensive arcana like origination and spend 1 boon for a Gain boon.
Night	Night is actually a very strong arcana, to the point where I think if you want to run Lovers over origination it is a very viable alternative to Huntress. However, as it currently stands, Night only gets real value on a few aspects to the point (eg. Momus) where it is typically not worthwhile to opt into.
Excellence	Excellence essentially gives you a lot of poms over the course of the run by rarifying boons. However as discussed above, the value of poms greatly depend on the boon you are actually grabbing, and as a result Excellence is typically not worth the 5 grasp.

Vows

Vow of Pain: One of the easiest vows to enable per point of fear because you should be able to not get hit as often as possible. Sure there are situations where damage is all but unavoidable, but for the most part you should not be taking so much damage where you need to turn off Pain. Once again, it is a hard truth to swallow, but you need to get to this skill level if you want to consistently clear high fear.

Vow of Grit: Not a vow you want to enable early. 10% extra health per rank doesn't seem like a lot, but considering every single enemy you have to fight over the course of the run, 10% additional health on every enemy adds up very quickly. A single point of Grit can mean you have to deal an additional maybe 50k damage over the course of the run.

Vow of Wards: Wards is an interesting vow because of how it works. The stronger the weapon, the harder Wards is. By stronger, I mean in terms of a single attack. Wards on axe are brutal because the axe relies on single strong hits, so wards can give every enemy ~200 eHP. On faster hitting weapons, wards aren't that big of a deal (think mel torches, staff).

Vow of Frenzy: Should be one of the earliest vows to enable. 40% bonus movement speed may seem scary, but once you get your muscle memory trained to match the faster movement it is essentially free fear.

Vow of Hordes: One of the greatest noob trap vows in the game. Hordes is what I consider a multiplicative vow, as it amplifies every other enemy buffing vow. Hordes spawns more enemies, and each enemy has more HP from Grit, can be from a different region due to Menace, has the chance to spawn revenants from Return, could have perks from Fangs, so on and so forth. Do not enable Hordes beyond Hordes 1 the moment you start enabling other vows that buff enemies until 40 fear.

Vow of Menace: One of the easier vows in the game because you should know how to deal with every enemy already. It just means they spawn a region earlier.

Vow of Return: A vow that is free on paper but requires a surprising amount of technical skill to overcome. It is a time waster and makes encounters harder due to the potential for enemies to respawn. Learning to deal with Return is a skill of its own, and you should look to enable Return as soon as possible to learn how to consistently deal with them.

Vow of Fangs: Ah Fangs my hated. Like Return, Fangs is a vow you just have to learn to deal with. There are many different types of perks, each having their own way you need to learn how to deal with. Sometimes, you get horrible Fangs combos and you just die. It happens.

Vow of Scars: Vow of Scars is interesting because as you get better at the game, the need for healing reduces to the point where Scars 1 and 2 should be treated as free fear. However, this does not mean Scars 3 is free fear. Scars 3 significantly increases the difficulty of the game and should only be taken if you plan on clearing above 40 fear. Otherwise, do not enable Scars 3, but learn how to clear with Scars 1 and 2 enabled.

Vow of Debt: Debt is as close to free fear as you can get, as you should be able to clear any run without buying anything from the shops and should be enabled for any underworld clear. However, due to Hermes shrines on the surface being so common, debt on the surface is actually bait as you can get an insane number of boons for cheap throughout the run.

Vow of Shadow: Shadow adds a lot of difficulty to miniboss fights that again, you should just be able to learn to deal with. It's one of the vows where you just have to simply get better at the game and learn to consistently deal with.

Vow of Forfeit: When playing on low fear, losing 4 boons over the course of the run may not seem like much considering you could be getting 20+ boons per run. However, considering you lose your first run in Erebus and Oceanus can typically result in no boons due to how location rewards play out, this is one of the main reasons why high fear runs typically have single digit number of boons by the end. It's not as bad on the surface since Ephyra gives you so many major rewards. This vow is really where your mastery over the aspect and the game's mechanics comes into play. If you have the raw skill, then this will feel like free fear.

Vow of Time: Similar to the Vow of Frenzy, this vow should be enabled to the max as soon as possible. Learning to play with only 5 minutes in each region is a very good skill to get down to train your raw skills, and eventually you'll get good enough where even clears that take beyond 20 minutes feel slow. The exception is the surface, where bad rng and tanky enemies can mean 5 minutes is a very short amount of time. If you are just trying for 32-40 fear clears, then you can take timer 2. If you have a lot of time remaining for the last guardian fight, don't feel rushed and play it slow. A 20 minute clear has the same value as a 12 minute clear if you aren't speedrunning. They are both clears.

Vow of Void: Do not touch until you are proficient enough to clear 50 fear consistently. Losing arcana greatly hinders your early game power, and is not worthwhile to take. Even on 50+ fear, people only enable Void when they are trying for 51 fear clears and above.

Vow of Hubris: Another "free" fear that you should enable early. It is only detrimental if you take boons with rarity or priming boons, but overall you should learn how to manage your max mana even with aspects that are very mana hungry.

Vow of Denial: Another “free” fear that can actually be beneficial from time to time. Since the number of boons you actually encounter decreases as you climb higher into fear, being able to remove “bad” options from the pool can mean you hit the boons you need sooner. Be careful about removing too many options from the same god however, as you can be left with only sacrifices that are detrimental.



Example of a 32 fear loadout for the Underworld.



Example of a 32 fear loadout for the Surface

0-16						
16-24						
24-32						
32+						

Ordered Fear Tierlist from Left to Right in terms of what to enable first

Familiars

Frinos: 40 Max HP + Blocks Projectiles

For both DDs and Strength, Frinos gives the most amount of HP. It gives 80 eHP for Strength users. For Death users, the 3 DDs reviving for 40% means Frinos's 40 max HP increase equates to an additional 48 max hp overall, which is more than Toula's DD. Overall, Frinos with Death gives a total of 88 eHP, making it significantly better than Toula in terms of raw hp numbers. The projectile blocking can be very helpful in blocking Hecate's hex and removing the need to dodge it entirely if you position correctly. Other than that, Frinos's blocking mechanic is unreliable and oftentimes negligible.

Use Frinos if you feel you are not skilled enough to consistently dodge attacks, as the additional max hp gives you more room for error

Toula: 1 DD that revives for 40 HP + Some Damage

The worst of the high fear familiars. The DD is only useful in very niche scenarios (eg. Echo and Athena full DD refills), and even then you would rather have Frinos's max hp for more effective HP revives anyways. The only caveat is that Echo and Athena DD refreshes are a lot more effective with Toula around, so if you are deciding between Frinos vs Toula and plan on taking Athena for Renewed Faith, then Toula is very marginally the better play, but even then Frinos makes your base 3 DDs stronger so it's really personal preference. The damage from Toula needs to be manually activated, and is oftentimes negligible.

Never use Toula (I'm sorry ;-;) unless you really like her.

Hecuba: 60 Max Magick + 100 Magick refill every encounter

An absolute godsend for any mana requiring aspects. Hecuba can single handedly remove the need for an early gain boon for the majority of mana hungry aspects up until your 3rd or 4th boon (except Charon), meaning you can opt into early game damage to clear rooms quickly and beat the timer. Hecuba does not completely negate the need for a gain for mana hungry aspects like Momus, Pan, and all the Flames, so while it greatly helps for the early game, it is not the one

stop solution. Hecuba's bark to stun enemies can come in quite handy and be greatly helpful in more situations than you would expect, so Hecuba also has that offensive/defensive aspect to the familiar as well.

Use Hecuba if your aspect uses >100 mana per encounter to clear

Raki: 4% Base Crit Chance + Chance to Mark Enemies for an extra 15% Crit Chance

The "speedrunner's" familiar. Raki is the best familiar if you are aiming to deal as much damage as possible, as crits are a multiplicative damage increase. If you do not need the safety of Frinos or Gale due to raw skills and your aspect does not spend significant amounts of mana, Raki is the best familiar for beating the timer. Raki's damage as well should not be discredited, as it can do quite a bit.

Use Raki if you have the raw skills to not need defensive familiars and don't need mana

Gale: 6% Dodge and Movement Speed + 3 Blocks to any dmg with a 400 dmg Retaliation

If you have the raw skills needed to consistently dodge attacks, Gale is just the better Frinos. The movement speed can go a very long way to aid in positioning, dodging, and traversal, and the blocks effectively act as a Lovers shield that lasts through the entire region. It is significantly better than Frinos for the surface, as many of the attacks are high damage and single instances.

Use Gale if you are skilled enough to dodge most attacks but still want a defensive familiar