

OK But No Really Who The Fuck Is Janus

Or, The Janalysis

Janus.

The god who rose not, but reigns. The Exception. St. Januarius. All the gods and none.

If you have any sense about you, you'll have clicked off by now. But then, if you had any sense about you, you wouldn't have clicked on to begin with.

Janus, then. Who *is* he?

That's not for me to say. I am not here to argue any one theory on who Janus is. I am here to compile. To catalog, collate, and digest every scrap of information, gather every relevant theory, and square the two against each other.

A warning in advance: this work presumes a good deal of understanding of the Secret Histories. You will want to know already of each of the Hours, and of at least some of the lore related to them.

Now, without further ado:

Part the First: Who Is This Guy Anyways?

There are many gaps in our knowledge of Janus (one might argue that Janus is more gap than god), but there *are* things we know yet. Once in the past, I had compiled most of the text surrounding Janus for a project similar to this one. However, rather than flatly echo the information, as I did then, this time I seek to digest the information for its most relevant insights. Of course, there is necessarily a trade-off between depth and groundedness in any analysis, so I can only hope I have found a worthwhile balance.

(A note on formatting: some parts of the analysis I am quoting from others, for the sake of clarity between quoted text and my own, quoted text will be *italics*.)

- Janus is the gatekeeper, the twin-god, the god that wounds, the presager of change, the sun, and the moon. ([Locksmiths Dream: Stolen Reflections](#))

Starting with the basics. Gatekeeper and presager of change map cleanly to the IRL Janus, whose domain included thresholds and change. Basic stuff.

“God that wounds” invites connection to Knock’s associations with wounds (and Janus is associated with wounds elsewhere too- more on that later). Twin-god I am less sure of, but Janus is well known for being two-faced. The obvious connection is to the Hours collectively called the Twins, the Witch-and-Sister and the Sister-and-Witch, but the Twins seem completely absent from any other Janus information, which immediately kneecaps that conclusion. More likely, then, is that this text is also just acknowledging Janus’s IRL associations.

Sun and Moon are also difficult to grapple with. The Sun is in a sense a door- a hemorrhage of Glory, to be specific- and Janus does have some solar connections (more on that later), but the Moon is silver and silver is silence and silence is the opposite of a door or a wound. While these associations are present in the IRL god, I don’t think they can mean much in the Secret Histories

This is a lot, but I think this part of Stolen Reflections is really just recapping IRL Janus’s nature for those unfamiliar with the Roman god, perhaps along with a few teases for us to watch out for in later lore.

- Janus is the Watchman, the Twins, the Mother of Ants, the Forge of Days, the Meniscate, and the Madrugad ([Locksmiths Dream: Stolen Reflections](#))
 - Teresa later retracts these connections, claiming that Janus is probably either the Watchman or the Meniscate ([asking Teresa to sign Stolen Reflections](#))

The base text of this part of Stolen Reflections reflects the previous list of titles, but the sheer breadth of possibilities combined with the weakness of those titles in the Secret Histories robs this piece of nearly any use. Teresa’s redactions, fortunately, provide direction: Janus is associated with the Meniscate and/or Watchman. It cannot be so simple that he *is* any one of them, but Teresa’s status as a Lantern Name (and of the Watchman himself, no less!) means it is difficult to discount this information.

- Hersault and Coseley once agreed that Janus was ‘all the gods and none’. But later, Hersault described him as ‘all the gods’’, and Coseley favoured ‘none’. ([Locksmiths Dream: Stolen Reflections](#))

This is a gloriously straightforward piece of information. Janus is all and/or none of the gods. simple, really. Note that Coseley famously radicalized against the Hours later on in life, the difference between all or none is often hypothesized to be a matter of perspective.

- In Gallaecia they called him Ianus Lamius, but the Oblivates are notorious for their slanders. ([Locksmiths Dream: Stolen Reflections](#))

This is a piece I had missed in my first roundup of Janus lore, and in that interim Splashcat beat me to it. I’ll quote their analysis now:

"I've definitely seen the first half of this discussed a lot, but the second half, not so much. I didn't really know what "Lamius" meant until recently. I vaguely thought it might have a connection to "Lame" as in crippled, but I went looking, and no. It's the male form of "Lamia."

So then what's a lamia? Obviously pop culture says it's a snake woman, but naturally that didn't solidify until later, the snake stuff was there but older accounts varied more. One myth has Lamia as a queen who had an affair with Zeus, had the resulting children stolen by Hera, and then went mad and started devouring other children, which twisted her into a monstrous form. Other accounts make her a boogeyman, a child-eating spirit of the night. And if this theme is sounding familiar, well, Apollonius of Tyanna said that "lamiai" was just an informal term for "empousai."

So this is "Janus the (male) Alukite," and I'm not quite sure what to make of that connection to the Crime of the Sky, but I'm very interested by it."

Certainly, there is some connection to the Crime of the Sky, but I doubt Janus is simply an Alukite. Iamus Lamius is a slanderous title, so the connection to Alukitedom is likely a disingenuous oversimplification meant to paint Janus negatively. Still, the connection is undeniable.

- St Januarius is the Name which was wounded; the Name of Exceptions; the little god at the door. ([Shrine: Saint Januarius](#))
 - While St. Januarius is a real life saint associated with Naples, blood banks, and volcanic eruptions, the St. Januarius of the Secret Histories is the patron saint of boundaries. ([Atrium](#))
 - St. Januarius is sometimes associated with the rim of the Sol Invictis [sic] symbol ([Sol Invictus Symbol](#))
 - The Thunderskin protected Januarius from "perils from every past" ([True Blood of St. Januarius](#))
 - Ingesting the "blood" of St. Januarius can heal decrepitude, by "opening the door of years and the door of agonies, and through that twin gate, pain and history flee." ([January's Quickening](#))
 - This blood is, as it happens, probably not blood at all. ([January Sanguinary](#))

Courtesy of Determination Chen, the following historical context is available:

St. Januarius was a third-century bishop and martyr, whose blood is believed to liquefy three times a year to this day. He doesn't seem to have any association with Janus or Janus concepts, and might be a proxy that was used to worship Janus.

St. Januarius is a strange beast. His connections to Janus are twofold: first, as will be seen in just a moment, a recipe involving his blood gives a significant piece of Janus-lore. Second, his “enactments” (as much as a non-Hour can have enactments) mirror a triplet of titles we’ll see applied to Janus later

The difference between the real life Janurius and the one in the Secret Histories is an interesting piece of trivia, but it's hardly the first time a saint has been changed drastically to fit the Secret Histories. St. Lucia the Eyeless, Name of the Menscate, was also a real saint, but not one with any connection to the moon or mirrors.

Sol Invictus was the name of the predominate sun god of the late roman empire. The name has been translated as “unconquered sun”, which you may recognize from the Church of the Unconquered Sun. The Sol Invictis symbol has been associated with the Unconquered Sun since the times of the Shadowless Kings, though it seems it's only after the Reformation that each quarter was associated with one of the Solar Hours, and presumably only after the Reformation that the rim of the wheel became associated with St. Januarius. The actual consequences of that association aren't immediately clear. Interpreted semi-literally, one might conclude that Januraius (or through him, Janus) somehow *contain* the Solar Hours, but the mechanism of this is woefully unclear. It could be that the rim is simply the last part of the symbol without a preexisting association, but I admit this answer is, in a word, lame.

The Thunderskin's appearance is another interesting point. The “blood” itself seems to be mostly a reference to the real life saint, whose blood had a habit of liquefying apropos of nothing. It's entirely unclear what the “perils from every past” are, or if they are even something specific. Given the Thunderskin's position as foremost Heart Hour, garnering his protections isn't a particularly impressive feat, but the why and how remain unknown.

The twin gates mentioned in January's Quickening appear to be references to the gates of Janus, which famously closed in times of peace and opened in times of war. It's possible-though hardly certain- that the passage of pain and history through these gates is some reference to the many things attested to lay behind the gates when they are closed, and which thus pass the gates when they are opened. “History”, of course, is a very loaded term in the Secret Histories, but it is hard to say if the significance of History was entirely developed by this time.

Januarius, ultimately, is his *own* beast. I suspect his mysteries- his association with the Thunderskin and Sol Invictus, and the loaded appearance of the word “history” in his healing- are his own, and that, at least for now, investigation into him should be considered a separate matter from investigation into Janus.

- Janus is the god that rose not, but reigns. Janus is the saint that died not, but is dead. Janus is the door between what cannot be, and what must be. ([upgrading the Seven Graces with True Blood of Saint Januarius](#))

“Rose not, but reigns” is similar to the Chandler’s deal, but leaves little else to work with. It could just as well be that Janus has always been around, or that he descended rather than rose, much like the Gods-From-Light.

“died not, but is dead” was a troubling piece, but I believe I’ve identified a good way to untangle it. There is only one saint associated with Janus, that being St. Januarius- its his “blood” that gives you this text, after all. Januarius, as a saint and martyr, did die, but I suspect his relationship to Janus is not one of synonymity, but rather that Janurius was an alias or mask of Janus. When a false identity is cast aside, we can reasonably call it “dead”, and yet no real death occurred, as no real person died. Similarly, St. Januarius is dead, though he did not die, because he never lived.

“Door between what cannot be, and what must be” is another puzzling one. There is no indication of *what* exactly cannot be, or what must be. The simplest explanation, and so the one I am most comfortable using here, is that through Janus ordinary impossible things can be done.

- The 9th of January is the Agonalia of Janus. ([Solomon’s preparation](#))
 - This is, famously, the date Solomon Husher disappeared. (various, see above and below)
 - In his resignation letter, Husher wrote “Winter does not wait forever; though Janus might.” ([The Agonalia of Janus](#))

Courtesy of Determination Chen, the following historical context is available:

The Agonalia of Janus was the holy day where the Romans sacrificed a ram to Janus, in order to placate him. It is the Romans' New year celebration. Of the New Year, Ovid asked Janus (in Ovid's Festi, Book 1: January 1: Kalends)

‘Tell me why the new-year begins with cold, When it would be better started in the spring?’

And Janus replied:

‘Midwinter’s the first of the new sun, last of the old: Phoebus and the year have the same inception.’

Note that the first half of Husher’s resignation letter borrows the last half of a more well known quote, also from Husher: “the White is West of the world, and winter does not wait forever.”

This “White” appears to have some connections to the Sun in Rags, given that the sun sets in the west, and that both the [White](#) and [Rags](#) are tied to bulls. The Sun in Rags doesn’t seem particularly relevant to Janus outside their shared roles as gods of endings, but the above quotes mention of midwinter as the “last of the old sun” certainly hits some ragged notes.

Aside from all that, of course, is the straightforward conclusion that Janus is implicated in Husher’s disappearance.

- When Quirinus (a Name of the Colonel) was honoured in Rome, he was sometimes associated with Janus - especially in the rites of the Unnumbered Legion. ([Quirinic Meditations](#))
 - Quirinus is also relevant earlier on, as one of the gods worshiped by the flamines, a group of Roman priests Teresa mentions in Stolen Revelations while musing on Janus.

Courtesy of Determination Chen, the following historical context is available:

Quirinus was a war god, a god of the civic powers of Romans, and later associated with the deified Romulus. By Augustan Rome, Quirinus had become an epithet of Janus. Whether there is any relation between Quirinus and Janus is unclear; scholars are uncertain as to why the two became associated.

While there may exist other explanations, I personally suspect (and hope) these associations to be the result of syncretic obligation. With both Janus and Quirinus being present in the Secret Histories, some acknowledgment of their IRL conflation was required.

- Janus is a Mansus-prank ([The Crossing to Noon](#))

This is probably sarcastic, as the text compares this fact to “the City Unbuilt will remain so, and only one History is ever written”. It is likely not meant to be analyzed in any real sense. But it does mention Janus, so I am obligated to mention it, and now I have.

- The book “The Road to Janus” is named after Janus. ([the Road to Janus](#))

The Road To Janus consists of prophecies about the Librarians of Hush House. The twelfth Librarian, the one you play as, is described as choosing “one Blossom of Three” and coming “before the Snow”, which is likely foreshadowing/hints for the hidden ending A Knowledge in the Look of Things, which requires you to make the First Flower: White determination and present your journal (along with a Wist card) to the Earls Yew during winter. Given this ending’s associations with Solomon Husher’s disappearance, and how deeply Husher’s disappearance is tied to Janus, I suspect Janus’s appearance in this book serves mostly to reinforce that connection further.

- If Janus were an Hour, Forculus, Limentinus, and Cardea might all be counted his Names, but he isn’t, and so they are not. ([The Raptures of Forculus](#), [The Elations of Limentinus](#), and [Cardea's Delights](#))

In IRL mythology, Cardea was a Roman goddess who ascended after being raped by Janus, who then gifted her a hawthorn branch (doubtlessly the origin of the Horned Axes association with the plant) and domain over hinges as recompense. Forculus and Limentinus are less clear, but seem to be gods of double doors and thresholds respectively.

The core insight here is obvious: whatever Janus is, he is NOT an Hour, but there is a touch more beneath the surface.

Firstly, it's worth mentioning that the author of all three books is one Abbot Geffery, who also built an altar to the Chancel, within which hides the book *The Sun Disfigured*. I'm not sure if the numen is relevant, but the Chancel themselves actually seems to have representation in the books.

Each book itself seems to reference one of the Chancel Hours. Cardea's Delights mentions the Twins outright. Elations of Limentinus speaks of the "signs upon the threshold" and of who is and isn't allowed in the Mansus, which evokes the Horned Axe. And while Raptures of Forculus does not mention the Meniscate by name, it does mention the "sanctioned" Hours, which we know better as the Solar Hours, and speaks of "signs that mark doors", which narrows things to the single Solar Knock Hour. That last one is somewhat flimsy, but we can be reasonably sure it's supposed to reference a Chancel Hour, both to complete the pattern and because Abbot Geffrey *did* build that Chancel shrine.

- Forculus, one of Janus's would-be Names, once defeated Chaima in the Bounds. ([Chima and Serena salon dialogue](#))
 - In this same dialogue, Serena launches into a series of questions on whether this might mean Janus is real, Chaima warns her against asking those kinds of questions.

This tells us pretty directly that Janus is a mysterious and poorly understood figure even within the setting, with some considering him unwise to pursue. This is nice to know, a neat piece of context about how Janus is regarded in-universe, but I don't think it reveals anything about Janus himself.

- Elagabalus is, among other things, accursed of Janus ([The Sun's Design](#))

This is a strange one. Many of Elagabalus' other traits relate to being neither one thing nor another. Real or imagined, liar or truth-teller, Long or mortal, etc. It might be natural then to conclude that Janus takes issue with this paradox state, though this conclusion is troubled by how paradoxical Janus is himself. It could just as well be that Janus takes issue with Elagabalus's associations with Eternity and the Sun- perhaps the plans to bring Eternity Right Now written on Elagabalus's skin offends Janus's infinite patience- but again this is troubled by his own Solar ties. It could also be that the order is reversed, and Elagabalus is never one thing or the other *because of* Janus's curse.

- Calyptra may be known, as Night, Dawn, Eclipse. The Chancel may be known, as Threshold, Mirror, Shell. Calyptra and Chancel then are two: [Janus may be] a third ([The Three and the Three \(Kerisham Manuscript\)](#))

If the two Hour counsels are two, with Janus as a third, it would naturally follow that Janus is himself an Hour counsel. Note though that the Kerisham Manuscript is the most heavily censored version of The Three and the Three, so this insight might be less powerful than it first seems. Still, the book *does* contain potent secrets, so it's likely we can expect this information to be of some use.

- The deepest knowledge is forbidden to all mortals except those who seek it beneath the Watchman's Tree. It is Calyptra that planted that tree, but it is the Chancel, the Cruciate, that has elected Calyptra. Who then elected the Cruciate? [it may be], as the saying goes, a matter of Janus ([Three and the Three \(Vatican Manuscript\)](#))

This book tells us two things. Firstly that Calyptra is elected by the Chancel, and secondly that Chancel is itself elected by Janus. The wording does leave room for an idea that will appear more explicitly later, that Janus might be less of a discrete entity and more of a phenomenon or post-facto justification. Of course, the line between animate and inanimate, especially at this scale, is perilously thin in the Secret Histories, so this might not help us much. Do note that this version of the Three and the Three is also quite censored, though less than the Kerisham Manuscript, so we should avoid placing utmost faith in the text, though it is still broadly trustworthy.

- It is said that Janus elects Calyptra, that the Chancel is the judgment of Janus, that Janus is the wound in the Law (The Three and the Three ([St Chiavi Manuscript](#)))

Janus electing Calyptra is curious but fortunately straightforward. Janus is somehow involved in determining- or indeed, directly choosing- the composition of Calyptra.

The section on Chancel might seem to further what is said about Calyptra, that both trios are appointed by Janus, but it could also be taken to mean that when Chancel acts they are directly or indirectly expressing Janus's will upon the world. The St. Chiavi Manuscript is the least censored of the bunch, and so the particular wording should be treated with high regard.

Wound in the Law is more difficult. In the Janus Lamius section, we uncovered the possibility that Janus has broken or bent the Law of the Sky, but how that Law relates to Hour counsels is unclear. There do exist other suspicions that Wound in the Law refers to Law in a more general sense, meaning the rule of the Hours as a whole, which would mean this title refers to some way Janus's existence undermines the authority of the Hours, perhaps in this context by being something Calyptra can't suppress and Chancel can't legislate away.

- The Meniscate is the "sister of Janus" ([Unhatched Hymns](#))

"Meniscate-Sister" is mentioned as a trait of the messenger of the House of the Moon, but unless Janus is playing some bigender games like Chandler I doubt that's him (also, the other traits of the messenger point to the Ligeian Morgen). The Meniscate being related to Janus is certainly curious, and harkens back to Teresa's suspicions. Unhatched Hymns is more broadly

about the Sun, which may imply a general connection between Janus and the Sun. The Menicate is also called “Mother of Shadow” in the same sentence, but I’m unsure if there’s any connection there.

- Janus, alongside the developers, salutes the player when beating an Apostle (Major [Forge](#), [Lantern](#), and [Grail](#) victory text)

This is among the more intriguing pieces. Janus acknowledging a player's ascension could indicate an existence that surpasses the veil between the game world and ours, or a special place in the Mansus ecosystem that makes him uniquely tied to Name ascensions. Perhaps they are only possible with his permission, perhaps this intersects with his associations with the Chancel- though it’s uncertain if they would bother with something as lowly as Name ascensions. These interpretations might be favorable to metanarrative nonsense, but it's hard to deny that metanarrative nonsense is the most straightforward conclusion here.

- Had Janus a kingdom, it would be that city which is yet unbuilt. Had Janus a child, she would be the secret axis of the earth. Had Janus a season, it would be Numa. ([April #1: GONDISHAPUR](#))

Connections between Janus and the City Unbuilt, as well as Numa, are fascinating in their own right. The City Unbuilt is a hypothetical city of mortals, a shining city where no Hours agenda would mold our fates. Numa, meanwhile, is a liminal labyrinth season in which causality collides with paradox, and the maybe-dead walk in brumous mists. Janus being so unambiguously associated with both is a powerful piece of information, likely meaning his nature aligns with both in some way.

With Numa and Janus sharing a sentence, it would be remiss of me not to mention the Roman king Numa Pompilius, whose temple to Janus famously opened its gates in times of war, and closed in times of peace. Additionally, King Numa moved the month of January to first, as “he wished in every case that martial influences should yield precedence to civil and political. For this Janus, in remote antiquity, whether he was a demi-god or a king, was a patron of civil and social order, and is said to have lifted human life out of its bestial and savage state. For this reason he is represented with two faces, implying that he brought men's lives out of one sort and condition into another”. meaning, I think, that he considered Janus to be responsible for the rise of humanity from beast to thinking man. While Numa is certainly a noteworthy individual, I unfortunately don't think historical analysis will uncover much about *our* Janus.

The child is difficult to make sense of. Some ideas that the child is the Chandler exist, but none are terribly ironclad. I'm not sure what “secret axis of the earth” means, and until a reliable interpretation of that specific part surfaces, I'm not very comfortable making any predictions about the child.

- Janus has been called 'the wound in the law', 'the door between gods', and 'the exception'. It is Janus' decision alone that determines passage to the highest estate - or

perhaps it is only that when one achieves that estate and another does not, we call the distinction, 'the decision of Janus' ([Book of Hours Github](#))

Once again, we hear of Janus's title as "Wound in the Law." This is the fourth time Janus and Wounds have shared a sentence, with the St. Chaivi manuscript even using the same wording. As mentioned there, this title could refer to Janus Lamius, or some more general nature of Janus which is antithetical to the unchallenged rule of the Hours, the counsels especially.

"Door Between Gods" is outwardly parseable, but not in a useful way. A door, of course, is a boundary between places. If Janus is a door between gods, that might mean those gods are the places, and Janus is the door between. Unfortunately, as you might have noticed, this is nonsense. In more helpful light, this title could link to his Chancel associations, as a door is usually involved in ascension, and the Chancel holds some loose liminality associations, to say nothing of the Horned Axe.

"The Exception" is arguably the most impenetrable of these. It calls to mind Vak, who is herself described as an Exception- and to Calyptra, the Law, no less- not to mention Vak also being a door and a kind of wound. Ys is also called an exception, but there doesn't seem to be any further connection. The Vak connections could indicate a similar exception-nature against Calyptra, but like Wound it could also be a more general kind of Exception.

The rest of the text does not improve much. The lack of commitment makes it hard to tell what the author is even trying to say- or if they have much to say at all. The wording almost aligns with Janus's salute in Apostle victories being a matter of blessing or permitting our ascension to Namehood, but surely Hourdom would be this "highest estate". The "decision of Janus" appears to be a term used to describe one ascension by the opportunity cost of those who didn't ascend, the ascended being "chosen" while the non-ascended is not. This wording seems geared to rob Janus of agency by positioning him as a phenomenon invoked to *describe* the world, rather than an entity who actually makes real decisions, but as mentioned in the Vatican manuscript this might not mean much in the grand scheme of things.

Alternately, this could all link once more to Janus's associations with the Chancel. They would naturally control movement to the "highest estate", if we assume it is in fact Hourdom, and the Chancel is also known to be the "judgment of Janus", which does provide a nice and direct link between him and the metaphorical level which decides who ascends and who doesn't.

- A Tuppence is a sort of Janus of pennies. ([twopence](#))

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Part the First and a Half: Additional History

Cutesy of Determination Chen, the following additional historical context is also available:

The Festi also contains some intriguing tidbits. In that work, Janus boasts extensively of his powers and origin. To wit:

The ancients called me Chaos (since I am of the first world):

Note the long ages past of which I shall tell.

The clear air, and the three other elements,

Fire, water, earth, were heaped together as one.

When, through the discord of its components,

The mass dissolved, and scattered to new regions,

Flame found the heights: air took a lower place,

While earth and sea sank to the furthest depth.

Then I, who was a shapeless mass, a ball,

Took on the appearance, and noble limbs of a god...

Whatever you see: sky, sea, clouds, earth,

All things are begun and ended by my hand.

Care of the vast world is in my hands alone,

And mine the governance of the turning pole...

I sit at Heaven's Gate with the gentle Hours,

Jupiter himself comes and goes at my discretion.

So I'm called Janus.

If nothing else, this account makes it clearer why Janus was chosen to be the name of the purported power behind the Chancel.

Further, Ovid asked:

Next I said: 'Why, while I placate other gods, Janus,

Do I bring the wine and incense first to you?’

Janus replied:

‘So that through me, who guard the threshold,

You can have access to whichever god you please.’

Which sheds light on why Teresa associates him with the Watchman ("He is often the first Hour that we supplicate.")

Now, all this information is nice, but it's rather decompressed, isn't it? Can we get to the point?

Part The Second: Could You Repeat That?

I have just spent the last several pages chewing away at each piece of Janus-lore in existence. But chewing is only the first part of consumption, next is the breaking down of that masticated matter into chyme. Or, expressed plainly, distilling what we've learned into fundamental insights: axioms and understandings that we can trust to form the foundation of Janus-knowledge.

- Janus has some special connection to the Hours Watchman and Meniscate, both of whom he might be.
- Janus is All the Gods and None. Depending, perhaps, on one's perspective.
- Janus, under the alias Iamus Lamius, has some special relationship to the Crime of the Sky, and may be, at least from an uncharitable perspective, an Alukite.
- Janus is “the god who rose not, but reigns”, likely meaning that he did not ascend as the Gods From Flesh or Blood did, and was either always here, or entered from somewhere else.
- Janus is “the Door between what cannot be, and what must be”, likely meaning that, through him, the impossible may be realized.
- Janus is implicated in the disappearance of Solomon Husher.
- Janus is *not* an Hour. if he was, Forculus, Limentinus, and Cardea would all be his Names. But he isn't, so they aren't.

- Janus accuses Elagabalus, perhaps meaning he distains their associations with the Sun, or with paradox, or that he inflicted that paradox-nature upon them.
- Janus can be considered a third counsel, on par with Chancel or Calyptra.
- Janus is responsible, directly or indirectly, for the election/composition of Chancel and Calyptra.
 - Chancel is, additionally, the “judgment of Janus”, perhaps meaning their actions express Janus’s will upon the world.
- Janus is a sibling of the Meniscate
- Janus salutes the player in Apostle victories, alongside the developers.
- Janus is connected to the City Unbuilt, which would be his city, if he had one.
- Janus is connected to the season of Numa, which would be his season, if he had one.
- Janus is the “Wound in the Law”, perhaps referencing his maybe-Alukite nature as Iamus Lamius, or meaning that his nature or actions in some way undermine the authority of the Hours, Chancel and Calyptra especially.
- Janus is the “Door Between Gods”, perhaps meaning he is or dwells within the area “between” Hours, though this could also be referencing his Chancel associations.
- Janus is “The Exception”, perhaps meaning he holds a particular affinity with exceptions in various laws, or, like Vak, with Calyptra in particular.
- The “decision of Janus” appears to measure the opportunity cost of one ascension to “the highest estate” (presumably Hourdom) in terms of other failed ascensions. It may be that Janus is actually choosing, or that he is not, and the “decision” is applied retroactively.
- Janus is associated with the Name St. Januarius.
 - St. Januarius, the patron saint of boundaries, is the god who was wounded, the Name of exceptions, and the little god at the door. Each of these titles seem to mirror Janus's own.
 - He is associated with the Solar Church, particularly the rim of the Sol Invictus symbol.
 - He was protected by the Thunderskin, and January Sanguinary is sometimes mistaken for his blood.

- Janus is regarded among in-universe scholars with uncertainty and confusion. Even a former librarian is unsure if he even exists. Additionally, the pursuit of information about Janus is considered by some to be unwise.

Part the Third: What? Huh? Wha?

I wish I had but answers. That all there was to say about Janus was things we *know*, and never things we *don't*. I am not so fortunate. Here is a list of questions.

- What does it *mean* that Janus might be an Alukite? How much of the title Iamus Lamus is slander, and how much is truth?
- Who is Janus's child, and what does it mean that she is the "secret axis of the earth"? Does this intersect with Janus being a maybe-Alukite? How?
- What exactly is St. Janurarius's deal? Does he currently exist? How did he gain the protection of the Thunderskin? Why is he accounted the rim of the Sol Invitis wheel? What, exactly, is his relationship with Janus?
- Is there a link between Janus and Vak? Is there significance to their shared title of Exception?
- What, exactly, is Janus's connection to the Watchman and the Meniscate?
- What, exactly, do Janus's titles mean? What I've presented is only my best estimation, and I am not wholly confident in all of them. Might the truth be something else?
- What, exactly, is Janus's relation to Numa and the City Unbuilt? Does he patron then? Claim dominion? The wording betrays that they would fall under him only *if* he had a city or a season, meaning he must not currently have any such thing. Why? Why does he lack these?
- What, exactly, is the decision of Janus? It is presented both as though Janus is a discrete entity that permits or forbids entry to "the highest estate", and as though Janus is merely a term for the opportunity cost of one ascension being measured by another. So which is which? If it is both, how?

Part The Fourth: What Do *You* Think?

There are many ideas, inklings, and theories about Janus. I have queried the Weather Factory Subreddit and the Cultist Simulator Discord for these ideas. I have compiled below all the ones I found particularly common, compelling, or otherwise noteworthy.

- Janus is a hallucination, mistake, or folly.

Perhaps that Janus is not in any sense real, and instead he is an illusion or misinterpretation. This theory argues that Janus is the result of overenthusiastic cork-boarding, the tin foil hat of the invisible world. If Janus seems paradoxical, if his overlapping natures seem impossible, that's because he is, and they are.

- Janus is the author's handwave and the author's taunt.

Perhaps Janus is real, but only as real as he needs to be. This theory draws further from Janus's paradoxical nature, as well as his metanarrative appearances, to present him as the great suspender of disbelief, whose actions are emblematic of the author's all-mighty ability to warp reality and probability in the name of a good story. Who elected Chancel? Who authorizes the rise of Names and Hours? Why does the world turn so, when it could turn thus? Don't worry about it, it is Janus's fault.

- Janus is the Gaps Between.

Perhaps Janus is something between somethings, a negative space implied by the positive. This theory posits that Janus is something that resides in the distinction between things. In the loopholes within laws, in the space between spaces, perhaps even in the shadow between knowns, all these things are Janus, or at least where Janus lives. It's an idea that takes some time to wrap your head around, but it makes a kind of sense.

- Janus is the Horned Axe

Perhaps the truth is nothing so complicated, and Janus is just another name for the Hour of borders. This theory claims that Janus's associations with wounds and doors are too great to be coincidence, and so he must be an alias of the Horned Axe. Fittingly straightforward given the Axe, this one takes the most fundamental components of the roman gods identity and presents them as the end-all be-all of matters of Janus.

- Janus is the Watchman

Perhaps we should not doubt the Baldomerian, perhaps she is on to something here. This theory takes Teresa at her word and argues that Janus is an alias of the Door in the Eye, better known as the Watchman. Buoyed by straightforward door-door connections, Janus's siblinghood to the Meniscate, and Janus's Solar associations, it's a theory that demands, at the very least, some measure of consideration.

- Janus is the Meniscate

Perhaps Teresa's *other* theory is more fitting. This theory follows the other thread, claiming that Janus is, in fact, the Meniscate. Many of Janus's Knock associations work here as they do with the Horned Axe, as do the Solar associations from the Watchman. The Meniscate is herself wounded, and there is a certain esoteric charm to claiming Janus is another phase of the moon.

- Janus is the Chandler

Perhaps Janus is not an Hour, but only not *yet*. The Chandler is an unusual Hour-to-be, one whose strange and unconventional nature might align well with Janus. This theory bases itself on Janus's solar associations, and there is a daisy-chain of connections from Janus to Elagabalus to Sunset Celia to the Chandler. While the Chandler's nature has become less confusing with House of Light, this is still a theory that holds well- arguably better than any other single Hour.

- Janus is an absence

Perhaps Janus is Not, and in being Not he is a power beyond anything that Is. Taking a significantly more Winter angle from the god of the gaps theory, this theory posits that Janus is the god who isn't. A perfect absence (for perfection is only in absence) who nonetheless acts upon the world, Janus is the mechanism by which the possible is so and the impossible is enacted, for if Nobody can make it so, then Janus is that Nobody. This theory is one which can comfortably be said to have a figurehead, as Moth, Without went ahead and wrote an [entire paper](#) about it.

- Janus is something greater than even the Hours.

Perhaps Janus is something greater, the highest force of the Secret Histories, whose hand may have shaped the earth and the stars. This theory posits Janus to be a force greater than any Hour. The notion has some precedent- the Sun in Splendors was implied once in an AMA to be a "Day" (though word of god, including that AMA, has been retroactively made the word of Ferezeref the Magpie) and Janus has some solar associations besides.

- Janus is something from outside the Secret Histories

Perhaps Janus is a mask for something which lays a layer above the Secret Histories, perhaps Janus is something from *our* world. This theory posits Janus to be something from beyond the Secret Histories universe. Sometimes that is AK or Weather Factory as a whole, sometimes that is us, the players. The theory benefits from some of the same metanarrative nonsense as the author's handwave, but presents a more direct involvement from the author or from us.

- Janus is the fundamental rules of the universe.

Perhaps Janus is whatever would happen in those places no Hour has a hand, like the City Unbuilt and other liminal realms. This theory posits that Janus is the fundamental rules of

existence, which even the Hours are bound by. The theory prides itself on a clean interpretation of the Herusalt/Cosely divide: if Rules are made by the unified consensus of the Hours then Janus is all the gods, if they are some universal default then Janus is none of the gods. Note that this idea of the unified consensus of the Hours does have some [precedent](#), and isn't baseless speculation.

Part the Fifth: Please Consult the Jraph (Janus Graph)

	The Gaps	Horned Axe	Watchman	Meniscate	Chandler	Absence	Greater	Fundamental Rules	Outside
Teresa's Hypothesis (WM or MC)									
All The Gods And/Or None	None is Easy. All?					None is Easy. All?	None is Easy. All?		None is Easy. All?
Rose Not (But Reigns)		From Stone							
Permits the Impossible			Watchman's Paradoxes			(See Moth's Paper)			
Husher's Disappearance								Into the Rules?	
Not an Hour					Not yet				
Acurses Elagabalus	(Inflicts In Betweenness)	(Forbids Paradox)				(See Moth's Paper)			
Meniscates Sibling				Her Own Sister?	Will Be, Eventually				
A Third Counsel		Part of Counsel?	Part of Counsel?	Part of Counsel?	Part of Counsel?				
Influence The Counsels	Negative Space Defines Positive?	(Part of Chancel)	Enemy of Calyptra	(Part of Chancel)		Negative Space Defines Positive?			

Salutes (And/Or Permits) The Apostle									
The City Unbuilt					(St. Mihail)			(where the Rules take over)	
Numa								(where the Rules take over)	
Wound in the Law (Undermines the Hours)								Works for Default, Less So for Consensus	
Door Between Gods									
The Exception (or affinity with)					(Great Counterfeit; Exception to the Crime)				

This is the Jraph. The Janus Graph. It is my attempt to square the most relevant theories with the most relevant pieces of evidence.

Each column corresponds to one of the theories discussed above, and each row to a piece of evidence. Each intersection attempts to gauge how well the relevant theory can handle the relevant information.

There are three colors to the Janaph. A green square means that, per my analysis, the relevant theory can adequately explain, incorporate, or otherwise digest the relevant evidence. Red means it can't. Yellow means uncertainty, or only partly, i have annotated Yellow squares to try and explain the discrepancies. (some Greens have elaborations of their own in parentheses, when I think the resolution checks out but needs some explanation of its own)

Not all evidence made it in. Not all "evidence" actually tells us much (it's nice to know that Janus is a mystery even within the Secret Histories, but we could've gotten that one ourselves). Not all evidence can be interpreted with any real certainty (until we can fully understand what it even *means* for Janus to be Alukite, I don't think it'll be helpful to ask whether the Gaps can "explain" it).

Not all theories made it in. Well, *two* didn't make it in. Both the Hallucination and the Handwave are structured in such a way as to subvert this kind of fine-tooth analysis entirely.

Firstly, it's impossible to argue that Hallucination cannot "explain" something, as the very nature of the theory is such that anything which struggles to be explained is fuel for the fire. It's a theory that can sidestep directly analyzing any evidence because "of course it doesn't make sense, it's not supposed to, Janus isn't real".

The Handwave suffers a similar fate. If Janus's nature is only what it needs to be in the moment for him to carry out his role as the author's lackey, then any apparent contradiction in his nature is merely the result of one situation demanding a Janus-nature that another did not. "Of course it doesn't make sense, it doesn't need to, Janus is just whatever he needs to be in that exact moment."

Finally, I would like to mention that I do not wish for this Jraph to be gospel. I am flawed, and the facts can change. One day, I'm sure, this Jraph will be so painfully outdated it would be actively detrimental to use it, so please do not hesitate to prove my conclusions wrong! The point of these things- this entire work, really- is to foster discussion, so please, discuss.

Part the Fourth: And Nothing More Is Said (Some Final Words)

First, a word on time: OK But No Really Who The Fuck Is Janus is accurate- or as accurate as I have been able to make it- as of January 9th, 2025. As of writing, *Traveling at Night* is but a distant star on the horizon, the Janus lore within only suspected. When the game is out and the lore is found and digested and laid bare, I think I will make a Janalytical Addendum to summarize what we learn and what we don't, but that will be then. For now, my work here is what it is, and I think it will stay that way for a while yet. Meaning, that is, that unless a major revelation surfaces *tomorrow* I probably won't be editing this much or at all once it's out. Sorry, but I've got other projects I want to work on.

That said, I turn now to the process of thanks:

First, I must give thanks to my good friend Finn, for proofreading this text for clarity and word choice.

I'd like to extend a small measure of thanks to Deblob LeSymurgist, for helping me understand what "the saint that died not, but is dead" could mean.

I would do well to thank Determination Chen, for having dug up that additional historical context way back when.

Splashcat, finally, deserves thanks for uncovering *Iamus Lamius*, im not sure if I would have found all that on my own.

I must thank each of the lore proofreaders for helping to catch any lore connections or mistakes I missed. Their aid patched the gaps of my own ignorance, and elevated this work to its fullest potential. They are:

Tinchosabala, who was the first, and who's feedback inspired confidence that I'm not secretly a lunatic.

Alunsina, who pointed me to the feasting hall tidbit, and gave me a nice conversation about Elagabalus besides.

Cel, who gave the Jraph its modern name, and promoted me to give Door Between Gods a second look- for the better, I think.

And Atgo, last and frankly greatest, whose input is responsible for the Rags-bull-White bit, the potential patience-conflict between Janus and Elagabalus, a small rewording of Stolen Reflections, a reworking of the Three and the Three to mention their relative levels of censorship, a number of adjustments to the Jraph, and a quadruple threat of Chancel connections to the highest estate, the Name salute, the Door Between Gods, and the Not-an-Hour books. I cannot thank you enough.

And, finally, I turn to *you*, the reader, who might be Janus himself. Thank you so much for reading this. The Secret Histories have been a wonderful pair of games, a delightful community, and a lasting impact on me personally. I hope you all have enjoyed reading my attempt to untangle this two-faced Roman god's mysteries, and I hope this work inspires you to give Janus the second look he deserves. There's a truth here, under all the paradox and ambiguity, I'm sure of it, we just need to find it. May your path be illuminated, and may you never quite cease.