

For ZomnoCon 2, theme *Film Noir*.

SIGNIFICANT RITUAL: DOUBLE AND NOTHING

Often erroneously (or maliciously) referred to as "Double *or* Nothing," usually by Demons.

There may be whisperings in the occult underground that the ritual "always fucks you," but most people think that's sour grapes or confirmation bias. The ones who pulled it off aren't exactly going to advertise it.

Cost: Metaphysical.

Ritual Action:

1. Become wanted, either by the law or a criminal affiliation such as a gang. At least one person has to be actively searching for you *and* willing to arrest or turn you in to one of the two.
2. Acquire the passport, driver's license, visa or other official documentation of a complete stranger.
3. Find a newspaper clipping with the obituary of a complete stranger who is the same age or younger than you. (Printing out an online obit counts.)
4. Wear the clothes of a stranger. These can come from anyone.
5. Make yourself up in a disguise based on one of the strangers. It does not matter which one.
6. Burn the documentation and the obituary.
7. Go to sleep in the strangers clothes.

When you wake up, you will wake up in a stranger's body with their copies of all of the items you destroyed. Supposedly, this ritual always swaps your body with either the now-magically-alive body of the person in the obituary or someone in even worse trouble.

In actuality, it always does the second thing--the occultist ends up in the body of someone in even worse circumstances than theirs. Some possibilities include:

- A man with a warrant on him for fraud is now wanted for assassination. (*Across the Bridge*, 1957.)
- A man steals from a mob casino and receives the identity of a man with a hit on him from another, different mob casino. (*Hollow Triumph*, 1948.)
- You evade a significant blast from an adept only to swap places with someone who is the target of a Godwalker or in the inevitable path of a major blast.

- You evade The New Inquisition or The Sleepers only to become wanted by a more powerful mundane organization like the FBI or the Triads.

USING DOUBLE AND NOTHING

Double and Nothing is a ritual that always ends the character in objectively worse straits than they started, so it's likely to beg the question to a potential GM, *why use it?* Some possibilities:

- As the setup for a scenario; the players all wake up after using the ritual in the bodies of four related strangers, and now have to wrestle themselves out of unknown trouble or play out an inevitable but varied series of tragic ends.
- As a bait and switch: a desperate player summons a demon looking for a get-out-of-jail-free ritual and gets this under the false *Double or Nothing* billing. They only find out later, if ever, that coming out ahead was never actually an option. (One reason it is good to provide this significant ritual *gratis* is its a red flag that it's too good to be true.)
- Relatedly, the player cannot conceive of a worse outcome than their current trajectory and the ritual is a material upgrade but a metaphysical downgrade. For example, they are currently imprisoned on death row for the murder of their spouse and the body they swap into is at-large but wanted for a worse crime, such as a shooting.
- The players acquire the ritual and use it to fuck over an enemy, either through trickery or force. The latter is likely to make the ritual behave unexpectedly, usually not in the players' favor. Bonus: the players' cabal could *be* the "criminal affiliation" depending on their activities.
- An GMC uses the ritual and gains the body of one of the players' associates. The players must work to find out what happened by tying the GMC's bizarre new motivations to their original body and/or talking to the victim GMC, now body-swapped against their will into the caster.