City of Mist



A DETECTIVE ROLE-PLAYING GAME IN A CITY
OF ORDINARY PEOPLE AND LEGENDARY POWERS

SON OF OAK GAME STUDIO


City of Mist

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HOMAGE TO D. VINCENT BAKER AND *APOCALYPSE WORLD*

The rules of this game are partially based on the "Powered by the Apocalypse" game engine, presented in 2010 by D. Vincent Baker, in his revolutionary game *Apocalypse World*. Vincent changed role-playing games forever by introducing a new way to play that emphasised a flowing conversation and a great story. Many great games that use this engine have since been published. We thank Vincent for his contribution to the world of role-playing games, which also allowed the creation of *City of Mist*.

CONTENT WARNING

This game contains mild language and some graphic representations of violence. It contains references to human actions the reader may find offensive or unpleasant, such as suicide, murder, or prostitution, as well as extensive references to criminal activity. The game does NOT contain any graphic representation or verbal description of sexual acts.

City of Mist

A DETECTIVE ROLE-PLAYING GAME IN A CITY
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To my parents, Shmuel and Ariella, for Logos
to my teachers and masters, for Mythos
to Mark, for all your help with this,
and to God, for creating
the best role-playing game of all.

INTRODUCTION FROM THE CREATOR

Myths and legends have always been an integral part of human culture. Since the dawn of mankind, we have told stories to relate universal truths and to understand our world. Legends appeal to a deep place inside us, a part of us that understands not through analysis but through intuition. They convey a message, a teaching beyond mere knowledge. While they may seem simplistic, listening closer could reveal that they tell us the secrets of the universe: about the cosmos, the forces that operate within its theater, and our place in it. They awaken a sleeping quality in us, calling us to ponder, to feel, to ask questions.

But what happens when the timeless stuff of legends enters the sphere of our everyday lives? How can such sublime material, originating from the stars, find a body here on Earth, where everything eventually turns to dust? Can these two forces – the legendary and the ordinary – live in the same space, exist together in the same person? This is the question that lies at the heart of *City of Mist*.

At its best, role-playing is a magical experience. You and your friends tap into a wellspring of creativity, a collective intelligence that creates stories unbelievable in their intricacy and internal meaning. At times, the dice themselves seem to conspire to tell a great story. In the words of one of the playtesters of this game: "We create a masterpiece, whom we are the only ones to ever see."

I wish you a very enjoyable and awakening journey of discovery with this game.

Amít

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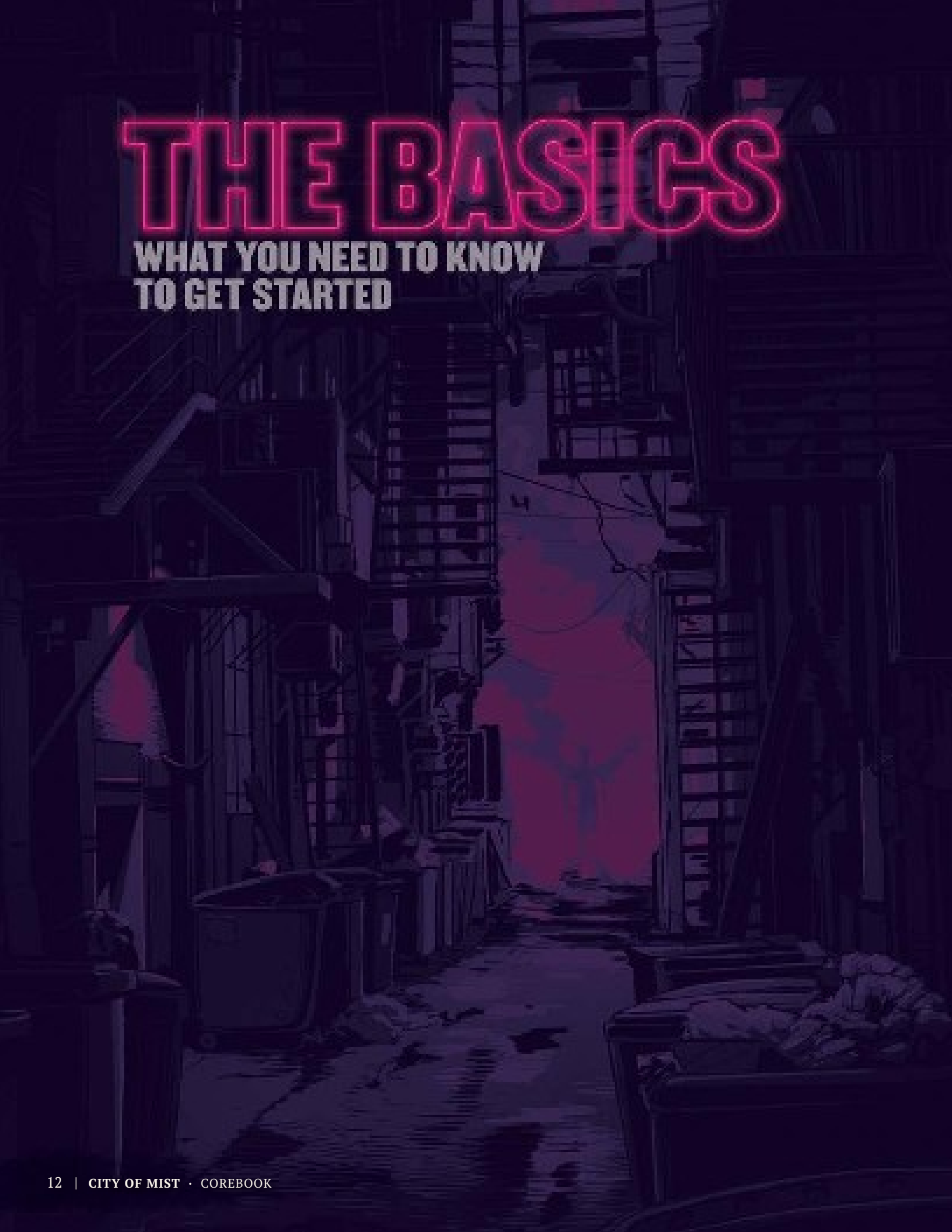
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THE BASICS

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW TO GET STARTED

The things you'll see on the streets, they don't always add up, y'know? Sometimes you're downtown, middle of the day, you raise your head and catch a strange reflection on the skyscraper: something like a crooked, dreary castle tower is jutting into the overcast sky above. Another day, you take out the trash in the evening and you see her across the street, looking at you, a kid dressed in bright colors with the head of an elephant. Or you're alone at the office, it's late, and you hear a voice, a familiar voice, calling to you. Someone you knew, and they've been dead for years. It's not Halloween. You're not on drugs. What are you going to do?

I'll tell you what: You're going to keep doing the same things you've always been doing. You keep walking. You dump the trash and come back inside, watch some TV. You keep working. It's in your head, right? You can't really be seeing this. There must be some logical explanation. But a tiny part of you is questioning. It's whispering: what's going on? Where am I? What is this? It feels like you're about to wake up from a dream, but this feeling stretches over weeks, months, and years.

You get used to it. You get used to it so much that you hardly ever remember this feeling is there. You go back to your life: you work, sleep, eat, you do whatever it is you do. See, you can't afford to really ask yourself what was that thing you saw. You can't, because deep down inside you know the truth. You know that if you go looking for answers, if you doubt the way things are, you will have no escape but to also doubt who you are. You'll have to ask the toughest question of all: who am I?





WELCOME TO CITY OF MIST

Here's the lowdown: City of Mist is a modern city where legends are real. It's not as if knights and monsters walk down Main Street donning shining armor or breathing fire, but rather that knights and monsters are reborn inside ordinary people, regular Joes and Janes. Those people, known as Rifts, live out a modern version of their legends, called Mythoi, and sometimes can even make the shining armor real or breath actual fire – but they still have their ordinary lives. On the occasions when they tap into their Mythos, a mysterious and mystical force hides their miraculous powers from those who have not awakened to the legend inside them: the sleepwalking residents of the City. It makes armor look like a flak vest and fire breathing like a party trick or a gas leak explosion, so no-one ever knows about the Rifts except the Rifts. This mystical veil is the Mist. This is its City.

You are about to tell a story set in City of Mist, a story that most closely resembles a detective comic book or a TV series. You and your friends will each play one of the lead characters, a member of the crew that is at the center of your story – each except for one, who will take the role of the host, referee, and narrator: the **Master of Ceremonies**, or **MC**.

You can read more about Rifts, the City, and the Mist in **Chapter 1: The Lowdown**. The role of the MC is described throughout the book and specifically in **Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes**.



PRONOUN USE

Throughout this book, wherever possible, the text refers directly to you, the reader. Mostly, this relates to you as a player; in some places, it relates to you as the character you are playing, or to you as the MC, if you take this role. A clarification is given where needed; elsewhere, the meaning can be understood from context.

Where the third person is required, this book refers to characters as 'she', players as 'he', and the MC as 'she' as well. This is an arbitrary division for the sake of readability and balance in the use of pronouns; characters, players, and MCs can be of any gender.

SETTING UP

The first thing you'll do is describe your characters and crew and create the setting for your series. Your characters are all Rifts. They have their ordinary lives, the legend growing inside them, and many, many questions, so they all *investigate* in some way, even if it's not their profession. You create your character by naming four **themes** that are central to his or her story. A theme can be an aspect of your character's ordinary life, like an occupation or a personality profile, or an aspect of the abilities related to her Mythos, like Cupid's ability to make people fall in love with each other. You then use questionnaires, called **themebooks,** to flesh out each theme and choose tags. **Tags** are short descriptions of specific abilities, qualities, resources, and objects your character possesses, such as *burly, sawed-off shotgun,* or *a prince's charm*. They not only describe your character but also power (or weaken) her actions in the game, as explained below.

During setup, you will also decide as a group what kind of a crew you'll all be a part of, what are your common goals, what are the questions you all want to solve, what are your team's strong points and weaknesses, and what the relationships between the crew members are. Your crew also gets a theme and tags.

The details of setting up are described in **Chapter 2: Who Are You?**. As an alternative to creating characters, you can use the pre-generated character playbooks and crew themes provided in the *City of Mist Starter Set*.

As the MC, you help the players build the lead characters by asking interesting questions, while at the same time thinking about the other characters and events you want to stack up against the lead characters in your series. **Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes** also explains how to create your own series while **Chapter 6: This is MY City!** explains how to create challenges such as villains, dangerous locations, complicated non-player characters, shady operations, etc.

THE GAME

Think of every game session as an episode of your show or an issue of your comic book. You get together for a few hours, in person or online, and play out what happens to your fictional characters. If you're the MC, you pick up where you last left off, describing the beginning of the next scene in the story: where and when it takes place, the atmosphere, who's there and what they look like, what they say and do. Maybe you ask the players where their characters are and take it from there. You always end with the question "What do you do?", giving the stage to the players and their lead characters. If you're one of the players, you respond by saying what your character says, does, feels, or thinks during the scene. It can go something like this:

MC: You arrive at the crime scene in Detective Enkidu's car. It's raining softly, almost as if someone up there is weeping. You make your way to the center of the plaza where the police have already closed off the perimeter. A body covered by a tarp is lying at the center, colored by intermittent blue and red lights. Your buddy Johnny from forensics comes up, looking like a middle-aged drowned dog. He takes a drag off his ciggy and blows the smoke out slowly, not looking at you but saying: "It's the third girl this week, detective. You need to get on top of this or the chief will have your head." Then he notices Excalibur. "Hey, who's the dame?" What do you do?

Jerry (playing Detective Enkidu): I walk right past him and crouch next to the body, taking in the crime scene. I want to find a connection between this and the other girls.

Dani (playing Excalibur): I approach this dashing policeman and say, "Sorry, darling. The detective can be a brute at times. I'm Estella, enchanté." I want to chat him up and see what he discovered here.

You never know in advance how the story will evolve, not even as the MC, because (a) everyone can take actions that will shape future events; and (b) the outcome of the characters' actions are determined by the rules and the dice – that's what's so fun about it, **you play to find out**.

Players can initiate scenes by deciding where their characters go next. For example, based on what they find out, Jerry and Dani may say Det. Enkidu and Excalibur go snooping around at a local night club where the victim worked, or go after a suspect. You can also introduce elements of the characters' personal lives or legendary background. A new scene will begin which can involve action, investigation, drama, suspense – or a combination of all of the above. You will be both a co-creator and a part of the audience of this gripping urban tale and your role is to make it interesting and enjoyable for yourself and everyone at the table: by playing your character as a player, or by making the lead characters' lives interesting as the MC.

During the conversation, certain things you say about your character may trigger the rules. The rules help add thrill and suspense to the game by determining what happens when the lead characters attempt important actions. As you'll see, they can help take your story in unexpected directions.

PC AND NPC

This book uses the conventional role-playing games terms when referring to characters. The players' lead characters are sometimes referred to as the Player Characters or PCs, while all the other characters, played by the MC, are called Non-Player Characters, or NPCs.

MOVES

The main way in which the rules kick in is called **Moves**. Moves are phrased like conditions: *When you do A, then B happens*. There are different kinds of moves in the game but most often you will use the eight Core Moves: ***Investigate, Convince, Face Danger, Hit With All You've Got, Go Toe to Toe, Change the Game, Sneak Around,*** *and* ***Take the Risk.***

For example:

TAKE A RISK

When you perform a daring, risky, or outright stupid feat, roll+Power. On a 10+, you do it, somehow. On a 7-9, things get messy. The MC will offer you a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

To invoke a move, describe an action that fits the condition in the first part of the move and name the move: "I'm going to drive right through that closing gate. I guess I'm **Taking the Risk**!"

If a player describes what their character does but doesn't name a move, for example "I'm searching the apartment for the murder weapon,", the MC will ask them what move they are using, or suggest one: "are you **Investigating**?".

If a player wants to activate a move but doesn't describe what happens in the story, for example "I'm gonna **Hit him With All I've Got**!" the MC will ask for the description: "Okay, but what do we see?" The player can answer "Oh, I feint a left jab and then hit him with a crushing right hook." or "I use my Mythos powers to get in touch with his emotional pain and then SQUEEZE!"

Once you invoke the move, simply follow the result as described. Some moves ask you to *roll plus something* (most often *roll+Power*) to determine the result. For these moves, you always roll **two six-sided dice (2d6)**, sum the results, and add whatever number *something* stands for (this is different for different moves). If the total is **6 or less,** it's a miss. If it's more than six, it's a hit: **7-9** is a weak hit and **10+** is a strong hit.

All the Core Moves ask you to *roll+Power*. **Power** is the number of tags your character has that can help her with the action she's taking – the more relevant tags you have, the higher your Power will be for this action and the better your chances are to get a hit. Some tags might reduce your Power, while conditions affecting your character can crank your Power up or down, depending on their description.

When a player invokes a move, it can go like this:

MC: Your suspect is not going to make it easy for you, detective. As you chase him to the edge of the roof, this dark slim figure in a black bodysuit leaps off the ledge, clears 20 feet of gap, and lands with a parkour roll on the concrete roof across, only to continue running unharmed. As you're running after him, you notice a few feathers floating ever so slowly to the ground, five stories below. It smells of something unearthly, but there's no time to wonder about that. What do you do?

Detective Enkidu (played by Jerry): I can't let that suspect get away! I'm going to jump right after him. That's **Taking The Risk**, right?

MC: Lemme see… it's daring, risky, and probably outright stupid. Sure.

Jerry (playing Detective Enkidu): I'm going to use my sheer brawn to clear some of the way and then grow thorny tentacles to pull myself to the far wall and climb up. I have two tags that can help me here: *beastily athletic* and *thorny tentacles*, so my Power is 2. **Jerry rolls two six-sided dice, gets 3 and 5, and adds them up.** I rolled 8, plus a Power of 2, for a total of 10. It's a 10+, so I do it!

MC: Nice! The suspect slows down a bit to look back and for a moment you can see his jaw drop as you scale the wall with your thorny extensions. Then he starts to run faster. What do you do?

Every move has different outcomes for 7-9 and 10+, included in its description. Unless otherwise specified, a miss indicates a dire complication or threat. When you roll a miss, the MC invokes one of the **MC Moves**, complicating things for the lead characters and increasing the challenge: they can

get hurt, become exposed to a new danger, lose something or someone dear to them, etc..

Note that the MC never rolls the dice. The MC can, however, make the players roll to see how they handle whatever threat or complication she throws at them.

The rules for the players, including all the Core Moves, are explained in **Chapter 3: Working the Case**.

THE SOCIAL AGREEMENT

When you play *City of Mist*, you are simultaneously the co-author of the story and a part of the audience. When you get together as a group to play role-playing games or when you are joined by a new player, it's a good idea to talk about what kind of story you all want to tell. Different players have different preferences and may be in favor or against certain types of stories or content. For example, some players dislike stories where PCs have the option to work against each other (known as player vs. player or PvP) while other players enjoy them. Work out what's best for your group.

MYTHOS VS. LOGOS

As a player, your lead character has a personal story that evolves during play. Each of your character's themes is either a part of your **Logos**, your ordinary life, or your **Mythos**, the legend within you. Your character's themes are fluid: give them enough attention and they will flourish and evolve; neglect them, however, and you will lose them and replace them with new themes. Replacing a theme represents a moment of personal crisis for your character: the loss of a loved one, the failure of her powers, etc. However, it is also a moment of great personal growth and evolution – in a new direction. In the ashes of your character's old life, a new theme arises and new aspects (and tags!) come into her story. Furthermore, the more your character loses and gains themes, the more she starts growing beyond the struggle of Mythos and Logos, earning precious **Moments of Evolution**.

There's more. You always replace a Logos theme with a Mythos theme and vice versa so the balance of legendary and ordinary within you is constantly shifting. You need to watch it: If you lose your last Logos theme, your Mythos will take you over completely and you will become an **Avatar**: a willing instrument in the hands of your Mythos. If you lose your last Mythos theme, you'll forget your Mythos and become a **Sleeper** like the rest of the City residents. The trick is to walk the line… for as long as you can, at least.

Everything about Mythos, Logos, and the dramatic moments of your character's evolution is explained in **Chapter 4: Moments of Truth**.

TIME TO HIT THE STREETS

That's it – now you know the basics of *City of Mist*. Does that mean you are really ready for what's out there? Doubtful. You're just going to have to hit the streets and figure things out as you go along. Brace yourselves: these streets harbor more than just ordinary dangers. Ancient things crawl beneath the asphalt roads, in the electric grid, and within everyone you meet. Can your characters answer their burning questions? Can they overcome other Rifts like them who may serve a different agenda? What will happen to them when the cameras start rolling?

Let's find out: when you're ready, turn the page over and start playing.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

- **Chapter 1: The Lowdown** has the inside scoop on the life of a Rift and the process of awakening, and describes some of the main City districts, locations, and local Rifts.
- **Chapter 2: Who Are You?** is a guide to the Exposition Session, in which you create your series as a group. It includes the complete character creation system using themebooks (questionnaires), quick character creation with Character Tropes, a system of crew relationships reflected in Help & Hurt points, sample crew themes, and a crew themebook.
- **Chapter 3: Working the Case** is a comprehensive set of player rules, detailing the rules of the conversation, defining the use of tags and statuses as well as resources such as Clues and Juice, expanding on all eight Core Moves, as well as on four cinematic moves: Voiceover Monologue, Flashback, Montage, and Geek Out During Credits.
- **Chapter 4: Moments of Truth** describes the game's character and crew development system, including Mystery and Identity rules, Moments of Evolution, Nemeses, expanded Avatar and Sleeper ("Denying the Beyond") rules, and three extra theme types: Ally, Base of Operations, and Ride.
- **Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes** is a detailed breakdown of the MC's roles, a step-by-step guide on how to run sessions including a variety of tools to help make your game cinematic, and an in-depth walkthrough for creating your own cases and designing your series based on the Iceberg model.
- **Chapter 6: This is MY City!** includes rules for creating and handling Dangers, a Danger Profile directory containing ready-to-use Dangers, and a special section on creating and using custom moves with templates and ready-to-use moves. It also contains a comprehensive guide to Avatars and their operations and four Avatar profiles.
- **Throughout this book:** a host of colorful examples for every rule and a range of optional rules to allow you to adjust the game to your group's needs, with a specific emphasis on controlling the challenge level of your game.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

If you played the *City of Mist Starter Set*, then you already know the world of *City of Mist* and many of the core rules of the game. Here are a few major changes that have been revised in this complete version of the game:

- Ordinary people with legendary powers are now called Rifts instead of Gateways. It just seemed a more apt term for a mystical opening in the Mist. You can continue to use Gateways if you wish; it has no bearing on the game.
- While the eight Core Moves remain basically the same, their wording has been revised for clarity. In some places, the move options changed slightly.
- The move **Stop. Holding. Back.** has been completely rewritten to allow players to better understand what degree of sacrifice and consequences they are committing to.
- The evolution of a player character's themes, including marking Crack/Fade, losing and replacing themes, etc. has been revised and clarified. Furthermore, this aspect of the game is now entirely player-driven. The MC simply creates interesting situations for the players; the player decides whether his character evolves from those situations and if so, how.
- The theme type Occupation has been renamed to Routine, and the theme type Gear has been renamed to Possessions.

HIGHLIGHTED TEXT

Throughout this book, specific game elements are highlighted in different colors:

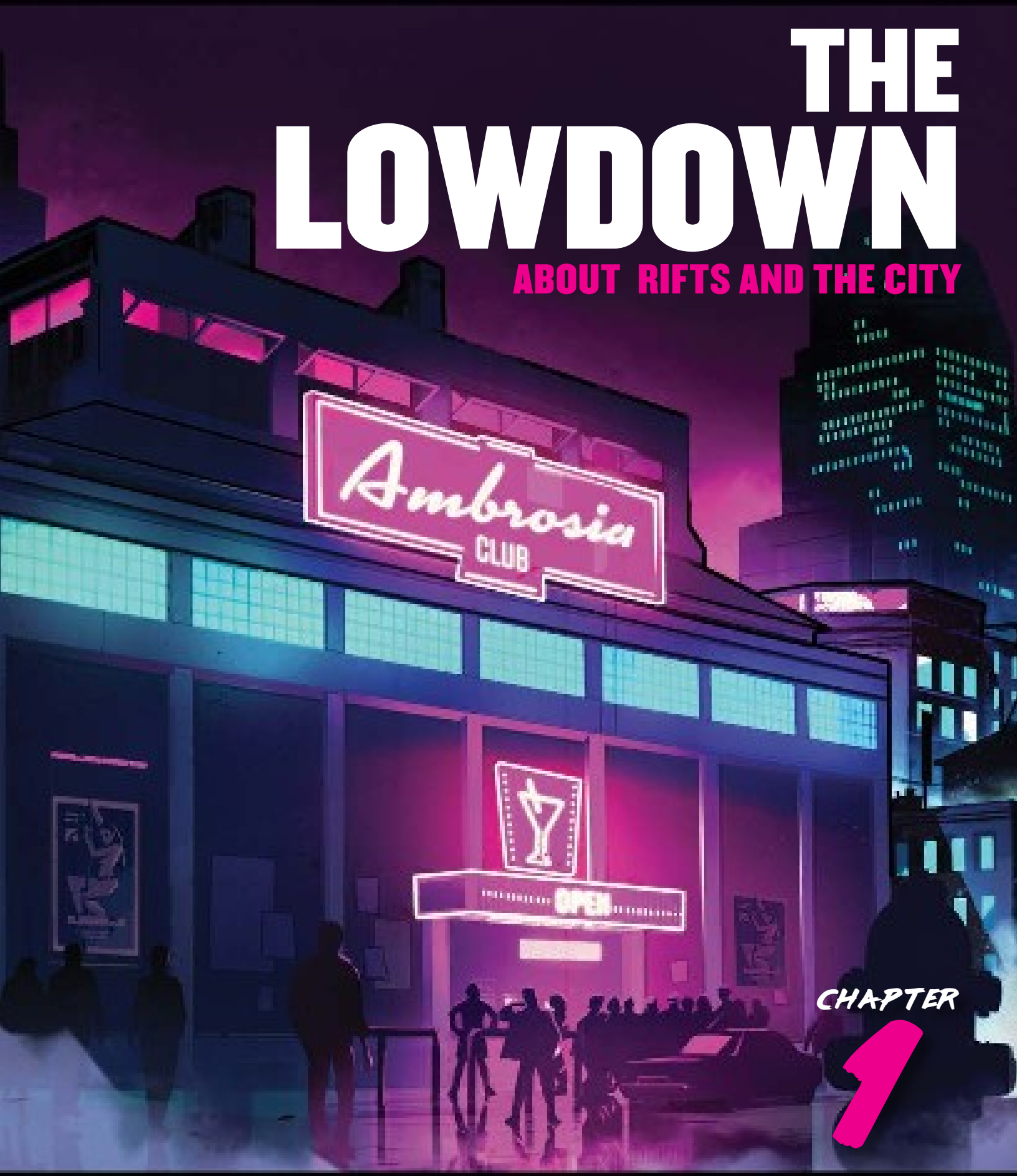
- **Tags** (first explained on page 112) are highlighted in *yellow* (or *purple* in dark pages).
- **Statuses** (first explained on page 230) are highlighted in *green*.
- **Spectrums** (first explained on page 400) are highlighted in *red*.


THIS IS HOW IT STARTS.
THIS BIRD SUPPOSEDLY JUMPED OFF THE ROOF OF THE ROYAL PLAZA HOTEL IN THE HEART OF TOWN.
SOMEBODY HAS TO HANG OUT WITH AND TONIGHT THAT SOMEBODY IS ME.
THE THING IS, THERE'S A LOT GOING ON IN THIS CITY YOU CAN'T SEE.
WHAT YOU DO SEE JUST HIDES THE TRUE STORY.


THE PEOPLE YOU'LL MEET, THEY'RE NOT JUST PETTY CRIMINAL POWER-HUNGRY PSYCHOS, DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES...
... ONLY THEY HAVE A CUTE SCRETCHAT OF THE LEGENDARY LIVES INSIDE THEM AND THEY CAN DO THE IMPOSSIBLE.


BUT FOR SOME REASON, A REASON I'M YEARS ON THE JOB I HAVEN'T HELPED ME UNCOVER.
NOBODY REMEMBERS WHAT THESE PEOPLE CAN DO.
...EXCEPT FOR OTHERS LIKE THEM. LIKE US.
ME. I'VE GOT THE OLDEST WRITTEN STORY INSIDE ME...
Detective
Name Farrah Erkiaga
...SO I KNOW STORIES...
...AND I KNOW THIS WAS NO SUICIDE.
SEE. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT SHE WAS.
Ambrosia
CLUB
don't forget me!
WHAT MATTERS IS THAT SOMEONE GOT TO HER. AND THAT SOMEONE IS STILL OUT THERE, FEEDING THEIR SECRET AGENDA LIKE A STEAMROLLER OVER THE DEAD BODIES OF THE PEOPLE I SWORE TO PROTECT.


I JUST CAN'T LET IT BE.


THE
LOWDOWN
ABOUT RIFTS AND THE CITY
Ambrosia
CLUB
OPEN
CHAPTER
1



LIFE OF A LEGEND

This section will usher you into the life of living legends in the City, ordinary people who involuntarily become involved in an insidious clash of forces that has been taking place right under their noses.

When you play *City of Mist*, you play as your character: one of the lead characters as a player or the supporting characters and antagonists as the MC. But, you're not *just* roleplaying your character, right? You invoke the rules, roll dice, add numbers up.

You know some things your character doesn't know. Terms like Mythos, Rifts, and the Mist are game terms used by the players and the MC so you can understand each other and the rules, but your characters don't know them or use them this way. So, after you've read this and started playing, **don't use game terms when speaking as your character**. If your character is just starting to discover the City, she'll talk about these things in vague terms ("Do you know anyone else that is… like us?"); if she's a veteran, she may have made up her own catchwords for these mystical phenomena.

YOUR AWAKENING

It starts as a nagging realization that there's something you've forgotten. At first, it's in the back of your mind, but as time passes it becomes clearer and clearer. It bothers you. You get this urge to break away from everything that's distracting you and try to listen, to focus. It's like a misplaced memory, something about yourself you can't remember. It's there, but your mind just can't grasp it; it slips through your mind's fingers like vapor. This is where most people give up and turn back to their lives. But not you. You stayed and listened.

When you finally remember this truth you have forgotten about yourself, words fail you because your waking mind is too constricted to accommodate what you take in. It's like a spark inside you, but at the same time it's an entire world. It has too many facets to be accurately described. It's something that has existed for an immeasurable length of time, vastly longer than you have; and yet, in a strange way, it's you: your very core, the root of your existence. The more you are in touch with it, the more you see that everything in your life, every action you've ever taken, every seemingly random event, it all emanated from *this*.

What is the nature of this force? Is it violent and ruthless? Is it as old as the roots of the mountains and the flow of rivers? Is it harmonious and benign, a force of healing? Is it mysterious and cunning? All of the above? Only you can know this.

Slowly, it will take shape: you'll remember faces, places, and distant times. Things that happened long ago – but did they? They don't seem as real as the life you have now, almost like they were faded pages in a storybook; but they *feel* more real than any moment you have ever lived. You'll remember yourself, different back then, playing a role in a clash of forces more ancient than you can possibly fathom: smiting down a terrible foe, stealing a forbidden item, suffering beyond imagination, loving without limits. For a brief moment, you'll remember your **Mythos**.

At the same time, charged with this new memory of yourself, your body will start buzzing. All over your skin, a tingling sensation spreads as you allow this force to enter every mote of your being. If you stay with it long enough, you will become its conduit. The visions you have seen will miraculously become a reality: perhaps a small tree will sprout from the palm of your hand, or your whole body will burn in cool bright blue flames. You have become a **Rift** in the gossamer veil of forgetfulness. You have remembered who you are. A new and yet very old voice inside you can finally say: "I am."

Awakening to what you truly are feels like breathing for the first time. Emotions gush in, along with a shocking realization and the thundering question: "How could I have forgotten myself?" You're awed by this force that has chosen you as its gateway into the world and at the same time you feel immense freedom, as if you yourself have been liberated and become limitless. In a way, you have.

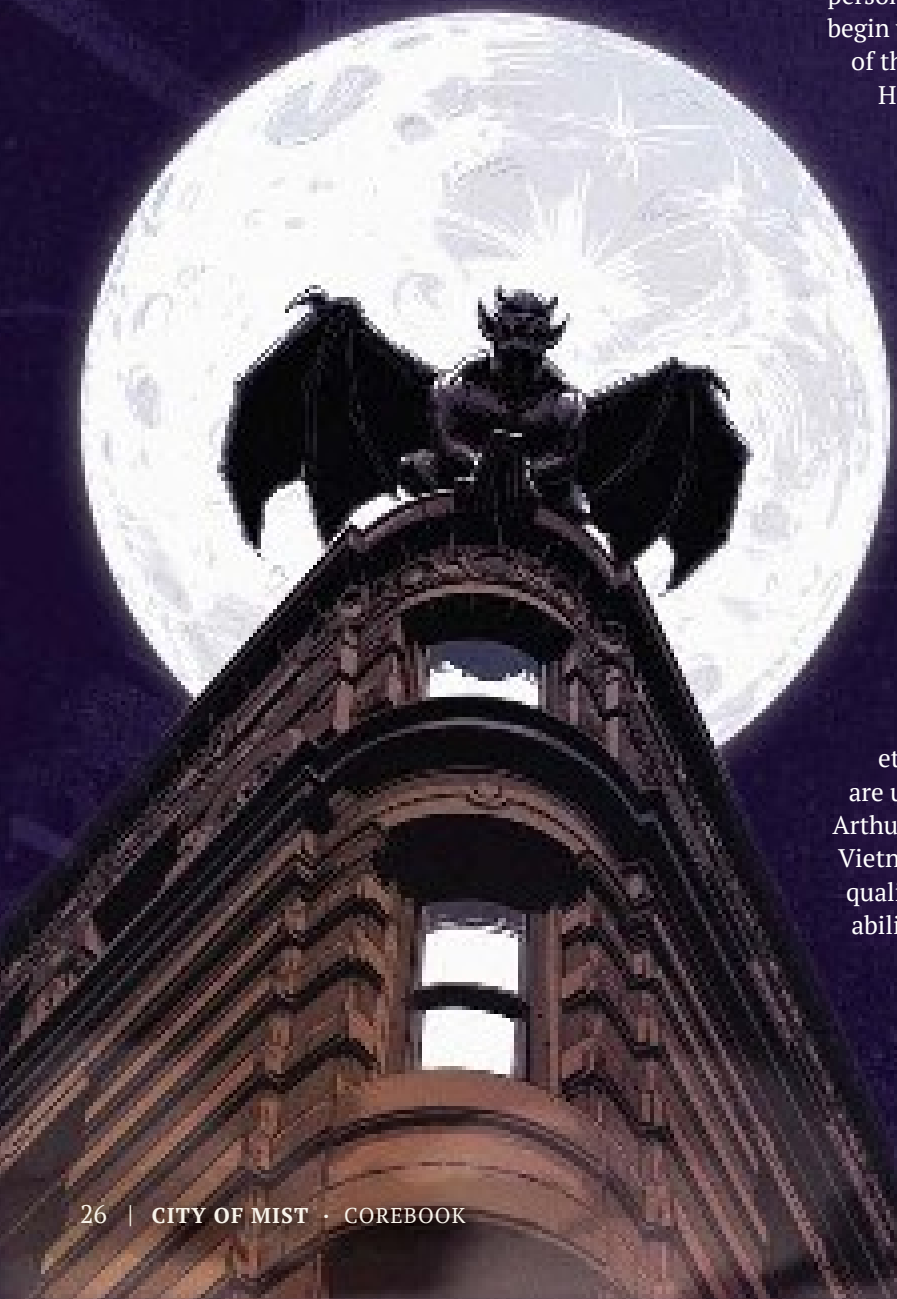
This awakening can happen in a moment or it can stretch over decades. It can happen spontaneously or it can be brought about by events in your life, premeditated, accidental, or fateful. No-one knows what this awakening *is*; you've asked everywhere. But you know others have had similar experiences.

Savor this moment, because it might not last long: **the Mist** is coming, to put you back to sleep.

THE MYTHOI

Nobody knows what a Mythos is, exactly. In a way, a Mythos is just a story or an idea that is trying to become real: a legend about people, places, and miraculous powers and events. Maybe all the Mythoi exist in another dimension, swirling in an endless space of pure concepts. Or maybe they exist only in our minds, in a collective unconscious that is perpetuated by the telling of legends and fairytales. Perhaps these two possibilities are one and the same.

It's impossible to know what Mythoi are because Mythoi can never exist in their purest form – the moment they manifest through something or someone, they already become an impure variation of themselves because they mix with their 'host', the Rift through which they come to life. They can never be fully perceived.



The details of a Rift's awakening to their Mythos vary from one Rift to another. Mythoi often find an opportunity in moments of personal crisis or tremendous sacrifice, when a person feels their world is crumbling down around them. What's really breaking apart is their identity, opening a momentary gap in the Mist that a Mythos can exploit to enter the City. The crisis that opens one up to one's Mythos may be of any imaginable nature. It can be an actual life threatening situation or a person's internal drama. What caused the crisis to begin with? Is it chance, fate, or the machinations of the Mythos that would take advantage of it? Hard to tell. So you see, more questions.

Another question common to Rifts is "*why me?*". One could imagine a Mythos chooses the Rift it will materialize through, but who knows if Mythoi are even conscious? It's just as plausible that a Mythos spreads like a virus or an idea, attaching itself to the person who is most receptive to its story. Perhaps something in the Rift's ordinary life is reminiscent of the legend of that particular Mythos and so, by association, they become linked. For example, the Queen of Hearts could choose a powerful lady as her Rift.

Still, it's hard to put a finger on what exactly draws a specific Mythos to its Rift. Many Mythoi manifest in individuals of a different gender, social background, ethnic group, or religion than those they are usually associated with. For example, King Arthur might manifest through an eight year old Vietnamese beggar girl. Perhaps it's an inner quality that attracts a Mythos, a person's suitability to *become* its story.

It's easy to think of Mythoi as invaders or interlopers, alien beings from beyond the Mist that, if given the opportunity, will overrun the city with their legends and tear it to pieces in a never-ending war of fantastical stories. That may be true, but it's not necessarily so. Mythoi are magic and horror, wonder and hope. It may be that Mythoi are the force that breathes life into the entire City, that governs and animates nature and urban landscape alike. Perhaps they're even gods or aspects of a single almighty divinity, and the Mist is the blind pulled over the eyes of the City's residents by some dark agency, for reasons unknown. If that is the case, then there is no 'getting rid' of the Mythoi – the City would cease to exist without them. As far as Rifts are concerned, their Mythos *is* who they are.

Then again, the Mythoi may not be external to the people of the City at all. They could be psychological forces secretly operating in the subconscious mind of every individual, passed on from one person to another through society, culture, and education until they find the right outlet in the form of a Rift. Any of these perspectives can be true, or all of them, or none.

There are only three things that can be said about the Mythoi for certain: they are a source of unimaginable power, they are mysterious beyond fathom, and they always want to tell their story, whispering it from beyond the veil of Mist we mortals cannot see.

BACK IN 'THE REAL WORLD'

When you come to, you realize where you are. The loud ruckus of the City is probably not too far away. Are you at home, sitting shocked on your greasy sofa, faintly illuminated by a TV screen tuned to a dead channel? Are you at work, peering at your reflection in the glass wall of your corner office, overlooking the sprawling City throbbing under dark clouds? Or perhaps you work at a diner, it's late, and the student who cleans the floors is staring at you with her mop still dripping as sparks fly all around you? Are you buried in the wreckage of a crashed car? What the hell just happened?

Your real life, **the life of an ordinary person living in a modern-day city**, comes crashing down on you in an instant. This realization rushes in like a tidal wave as you're reminded of who you actually are. The impact can be so powerful that you might forget some of the details of the awakening you've just experienced, perhaps even all of it. It all seems like a distant memory, a dream. But there's no time to get distracted by further thoughts, the real world is calling. Your motorbike is halfway submerged in solid asphalt. Your room is draped in a mantle of icicles. There are dead people lying around you, butchered by some horrible beast. Something unbelievable happened – but it happened to you, an ordinary person! How is this possible?

You try to recall the miracle that had just happened, this immense freedom, but something is blocking you. You feel like you're reaching through a thick and sticky spiderweb. All you are left with is the knowledge that something incredible happened, and the facts: your deformed arm, the police chasing you, this glowing light that follows you around. Now what do you do?

Soon, you will discover that it wasn't all a dream – a part of that force you felt stayed with you. When you tap into it, it feels insignificant compared to what it felt like before, but it's real, it's happening before your eyes, like something out of a fairytale or a myth. Maybe you can move clouds by waving your arms, or mesmerize others with a glare, or perhaps you can call on an ancient weapon out of thin air. You can hardly believe it, but it's there, it's real.

Now the panic sets in. There is no place for this new discovery in your life! What about your loved ones, your clients, or your boss? How are they going to respond when they find out? What about everything you studied for or everything you earned? Will you have to give it all up? Or hide what you have become? You're the wrong person to carry this kind of burden. How is it all going to fit together?

One way or another, you have been irrevocably transformed. This thing is inside you now and its arrival spells change. You're afraid, afraid for everything you have right now, even if you never liked it to begin with. Your ordinary life seems familiar and safe compared to the force that now resides in you. You think about abandoning this force. If only you could, you would forget about it and carry on with your life. But you know that this being, this ever-unfolding story, has now taken root in you. Your story is now its story and, remembering how it felt to be totally fused with it, you come to an irreconcilable understanding: abandon it, and a part of you will die. Embrace it… and you'll lose yourself in it.

THE CALL OF YOUR MYTHOS

It doesn't matter who you are: having a Mythos inside you means having unanswered questions. Perhaps you're already a hard-boiled detective, a self-inquiring Zen monk, or a curious history buff, but you don't have to be an investigator by vocation to have questions. Maybe you are a suburban housewife who has never really thought about ancient myths and legends before. Maybe you're a spoiled kid who has never been more than twenty feet away from a supervising adult. Or you could be a lonely elderly man who has no living relatives or friends. It doesn't matter. Now that the Mythos is alive inside you, you are constantly harrowed by countless questions: What am I? What is the nature of my powers? What is their source? Who else is like me? What should I do with this ability?

You don't always understand the questions echoing in your mind – they could be complete mumbo jumbo to you, like cryptic koans that are meant to lead you somewhere, though you have no idea how. Perhaps details of your inner story float into your waking mind: you see a face and feel compelled to discover who it is or set out in search of a symbol that you know is not real, but…

Other times the questions are very real. Your newfound powers have implications – ethical, scientific, theological, or social. You may be looking for a way to control your abilities or reverse their effect. Maybe you have questions about the circumstances of your awakening: why you lived when you should have died or whether it was all planned by someone or something.

You don't know in advance what your inner call will ask of you but it's there, egging you on, urging you to find out. You can try to drown it with stimulation, distraction, or medication but it's not going to work. It will always be there because you *want* it to be there. When you're ready to follow it, it will help you uncover what all these questions boil down to: the truth about who you are.

So, like it or not, you start asking questions. You start **investigating**. It could be that you ask your wife innocuous questions about that fateful night that "we'd all like to put behind us"; search police files or old newspapers for incidents that could be

connected to yours; brave the social discomfort and approach the boy at the party who can get you in touch with the right people; or break into your professor's office to flick through a few pages of that old manuscript before getting caught and expelled. Whatever way you do it, you are out there, allowing the questions to lead you to the answers you so desperately crave. And the more you put your time and effort into discovering the truth, the more you will notice two things are happening: one, you start neglecting other aspects of your life, and two, you start realizing there's a whole lot more going on in this City than you've ever imagined.

THE VEIL OF THE MIST

Accidentally or intentionally, there will come a point when you reveal your special abilities to others and thereby inadvertently stumble upon the greatest hoax in the City. You will discover, much to your simultaneous relief and dismay, that **no-one remembers anything regarding your powers**. To say no-one is slightly inaccurate, as you'll eventually discover, but you will find that the vast majority of city dwellers simply ignore, excuse, or forget any legendary power that you manifest in their presence. Is it that they don't want to remember or that they cannot remember? This is a philosophical question you may never answer.

This force, responsible for the ignorance of millions of people, is the **Mist.** Even its name is shrouded, you will never discover it. No-one can know its name; it cannot be spoken in reference to this force anywhere in the City. But you have likely come up with your own term for it: "the Hiding", "the Brain-wiper", or simply "this thing that makes people forget".

In many ways it is a mild, undetectable force. In other ways, its all-encompassing nature is terrifying, as your experiments will surely divulge. Whenever the legendary manifests in any way, the Mist ensures that no-one knows about it or recognizes it for what it truly is. You begin to realize that you live in an entire City that is forever in the clutches of this force and that everyone you know and meet is entirely oblivious to what is going on around them. They are "**Sleepers"**, "groggies", "fog-heads"; they are unable to see what you can see, no matter how concrete the facts you show them.

This realization alone can tear your psyche apart and indeed countless like you have lost their minds when the gravity of the situation struck them. You are living in a city of sleepwalkers, and that includes the people you love the most. A great chasm opens up between you and those closest to you, a chasm that you can only repress, never bridge. This may drive you to want to know more about the Mist. Even if you survive all this psychological stress, you will face unavoidable questions. "What about me? What am *I* not seeing? Is there something I too am blind to?" You start, in your own way, to study the Mist. If you continue asking questions, here's what you'll find out:

- **The Mist hides and distracts.** Just as one is about to witness the real-life manifestation of your Mythos, something will happen to make them look away or at the very least blur their impression. Fog will roll in, rain will lash at them, steam will blow out from the subway vents, the lights will flicker. Alternately, their phone will ring just at the right moment, or someone will cry for help, or they will spot their favorite sports player walking down the street. Whatever form it takes, the Mist will make them miss the miraculous display altogether, or at the very least doubt what they saw: "I saw something, but I'm not sure exactly…" If you push them later, most people will respond with disbelief that it ever happened, or even *could* happen.

  As you'll discover, the Mist is not limited to people's minds. Its effects are more far-reaching than mind tricks. It can cause interference in electrical devices recording your legendary powers (and Sleepers would claim it's edited footage, anyway). More worryingly, it seems to be able to

orchestrate events with disturbing synchronicity, for example having your boyfriend arrive at the scene out of the blue just as you're about to witness the magical powers of a Rift you worked weeks to track down.

You see, the effects of the Mist are not limited to Sleepers. You too, as well as the other Rifts you'll meet, are subject to its distractions. The difference is that you remember; you know there is something hiding the truth from you. You know that what you didn't see in a moment of distraction is what really matters, and that if you had seen it, you'd remember it.

- **The Mist provides excuses and twists perceptions.** Sometimes, if you're lucky or unlucky enough, the Mist will fail momentarily and someone will get to see your legendary power in all its glory. At first, as the unadulterated reality sets in, they may be shocked, eyes glazing over. However, the Mist quickly sweeps up after you. Moments later, the glazed look in their eyes will vanish; if asked about it, they'll acknowledge everything that happened *except* its legendary nature. Sleepers will staunchly maintain that there is some mundane explanation to what happened: a freak electrical phenomenon, some kind of scam using movie special effects, whatever. You don't seriously expect them to believe it was *the* Big Bad Wolf you just wrestled with, do you?

  This normalizing effect also works on a much deeper level. You'll find that Sleepers subconsciously edit everything they see as it happens. Where you may see a two headed troll, they will see horribly deformed and obese siamese twins; when obviously faced with the Queen of the Dead, they'll remember her as an obnoxious drag queen. The Mist makes it so that Sleepers just cannot *see*, not even what's right in front of them. Even you sometimes need an actual display of legendary powers before you can be sure someone else is a Rift. When thus revealed, the magnitude of the power of the Mist over the City's residents is truly alarming.

- **The Mist makes you forget.** This is possibly the scariest aspect of the Mist. When you experience this effect, you will suddenly grasp how fragile your mundane life is, how in one moment it can all be taken away from you. It seems there is only so much the Mist can cover up at once; sometimes, when it's stuck for a solution, the Mist will become aggressive and simply wipe out all memory of your Mythos manifestations from people's minds. For them, and sometimes 'them' are very large groups of people, it would be as if the event never happened. "I can't recall exactly what I did last Thursday. I guess I went to Eddie's, like every Thursday. I might have had one beer too many, though…"

  This effect also has a milder but equally impactful aspect, one which affects minds over time. People in the City don't dwell over mystical and supernatural shenanigans; they forget, they let go, they move on. Their own lives much more compelling than something weird they can't understand. Which brings us to the last point.

- **The Mist exploits the things dearest to you.** Your own life is the Mist's strongest weapon, especially the things you love or hate. If you value your family, the Mist will use them to throw you off. If you like cars or hate rats, you'll see a flashy ride or a hairy critter crossing the road just as you're about to witness something important. And since almost everyone either loves or hates themselves, the Mist also employs aspects of your own personality and body against you: a passing thought about your future, an inexplicable bad feeling that never leaves you, or a sudden hunger for burritos – all of these can be carefully placed by the Mist at the exact moment something else is happening at the corner of your eye, something legendary, something that will provide answers.

  If that's the way it works on you, imagine how it works on Sleepers. Sleepers are obsessed with their own lives. They don't care what's happening around them. Sometimes you think it's like they wear helmets made of pure noise, constantly dealing with "Me, me, me!". Well, in a way, you're the same, but at least your eyes are open *some* of the time.

So while this mysterious force prevents others from seeing you as you are, it also makes it more difficult for you to find the answers you are looking for.

An important fact you will learn is that **the Mist does NOT change reality** (at least not abruptly

enough for you to notice). While trying to get answers from a violent gang of cultists, for example, if you beat them up with your ancient bronze staff and you all end up getting arrested, they'll report "This freak came at me with some weird metal shaft!" If you do so by turning your arm into stone, they'll say, "That crazy son of a bitch hit me with a brick!" However, they will still be injured, for real, and forensics may be able to tell if they were hurt by bronze or stone. This is to say the consequences of your Mythos powers are very much real. Just because the Mist covers up all perception of the legendary aspects of your actions doesn't mean you will not be held responsible for them.

Only the legendary miracles and wonders are forgotten. Some of the ordinary residents of the City are quite sharp and focused: that police detective, that bohemian musician at the jazz club, that kid in the basketball court. They're not zombies or drones, they're just under a spell. They can tell you're up to something, even if they can't see it for what it is. And there is always the possibility that they too will awaken.

PAST KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIST

Naturally, not a lot of information about the Mist has been recorded and even less of it is circling around the accessible channels. If there were ever books, scriptures, or oral traditions that discussed the Mist specifically, they have long been forgotten or removed from public libraries and databases. Such a body of information, if it existed, would in all likelihood draw out the full power of the Mist, seeking to eliminate the threat to its existence. What that could mean to the person in possession of such knowledge is beyond your understanding.

But the Mist can't cover everything up. Sometimes it looks like it concentrates its efforts on the mainstream of society and abandons the sidelines to do as they will. Ancient texts and traditions do mention the existence of a force of obscurity and forgetfulness. Such texts are rarely heeded by anyone in the City, especially not Sleepers, who regard them as delirious rants of primitive people or a subject for vain academic research, which completely misses the message. To wit, ancient Vedic texts of Indian philosophy describe an illusory force that conceals the true nature of reality, called *Māyā*. In Kabbalistic writing, *Ester* is the barrier that veils the source of creation itself. Perhaps these ancient people know something about the Mist, but by now, no-one really cares. No-one but Rifts like you.

OTHERS LIKE YOU

From the moment you become aware of the power the Mist holds over the City residents, you'll find that you've become somewhat resistant to its effects. Whether you like it or not, you realize that what you have inside you, this Mythos, has given you the opportunity to awaken, to shake off some of the obliviousness and forgetfulness that plague the unaware Sleepers. From this point on, you will look at the City in an entirely new and different way. Where once you saw the routine of city life, you may now see the living stories and legends who have been existing beside you all this time, hiding in plain sight.

Still, the Mist makes it so you can never be sure. As you walk down the street, you do a double take on the guy in the news stand, realizing that he's brandishing two bumps on his forehead and is playing with a ball of thread. When you go out for lunch, the goofy yet beautiful busgirl at Ursula's Fish & Seafood seems like she wants to tell you something, but no voice comes out. Some neurotic guy in the subway is holding on tightly to an old Arabian brass lamp full of sand, mumbling to himself "they can't control me, they can't control me…".

It may not be frequent, but every now and then you will bump into someone else like you, a Rift with a Mythos inside them. You will notice each other, because you both will have the strong impression that you're the only people around who are actually awake. You'll soon become convinced that others like you are also able to remember the miracles and horrors of your legendary powers. Their Mythos frees them from the grip of the Mist, just as yours does.

This city is full of living legends like you. They could be your valet, your surgeon, your neighborhood's loan shark, the plumber, the IRS woman, the kid next door, the homeless guy in the park. You could even discover one among your family and friends. Everyone could potentially be a walking Rift in the Mist, which is why you can't trust the Mist to always cover your tracks: someone is always watching, someone always remembers.

A meeting with another Rift can result in anything from a fast friendship to a world of mayhem and agony, or both – just like any meeting of two powerful forces. You have to use your instincts and wits to figure out what this person wants – and make no mistake, they all want something. You'll soon find out that being a Rift doesn't really say anything about a person. Whatever legend is inside them, Rifts still have their personalities, their baggage, their aspirations. Some will help you with your cause while others will sell you out for theirs, it's just the way the world works. The only difference is, when a Rift sells you out and you find yourself in the Lions' Den, you won't be facing metaphorical lions.

OTHER KINDS OF RIFTS

To become a Rift, you must have a specific yet elusive quality: a "soul", consciousness, attention, the ability to "listen". This quality is the birthright of human beings, even if most of them turn a blind eye to it so they can concentrate on their material lives. However, there are unique cases of Rifts opening within animals, objects, and even places. Perhaps a human Rift used Mythos powers to create them or the 'spirit' of a Mythos chose them for some reason. In game terms, these Rifts have special names: animal Rifts are called **Familiars**, object Rifts are **Relics**, and Rifts attached to a locale are called **Enclaves**.

DEGREES OF AWARENESS

Not all Rifts are equally awakened. The more you give in to your Mythos, the greater your resistance to the Mist becomes and the greater the powers you are able to manifest. However, as your Mythos demands more and more of you, your personal life starts falling apart. Depending on how they see these two competing prospects, different Rifts adopt different stances regarding their Mythos.

The Touched: Some Rifts are only touched by a Mythos. Either they are at the beginning of their slow awakening or they have never really let their Mythos in or, more rarely, they have been down the rabbit hole and decided to diminish the part their Mythos plays in their lives. Touched still behave like Sleepers, for the most part. They're mostly absorbed in their lives with the exception of moments of awareness to something greater. These moments can give a Touched person a great deal of power but they also terrify them, as they're exposed to something vast that belittles their personal life. They are at the same time fascinated by their Mythos and scared of it, so they keep it at bay whether consciously or subconsciously. Being still in the grip of the Mist, some Touched (especially the newly-awakened) deny the existence of living legends in the City, even though by now they know it's true. Some Touched people lead a secret life where they can vent out and answer the call of their Mythos, but still maintain appearances in their normal lives.

There is a special kind of Touched individuals that you may have come across: those touched by another Rift's Mythos. Many heroes, witches, and monsters in legend had the power to influence or bewitch others, and these legends have been reincarnated in the City. When a Sleeper comes under the influence of a powerful Rift, they can gain some awareness as the power of that Rift's Mythos wards off the Mist. They may even be able to channel some of that Mythos' power. This is especially true for Sleepers who work for a Rift in their daily lives. Later, if the influence of the Mythos leaves that person, they may revert back to their obliviousness, or, sometimes, become awakened. There is really no telling in these things.

Borderliners: Some Rifts open up to their Mythos without sacrificing their ordinary lives. They live at the frontier of the struggle between awareness and everyday existence. While their connection with their Mythos is solid, it is still limited to vague feelings, weird sensations, or a strange 'knowing'. Their lives contain much of the personal and mundane, but within their personal story a great deal revolves around the presence of their Mythos. A Borderliner is a walking struggle between Mythos and Mist: when one becomes stronger and threatens to overshadow the other, a Borderliner will make sacrifices to keep the balance, even if she doesn't realize it until it happens.

Borderliners are the loose cannons of this City. Favoring their personal lives as much as the call of their Mythos, they don't always use their miraculous gifts in a way that promotes the story of their Mythos. On the other hand, they are powerful enough to really change things in the City. They are at the same time independent of their Mythos and dependent on it. In this way, they embody free choice more than any other Rift. (Not free will, though; they are still pawns of their Mythos and their lives. The difference is *they choose whose pawn to be* in any given moment).

Walking the line is not easy. Every Borderliner harbors a secret wish to let their Mythos consume them but is deterred by the personal sacrifices that must be made. At the same time, Borderliners wish to forget about their Mythos in favor of their mundane existence, their loved ones, their jobs, their problems, and their hobbies. There are those who actively maintain both aspects of their lives and walk the line for a long time, though this can become more and more exhausting with every sacrifice.

Legendaries: if your investigation lasts long enough, you will inevitably come across someone who has chosen (or was driven) not to hold back

but instead to revel in their Mythos. These individuals become truly powerful, channeling the fantastical qualities of their Mythos without fear or doubt. Legendaries still have a persona and attachments they care about beyond the sheer agenda of their Mythos, but these are often kept secret or are sidelined because they in fact limit their Mythos. For a Legendary, the story that their Mythos is trying to tell is important above all else and their personal life is only holding them back from fulfilling it – but they are too attached to let it go completely.

Legendaries are a force of nature. Most of the powerful figures of the secret world behind the Mist are legendaries: dangerous mafiosos, mysterious art collectors, fast food chain magnates. Unlike Sleepers of the same vocation and status, who are mostly out for themselves, when a Legendary starts an operation she is doing it at the behest of her Mythos for the purpose of its strange agenda.

Avatars: There are stories going around on the street about an individual so immensely powerful, that everything happening in the City is happening only because he or she allows it to. Can Rifts give themselves completely to their Mythos? If so, meeting one face-to-face would be a life-altering, identity-shattering experience; it would be the closest thing to meeting face-to-face with a Mythos, and you have only a vague idea of what that means. The chances of surviving something like that intact, whether physically or psychologically, are slim. What such a being would want from the City is beyond you.

WHAT'S IT LIKE FOR YOU?

As said, the terms given here for different types of Rifts are not used by your character. In your comic-book- or TV-like world, characters don't say to each other "Oh, I wish I could be a Legendary like you, but I'm just Touched." When the characters share their thoughts and feelings, it's often vague and partial.

Furthermore, one cannot tell just by looking at someone just how awakened they are, or what part their Mythos plays in their lives. These are things you will have to discover by investigating: getting to know the person, doing a background check on them, or tapping into your own Mythos for answers.

FAIRY GODMOTHERS IN DRAG AND DEVILS IN SUITS

In the old stories, the meeting of two people was never a coincidence – there was always a reason. For Sleepers living in the repetitive and bland world of the Mist, this may not be true – some meetings are purely the result of chance. But Rifts see a city that is almost dreamlike, where stories are always connected. In the magical world of the Mythoi, the meeting of two living legends could be a dramatic turning point for everyone involved. For this reason, Rifts in the City are strangely attracted to each other.

WHY ARE THEY AFTER YOU?

Rifts subconsciously see the world through the eyes of their Mythos. When they meet another Rift, their Mythos could either be indifferent or it could cast that Rift in a certain role in their story. When another Rift learns about *you*, they may subconsciously cast you as one of these symbolic aspects of *their* story:

- **the savior**, asking you to save them from others, who may be Rifts too, or from themselves;
- **the instrument**, trying to use you as a means to get what they want;
- **the prey**, seeking to consume you one way or another to satisfy the hunger of their Mythos;
- **the chosen one**, helping you fulfil what they think is your destiny;

- **the enemy**, seeking to destroy you before you destroy them;
- **the companion**, offering to join forces and work towards a mutual goal;
- **the obstacle**, trying to overcome you in order to reach their goals;
- **the object of their love**, trying to win your heart and keep you close;
- and so on…

This story-like connection deeply affects how they treat you. It could be that the leprechaun that runs the laundromat chain in your neighborhood discovers that there is a new Rift in town, after you blow the lid on his scheme to steal all the small change people leave in their pockets under the protection of the Mist. First, he might offer you a deal and try to recruit you to his little operation. If you refuse or try to take over, he'll make you his sworn enemy. It could be that he's just a petty thief, but he's got some connections: when he discovers he can't take you out himself, he'll call on a bigger fish to come deal with you, say, the toll road troll. Whether you intended to or not, your name starts crossing lips around the City. The more it does, the greater the risk you will draw the attention of older, more powerful Rifts.

WHY ARE YOU AFTER THEM?

Answers, you are looking for answers. Whether you have questions about the Mist, or you want to find the man who killed your father, or decipher a dark prophecy inscribed in graffiti all over town, you're looking for information. Rifts exist behind the veil of the Mist, even if they are the most famous person in the City. They see more than Sleepers and they know more than Sleepers. Rifts also have mythical powers; whatever it is you wish for, they can probably get it for you sooner than Sleepers. For example, if you were looking for the fairest of them all and learned that a gentleman in the Old Quarter has the powers of the Mirror from *Snow White*, that would be a good reason to go see him.

Of course, your Mythos casts other Rifts in major roles just as any other. Perhaps you swore to bring down the blacksmith who made and proliferated the witch-bullets that killed your partner; maybe you fell for a beautiful nightingale only to discover she is, in fact, mechanical; or you see potential in the young motorcycle-mounted knight and think his powers will be put to better use in your service. Whoever you are, you have your own agenda; so does your Mythos.

CASES & CREWS

STRANGE CASES

How do you find other legends? Even as an awakened person, the Mist hides your fellow Rifts from you, leaving no trace in the minds of those who encounter them, erasing all evidence with its silky touch, in time even from the minds of the aware. But the Mist does not alter reality: where people disappear, where money is siphoned, where destruction strikes – questions will be asked. And where questions are asked without answers, you get a **strange case**.

Strange cases are the mark of Rift activity. From a juicy "Aliens barbequed my dog" to a dry yet visceral "unsolved murder", odd incidents and mysterious circumstances crop up often in the media, records, and culture. These cases are usually sidelined, simply because Sleepers have nothing more to do with them than read about them and be entertained or horrified. But they are reported and recorded, and while Sleepers make their excuses, they can still acknowledge that they don't really know what happened there.

This is where you come in. Sometimes, it's almost like you can sniff out the real strange cases from the slush: a small newspaper article captures your attention or you overhear folks at the bar talking about some "weird shit going down in the low levels of the refinery". Is it your Mythos whispering in your ear?

Other times, it's as though the strange cases come to you. A mother will come asking for help locating her missing child, saying "I heard you were good with this sort of thing." Or you'll be walking down a smoky alley downtown at night and see an eerie green glow around the corner. When the strange cases fall in your lap, you can sense that it's no coincidence. Even if there is no direct connection

between the case and your questions, uncovering the truth of what really happened can lead you to someone or something that can shed some light on your own search. So buckle up – it's time to investigate.

WORKING WITH A CREW

An investigation, whether haphazard or well-thought-out, is a complex business. Some pieces of information you can only find by studying records; other details you might have to get from contacts or witnesses. Sometimes you have to be at the scene, and that could mean getting into places where you're not welcome. There are so many things that can go wrong, so much trouble you could get into. You need to be sharp, but at the same time tough, fast, clever, knowledgeable, charming…

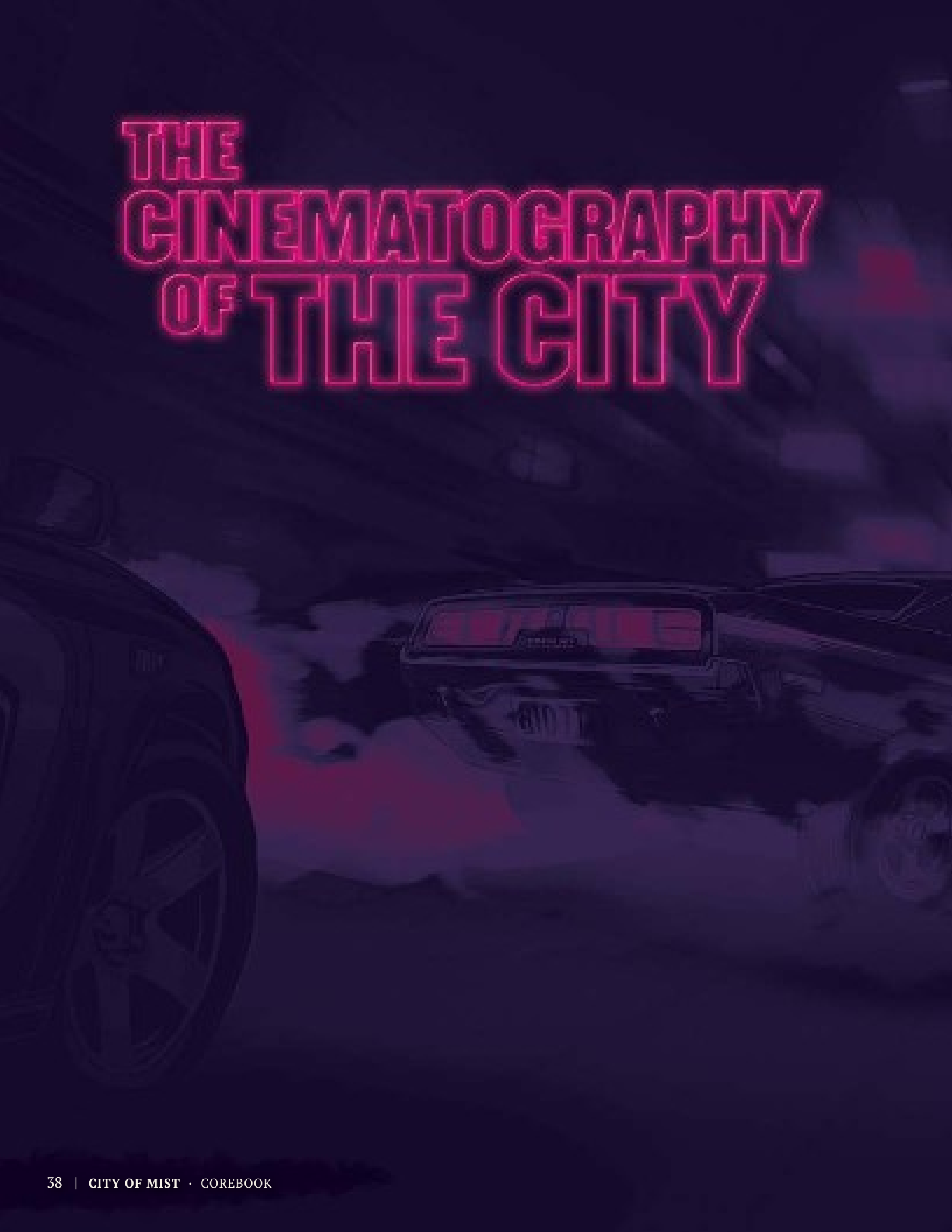
You'll soon find that conducting an investigation all by yourself is inefficient at best and outright dangerous most of the time. With no-one to watch your back or cover more ground, chances are you won't get very far. That's why you work with a **crew**.

A crew can be just you and another associate working nights together or it can be a formal group of investigators operating professionally. Maybe you start your own crew, putting together a team of worthy individuals you meet along the way. Otherwise, a group of Rifts with questions similar to yours may invite you to join them.

A crew always has a purpose. While each individual may have their reasons for working with the crew, everyone has to agree on the goal towards which the crew strives and the methods used to achieve it. When internal dynamics and differences between members put a strain on the crew's unity, it's the shared goal that keeps the crew going.

This is your life now, split down the middle between the ordinary and the legendary. On the one hand, you wake up in the morning and your everyday obligations and habits call to you. You have things to do, you need to go through the motions, you have yourself to be. Only now you feel like you're faking it, like the world of the Sleepers is a thin and fragile veneer over a City that is burning in the dark. Deep inside you, the galvanizing power of your Mythos is throbbing, screaming its questions. Wherever you go, you feel you are being watched by invisible eyes, the eyes of others like you. You live in a waking dream, knowing you can stumble into anything imaginable at any given moment, but you're still keeping up appearances. Both sides are constantly tugging at you, calling you to give up the other side and give yourself entirely to one. Some days you surrender to your Mythos and pay the price; other days, you seem to forget about it and concentrate on what's "real". It's a nerve-wracking way to live, but this is your life. All you know is that you and your crew are working on something, you're about to discover something. So when it's time and you get the call, you get up, grab what you need, fire up your Mythos, and start working the case.


24


THE
CINEMATOGRAPHY
OF THE CITY



The City is the backdrop for your story; its streets, alleyways, and rooftops are where your characters will uncover disturbing truths, unleash their mighty powers in a fight for what matters to them the most, and make harsh sacrifices.

The City is every city. You can choose to identify it as a specific city, real of fictional, or leave it as an unnamed, generic city. Perhaps it doesn't really exist on our Earth, only in the Mist. It is advised that you leave the question of whether the City is real or not open-ended, one which may never be answered. Keep it hazy, keep it dream-like.

Whether it's real or a figment of the Mist, the City at least *appears* to be real and has everything one may find in a modern-day city. **For all they know, your characters and other characters played by the MC exist in a real city.** This includes, among other things, the following aspects of a major urban center:

- **Geography**: different districts, neighborhoods, and zones; topography; parks and natural reserves; natural bodies of water and watercourses like rivers, canals, ponds, and a lake, the sea, or the ocean.
- **Infrastructure**: water sources & system, sewage system, power grid, fuel distribution system including petrol/gas stations and gas pipes, food storages, distributed heating, etc.
- **Transportation**: roads, parking garages, trains, subway system, buses, taxis, freight trucks, airport, seaport.
- **Population & Demographics:** people of different ages, gender, ethnic groups, religion, social standing, political views, etc.; locals, visitors, immigrants, and indigenous people.
- **Ecosystem:** climate, urban flora & fauna, pollution (air, water, noise, and light).
- **Food systems:** food factories, supermarket chains, local produce, markets, restaurants and eateries.
- **Government:** municipal body, politicians & representatives, tax system, elections, government services (e.g. social welfare), bureaucracy, emergency services.
- **Society & culture:** community centers, religious centers, cultural life (books, television, movies, theater, museums, art, etc.), media, recreation.
- **Business & Commerce:** banks, corporations, companies, small businesses, shops and stores, professionals, freelancers, investors, advertisement.
- **Law & Order:** legal system (courts, lawyers), law enforcement (police, federal police, special task forces), prisons.
- **Crime:** personal crime (domestic violence, rape, murder), petty crooks (grand theft auto, burglary, arson, etc.), organized crime (protection, gun trafficking, drug production, prostitution, smuggling, money laundering, etc.), white-collar crime (bribe, extortion, embezzlement, etc.)
- **Education & Science:** public schools, libraries, colleges and universities, kindergartens, private research institutions, labs.

CULTURAL AND ETHNIC REFERENCES IN CITY OF MIST

This book and other *City of Mist* content make extensive use of cultural and ethnic references. First, because the myths and legends that will be incarnated in your characters come from various world cultures, past or present. Second, because modern-day cities are hotspots of cultural and ethnic diversity and *City of Mist* would not feel real if it were any different. While we attempted to introduce examples from as many cultures as possible, it's impossible to include every world culture in one book. I encourage you to take your own native cultures or cultures you are interested in and bring them into the game as characters and Mythoi.

DESCRIBING THE CITY IN YOUR GAME

City of Mist is a game of imagination. There's no need to prepare all the details of the City in advance – you'll make them up or look them up as the need for them arises. For example, when one of the lead characters is setting up a meeting with an informant, the player can just make up a street name and say "Meet me at my place. It's in 403 Lexington St.". You don't have to check in advance if your City has a Lexington St. or where it is. When you said it, it became real in your story. If the other players or the MC see things differently, talk it out. If you wish, you can note down new details as you add them to your City.

The important thing is to be familiar with **city tropes**, that is, typical elements or locations that are likely to appear in a detective or neo-noir story. If you don't want to give a specific location or can't think of one, you can always use these tropes instead, saying "Meet me at my place. It's in the Industrial Zone. I'll write down the address for you."

The important parts of the City are the parts in which your characters' story takes place. The MC will know a few things about these specific locations because she will create them when she creates the cases you investigate (see Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes) or read about them in published cases. Everything else in the City is described in broad strokes; it is there purely as backdrop, like fleeting sights seen when driving around the City.

For the same reason, the *City of Mist* setting does not have a city map. Instead, it has **Districts**: collections of locations that you can use for your scenes and connect as you please. There's no need to have a detailed description of what's between this location and the next, because scenes never happen between locations. If you decide to set a scene in a taxi on the way between two locations, then this taxi simply becomes a location as well. When the characters are in a rush, the MC can determine how long it takes to travel from one point in the City to another, but this serves as a plot device, not a grid paper exercise. Remember, the City is just the backdrop for your story.



HOW TO USE THE DISTRICTS

Below you'll find common tropes of districts, locations, and characters that you can use in your story. Each combines an outline of the trope as well as detailed examples of what such a location could be like in *City of Mist*.

Read about the districts to get the feel of the setting and to inspire your own locations and characters. You can use the districts in your character's backstory, if you're a player, or add them to your cases, in advance or on the fly, as the MC (find the rules relating to some of the NPCs in Chapter 6: This is MY City!).

THE NATURE OF THE CITY

Every part of the City hides a story: not just dry historical facts but something *alive*, something that's struggling to exist – a legend. It's in the people but it's also in everything they do and make: the buildings, the establishments, the trends.

It's the old opera house on the waterfront that echoes faintly with organ music late at night, or the landmark corporate skyscraper that you always see on the skyline but whose actual entrance you can't ever seem to find. It's a new fad of dolls for little girls that seem to devilishly smile at you or a rock star who sends uncontrolled waves of ecstasy through her listeners. Or maybe it's that crummy diner at the corner of the street, giving off such tantalizing smells of fresh coffee and pastries that even sworn enemies can be seen there, having breakfast together.

The parts of the City that were abandoned by the mainstream, however, are the ones that reek most of something eldritch. Go under a highway bridge and you might find a hovel where something big and roughly human once lived. Way up by the spires of a forsaken church, stone statues of angels occasionally disappear for a day or two, as if they were off to run errands somewhere else. And if you ever make it to the abandoned subway tunnels, you'll see the occasional hooded teenager slinking furtively into a candle-lit cistern, perhaps a member of some unknown cult.

NOTHING BEYOND THE CITY

One of the premises of *City of Mist* is that **the lead characters never leave the City**. Whether other people actually leave the City is another open-ended question; everyone seems to think that coming and going is something normal that happens all the time. Tourists, business people, and strange country folk show up and disappear regularly. The City residents behave as though they are a part of something greater, like a country or a world, but whenever it actually comes down to acknowledging it, the story veers off conveniently.

The game is focused on the City. The farther the lead characters move away from that focus, whether physically or in a conversation with a City resident, Rift or Sleeper, the fuzzier things get, like the faded edge of an old photo. Where exactly did Johnny go? Not sure, he's out of town. Where did you say this truck came from? Somewhere out of town, I reckon. Where are we now? Oh, we're just a few miles out of town.

Why don't people ever talk about the greater world out there? Are people in this City just so in love (or obsessed) with it that they don't consider anything else worthwhile? Or is it another aspect of the Mist, possibly the strongest of them all? *You* may want to know the answer to these questions but your characters don't; they too are completely focused on the City.



DOWNTOWN

"She was a sight for sore eyes. And my eyes were pretty damn sore. Wasn't just all the lights and the adverts, blasting from every building. It's what I've seen on these streets: more dead bodies illuminated by neon than I care to count. She had something about her that made me complacent. She almost looked lost, standing at the junction in an evening gown, her exposed back turned to me. I overlooked the strange tattoo, but I shouldn't have. 'Buy me a drink? Looks like we both need it.' I had no idea what I was getting into."

– Sullivan, reporter for the City Herald

Downtown is where it's all happening. It's the beating heart of the City, pumping millions of souls in and out every day, locals and visitors of all walks of life who come here for business, pleasure, or both.

By day, downtown feels like a clockwork toy city: everything is buzzing with hurriedness and purpose, people trying to get things done. Neurotic interns run around with coffee trays, rushing to get back to their bosses in one of the top floors of a skyscraper before the start of an important meeting. Trucks unload goods in the back alleys of renowned designer stores, while at the front suited salesmen shower fake compliments at preposterously wealthy ladies with pampered poodles. Torrents of foreign tourists armed with cameras stream through the well-known monuments and attractions, such as the tallest building in the City or the City History Museum, where a hallmark piece of art is kept. So caught up in their activities, none of them is actually *present*; it's all about functionality, ticking the checkbox, moving on to the next task. Time seems to speed up when you're downtown and the people blur into streaks of muted colors. It's a city on amphetamines.

Downtown is a rainforest of billboards and neon signs. Visible all through the day, they become the only illumination after the sun sets. The hustle and bustle never quiets down; it only changes direction. In the neon-spiked darkness, downtown seeks release for all the tension it built up during the day. Cabarets, nightclubs, and trendy bars operate at full capacity right next to fancy restaurants, theaters, cinemas, and the opera houses. Diners, coffee shops, and food stands line the overcrowded plazas where live events take place, covered by all major media channels. There's entertainment for everyone here – according to what you can afford – including any sort of urban recreational activity. Private parties with expensive drugs and high-class prostitutes are commonplace, but the backstage of the City's most flamboyant district has even darker, stranger pursuits to offer.

BEYOND THE MIST

Rifts that operate downtown often sense that the Mist is strongest here. While this may be a subjective impression, there's no arguing that the constant bombardment of stimuli here makes everyone more prone to absentmindedness. This tilts the game strongly in favor of the more awakened Rifts. Legendaries prey on the hyperactive Sleepers that come here, or at least enjoy more discreteness due to the distracted masses, while even Borderliners have a hard time staying focused on their investigation through the thick fog of distractions.

Being at the center has its perks. Consumerism is a part of every big city, but downtown it is a force of nature, literally. Rifts related to urges, desire, and consumption of all sorts are attracted to the beating heart of the City, where there are more people to influence and tempt to take part in their Mythos' story. This naturally relates to money, business, and shopping but also to everything else – the consumption of art and culture, for instance. In fact, any Rift that has aspirations of influencing the masses or desires an unremitting stream of unsuspecting Sleeper victims will set its eyes on a downtown base of operations. Indeed, this is the best place to work... if you can measure up to the competition.

PLACES OF INTEREST

THE SUBWAY STATION is a place in between. Once you've gone underground, it's as though you travelled to another realm: a dark place where fluorescent lights flicker and things screech and roar in the tunnels. There is always some kind of underlying tension in the subway. Some primal instinct tells you that you are not where you should be. You are, in a way, buried in the earth, where all things come to die. You are on the verge of a great darkness, where the spirits of the dead and the memories of all that was broken or lost end up. It's a limbo, but nobody can sense it: during rush hours, when so many people wait nervously to be swallowed up by steel worms, the Mist covers up this feeling. But when you're there alone, venturing deeper and deeper underground on grimey broken-down escalators, the sensation that someone else is there with you cannot be avoided.

Teenagers hanging out late downtown talk about a weirdo roaming the subway tunnels, wearing a hoodie that sticks out over his head like a raven's beak. Sometimes he will just show up and stare at you out of the darkness of his hood. Word is you're safe as long as you stay on the platform. Is he guarding something in the depth of the subway tunnels? Or is he just a psychopath preying on those who missed the last train?

THE THEATER AVENUE glitters with stardust. The City's oldest and indeed largest theaters and opera houses line this expansive avenue, while smaller and more obscure establishments scuttle along the side streets. Spectacular productions succeed one another at a staggering pace, vying for the fickle audience's attention and money. Behind the scenes, actors strain to achieve greatness while hard-working stage crews put together grandiose sets and complex lighting and stage effects, only to take it all apart again after a few shows.

One of the longest-running shows in town, *The Sad Tale Of*, can be found in the established but obscure Old Orphanage theater. Hidden in a side street, the theater is visited mostly by those savvy to its existence, but has gained a steady following over the years. People describe this show as touching and remarkably life-like, but almost too wistful to watch. Some have seen it dozens of time, claiming that each performance is completely different than the other, but words fail those who try to explain. "You simply must see it," is all they'll manage.

THIN PLACES

In some places, the Mist is thinner than usual. More often than not, this is true for places that have been forsaken, ruined, or lost, so now only few people visit them. Even Sleepers can tell when they've wandered into a thin place: it creeps them out. Strange forgotten thoughts bubble to the surface and a haunting feeling of etherealness washes over anyone who comes near. All the hidden forces behind the Mist become slightly more palpable, evoking dark and gruesome fears.

Ironically, thin places are often shrouded in actual mist, smoke, or steam – it's all the waning Mist can do to hide what's going on. Mythoi's Enclaves can sometimes be reached by going through a thin place, which serves as a transition between the concrete world of the Mist and the abstract realm of the Mythoi. Another explanation, of course, is that people's imaginations just become more active in these strange spots in town.

THE ALLEY is where you'll find all of the City's trash hidden away. Not just the garbage: this is where shady deals and brutal crimes take place. When you want to meet secretly with a contact, because you haven't decided yet if you're going to work with them or kill them – you do it in the alley. When you want to hide a body long enough to get out of town – you stash it in the alley dumpster. It's where you go when you escape unseen from the scene of the crime or when you stalk someone to take them by surprise. The alley is a place for thieves, muggers, and crooks, and for lowly labourers who are pushed away from the frontline: cooks, waiting staff, porters, sanitation workers, exotic dancers. And while alleyways don't need Rifts to make them scary (Sleepers do that just fine on their own), Rifts are naturally attracted by this backstage of the City. Here you can operate freely, unseen by Sleepers and Rifts alike.

Almost every building in the City has an alley behind it, accessible via a backdoor, the fire escape, the sewer system, or the street, so alleyways act as a dark network of secret passages for the City. Some alleys, however, don't lead to where you thought they will. Some connect to another alley, others strangely emerge into a big bustling street a few blocks away. Sometimes you walk down an alley only to find yourself in a beautiful blossoming meadow in the middle of a hidden courtyard (but how did they get those tacky fake unicorns in here?). And one urban legend has it there is an alleyway that leads to yesterday.

THE FINANCIAL DISTRICT is a conglomerate of glistening, larger-than-life glass skyscrapers and lower, yet equally gargantuan, ornate stone buildings, at least half a century old but well-looked-after. This is the City's main seat of power, where corporate giants, banks, and government officials rub elbows. Anything big in business happens here, with the top financial and legal firms, major bank branches, and corporate headquarters all tucked conveniently next to each other. The City's highest-ranking executive authorities, council of legislators, and courthouse are just around the corner. The stench of corruption is everywhere; money might as well flow in the gutters of the empty side streets and spacious plazas that connect all this splendor. Black government cars, ostentatious white limousines, and limited series sports cars glide by effortlessly, reflecting citadels and palaces on their tinted windows. A handful of well-established plush hotels and expensive art-deco residential towers accommodate the rich and powerful, with all the luxury, security, and anonymity money can buy. And it is from here that these modern-age queens and kings, along with their advisors and emissaries, play a multi-faceted game of chess where the City's residents are the pawns.

There is one building in the financial district that has no name, nor is it possible to reach. Most days it is hidden behind other skyscrapers, out of sight; but every now and then, when you least expect it, it shows up on the skyline. Don't even bother trying to find its street. As soon as you come near it, the street bends unnaturally like a broken arm and you end up losing sight of it again. Fools will tell you it is just around the corner and that they can take you there, while the wise will tell you it does not exist and never has: a dark and dreary castle, engulfed in sea spray and murders of ravens, its old crooked spires painfully tearing into the clouds.

THE SMOKY JAZZ CLUB is a corner of refinement whisked away in the basement of an old building on one of downtown's side streets. Music coaxes you in as you pass by; it sounds like a tune you once heard, a long time ago. It evokes a warm and familiar feeling which, if heeded, will compel you to enter. There, amidst wafts of cigarette smoke, a mixed crowd of well-off enthusiasts and bohemian artists listen spellbound to the switchbacking improvisations of a small band of suited musicians, accentuated by the husky voice of a singer in a flowing evening gown. You might even see the Girl of Ipanema walking through the smoke.

Downing another double whiskey on the rocks or sipping on a cosmopolitan, you'll find the jazz club is a good place to contemplate your current place in life, your next move, or the dire overall state of affairs in the City (and do a Voiceover Monologue, see page 269). Most of the local crowd may be too busy brooding over their own trouble, but some will listen. Unexpected help or a fateful meeting may emerge from the smoke. Then again, it can always be that you were dreaming, or drunk, and when you leave this place you're still just as depressed as you were when you came in.

One of these clubs, "Reeds", gets little coverage by the critics but among its regulars it's fondly known as downtown's best kept secret. It is said that the wisest person in the City hangs out there, known for dispensing the best advice one could ever hope to get. The few who know about this place assume this refers to the old and blind sax player, Zebedee Jackson, but he's in fact just the keeper of the gate. Zebedee has his way of reading people, and if he thinks you have a real problem, and that you're not trouble, he will tell you to go down to the basement while he plays a sad and mysterious tune for you. There you will find that the wooden stairs, covered in a hazy mist, open up to a wide outdoor pond where you'll find him paddling his feet or fooling around. Just a boy, a very strange enchanted boy, a little shy and sad of eyes, but wise beyond fathom.

THE RUN-DOWN APARTMENT is all some can afford if they want to live downtown. Usually situated in an inconvenient location, such as just above the subway railway or a noisy restaurant, this apartment suffers from all manners of pollution. During the day, the dust and sunlight filtering through the blinds make the air here hazy and dense, almost dreamlike. At night, the neon sign attached to the side of the building casts an eerie glow on the place, topped by electrical crackle. Still, despite crumbling paint on the walls and bad plumbing, it's a good enough place to put your head down, for a while. The fridge is usually empty, except for a bottle of cheap alcohol. The rolled up wad of money under the exposed stained mattress is gone. But it's a shelter and it's safe. That is, until that night when you'll hear someone fiddling with the lock on the door and you'll wish you had installed another one.

The run-down apartment can be used as the sad abode of one of the lead characters; the home of another character involved in a case; a crime scene or a place to look for evidence; or even as a safehouse for the crew.

LOCALS

SHERYL FISHER

EBISU, JAPANESE GOD OF WEALTH IN BUSINESS AND ONE OF THE SEVEN LUCKY GODS

Sheryl Fisher is the plump and preppy CEO of the City's top advertising firm. From her office on the 40th floor of the highest skyscraper downtown, which sports a massive aquarium dotted with colorful sea critters and luminescent jellyfish, Sheryl makes sure that the transactional juices of the City keep flowing, keeping her clients, her bank account, and her Mythos happy. She does so using her uncanny penchant for baiting the consumers into buying whatever her clients sell, a quality she seems to have passed on to her copywriters as well as to the advertisement campaigns she runs. She is a wizard at conjuring jingles and catchy phrases for her clients and known for creating more than a few "must have" fads in the City. While outwardly jovial and good natured, Sheryl hides a chilling ruthlessness when it comes to protecting her fortune. If some other Rift pries into her business, she is not beyond concocting a bait that will be the last they'll ever bite. Thus far, Sheryl's elimination of the competition hasn't traced back to her, even in rumors. This is likely because she is judicious in the application of her powers – only real threats ever get dealt in this manner. And while some of the incarnations of the other six Lucky Gods are pleased with her performance so far, others among them find her conduct too much to stomach.

JUDAH WELLS

THE FROG PRINCE

Judah Wells is a hard-working garbage collection truck driver who covers the back alleys of the district. Every day, Judah laments his lack of a more lucrative job, but the burden of life in the blue-collar residential district with a wife and two kids keeps him too occupied to do anything more than daydream about being rich. In the meantime, he keeps his eyes open, hoping for a windfall of some type. Recently, a strange compulsion to search the dumpsters and sift through the upper-class trash has taken over him. He knows it's self-indulgent (and a bit gross: it's one thing to collect garbage, and another to wallow in it) but he just can't help himself; he feels compelled to do so, driven by a strong conviction that there's something in there, something that will change his life. His inner monologue created an entire fiction of him stumbling upon some amazing golden artifact. He daydreams about how he will feel when he finds his 'treasure' and what he will do with the money. Most of his co-workers think he's gone mad and either pity him or frown upon this behaviour. If he keeps it up and someone reports it to his superiors, he stands to lose his job.

Truth be told, it *is* a matter of time. Judah will find something and it will be golden and worth considerably more than just money. Judah's coming windfall will propel him into the social stratosphere of the City. But will he handle it all with aplomb or come crashing down famously?

ALICE

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Alice is new in town. Few know her; no-one knows where she's from. She seems to be a drifter of the backpacking sort, wandering downtown in a windbreaker and wool hat, rubbernecking the glowing neon and jumbo screen, riddled with amazement. Buy Alice a cheap burger and she is happy to talk without taking a breath. She will share her delirious metaphysical theories with you, adamant that there is something essentially wrong with this Babylon you live in. She'll tell you that everything here looks absolutely mad to her, that where she comes from, things are a lot more 'normal' and 'down to earth.' Reticent to say exactly where that is, she won't say much beyond 'outside the City' or 'in the country'.

Some of the things she says make sense, because downtown is pretty crazy. But don't follow her nor take any recreational substances she offers you. If she's in the zone and wanders into a live music event at the plaza or a nightclub, or any other audio-visual display that will mesmerize her, you will find out the exact meaning of "When logic and proportion have fallen sloppy dead."

JUDGE MEYER

SLEEPER

Judge Meyer does what he can to survive in the cutthroat world of politics; at least, that's what he tells himself. The good judge was never much into justice, but long ago, when he graduated from law school in the City's top university, he had a burning passion for all things legal. He was fascinated by how the judicial system aspired to correct a broken world and to keep it working. Now in his 60s, Judge Meyer is anxiously awaiting retirement. The world has proven to him that it is broken beyond repair, time and time again. The things he heard in his court have jaded him, leaving little room for black and white, right and wrong. So he takes a little money here and there, and bends the rules for those who can afford it, big deal. Frankly, it's not as though they leave him much choice: if he wants to keep his position he'll do as they say, take the money, and see what good he can do in other avenues. But sleep has been scarce for Judge Meyer at night. Can he shoulder the guilt for much longer?

THE BACKSTAGE KILLER

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

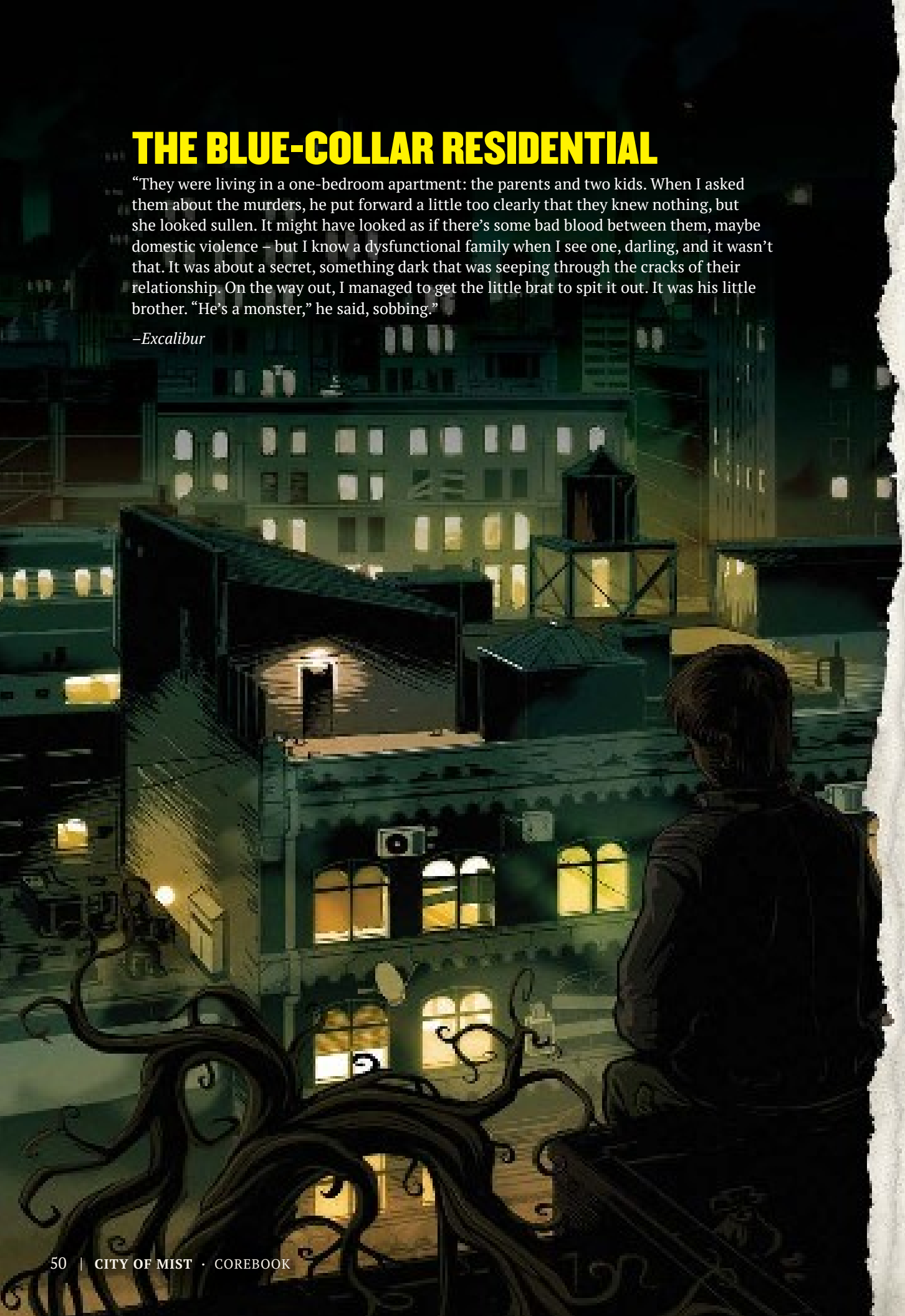
The Backstage Killer is an alleged serial killer operating in the alleyways and parking garages downtown. The killer has recently been linked to at least five different murders in the theater avenue, all targeting the rich and the beautiful. Police profilers were convinced that they can snag the killer, and have pointed out his or her rather transparent methods and an all-too-obvious issues with vanity, expressed as an obsession with the victims' appearances. But even when the police were able to close in on the killer – arriving at the scene too late to save the victims – the killer was somehow able to elude them. The profilers are now looking at two new theories, one claims the killer is a former prima donna, the other a disturbed fan. But talk to the cops on the beat over steaming coffee to-go, you'll hear another story: a hushed showdown at the backstage of a major theater, where the suspect reputedly vanished into thin air, has them believing their suspect is using stage effects to escape undetected. According to them, the killer is either a frustrated stagehand or one of the theater managers.



THE BLUE-COLLAR RESIDENTIAL

"They were living in a one-bedroom apartment: the parents and two kids. When I asked them about the murders, he put forward a little too clearly that they knew nothing, but she looked sullen. It might have looked as if there's some bad blood between them, maybe domestic violence – but I know a dysfunctional family when I see one, darling, and it wasn't that. It was about a secret, something dark that was seeping through the cracks of their relationship. On the way out, I managed to get the little brat to spit it out. It was his little brother. "He's a monster," he said, sobbing."

–Excalibur



Life is tough for the hard-working people of this neighborhood. They struggle daily to survive and make ends meet. They work hard and enjoy what little comforts they can get: a cold beer, a pack of smokes, new shoes, or a working fridge. Opportunities are not plentiful: the education system here is mediocre and the job market is flooded. The best most people in this neighborhood can hope for is to get through the month without sinking deeper into debt.

Sadly, this means this neighborhood breeds most petty criminals in the City and a good share of its organized crime too. People here work hard all their lives; by now, they've either given up on their dreams or are desperate enough to leap at the promise of a golden opportunity even if it comes with great risks. Mobsters and loan sharks thrive on protection money and the high interest paid by individuals with no other choice. Teenagers are naturally drawn to the thug life, where they feel they can earn a measure of respect and a nice bit of money. Idealistic local politicians try helplessly to change things for the better while their corrupt counterparts (and sometimes alter-egos) make a cut on the backs of the neighborhood residents.

Most of this neighborhood is a warren of tall tenements and apartment blocks where visitors often get lost. Some streets and buildings look stenciled, except for the various businesses on the ground floor: grocery stores, barber shops, fast food joints, pawn shops, laundromats. If you venture into the backyards and alleys, you may need a local to help you out of the labyrinth, decorated everywhere by laundry on clotheslines. Most of the day it's a pretty noisy and lively place: kids holler at each other and loud music is playing outside, mixing with the ruckus of traffic. At night, the streets grow silent and tense. Squad cars patrol the neighborhood, but there are too few to make a difference. It's up to the locals to take care of themselves: anything can come out at you from the dark.

BEYOND THE MIST

Hope–even false hope–is a good foundation for a Mythos to strike roots. The blue-collar residential district is therefore a prosperous hotbed for Rifts. From small-time crooks desperate to get their chance at greatness (or notoriety) to hopeful believers who want to make this neighborhood a better place, almost any story about tough luck and perseverance can find its host here. Blue-collar occupations and modest means also mirror perfectly the trades and lifestyles in myth and legend. Farmers, millers, fishermen, and their families star in many fairy tales. It's no wonder then that these Mythoi often associate themselves with folks from this neighborhood.

This district attracts Rifts that seek to involve many Sleepers in their schemes, but on a deeper level compared to downtown. The people living here are not going anywhere; they're the captive audience of any Mythoi who will successfully dominate their lives. While competition between Legendaries surely exists, the nature of the neighborhood tends to foster a handful of long-standing Rifts whose influence then becomes almost impossible to root out. They can become leaders of the community or behind-the-scenes criminal overlords who call the shots on their turf. Even if toppled, the same Mythos might simply take a new Rift as its new face, and continue business as usual. Any new Rifts operating here will learn very fast who is in charge in their part of the neighborhood.



PLACES OF INTEREST

THE 24/7 DINER is where you go to start your day with black coffee and pancakes in the morning, take a break around lunchtime, hold an informal face-to-face meeting in the afternoon, and have a sad dinner alone at the bar in the evening. If you're there at night, the staff will start treating you as part of the furniture. Greasy meals and percolator coffee is all you'll get here, but it's cheap and keeps you going.

With neon lights lining the underbelly of the bar and framing each and every window, the diner glows in eldritch magenta and lipstick pink throughout the night. Red leather seats enclose the booths and a bell rings whenever someone walks in. It's the penultimate casual meeting place, where anyone is welcome and no questions are asked. Sure, sometimes a hobo wanders in and starts shouting in a foreign language until they give him some food and send him away. There's also something funky going on with the *soup de jour*. Once or twice you may have witnessed someone trashing the place (or was responsible for that yourself). But for the most part the diner is where you can gear up, wind down, or just sit by the window and watch the City go by.

Joe's Burgers & Stews (The Magic Cauldron) is one place like that, situated on a junction connecting a few of the neighborhoods blocks – and turfs. Joe is a robust and energetic woman, who seems to labour tirelessly to keep the customers satisfied. Perhaps that devotion has earned her a place of honor among the hooligans and mobsters of the district; how else would you explain the uncanny lack of incidents in and around her diner? The diner sits right on top of the neighborhood's criminal faultline. It should be exploding with violence and yet, that never happens. And if ever some stray gangster stumbles in, Joe walks right up to him and explains the rules of the place along with a bowl of stew. Oddly enough, that's all it takes to keep them in check.

THE PRIVATE OFFICE is often found on the second story of a crumbling residential or office building, overlooking the street. Visitors knocking on the milky glass door at the entrance dramatically show up as crisp silhouettes, most commonly of attractive ladies and despicable gents. Black lettering on the glass identifies the practitioner: a private eye, a lawyer, an accountant, or a doctor. Inside, light filters through the shutters in smoky slanted stripes. The sound of the street below is muffled, yet constant. Behind a heavy wooden desk buried in paperwork and illuminated by a green desk lamp there's a swivel chair where someone is often drinking, smoking, holding a gun, or all of the above.

The private office is a staple of detective stories. Whether it's the lead characters' base of operations (and sometimes not-so-temporary home), the setting of dramatic conversation revealing a shocking truth, or the target of a break-in that now must be investigated – the office should appear in your story in some way. Luckily, the City is dotted with such small establishments so weaving one into the story will be quite natural.

Marty Brooks, a local conman, keeps such an office for a nondescript business he uses to launder his money. The lettering on the milky door are easily removable and he has a whole box of them, just in case he needs the place to look like something else for a while.

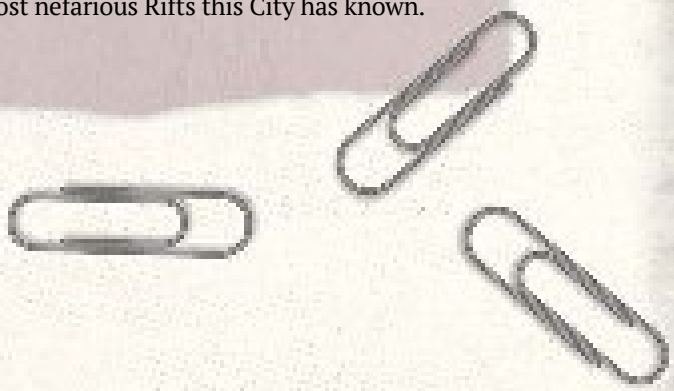
THE PRECINCT POLICE STATION is the symbol of law enforcement in the district. It is a bustling hub of activity: people coming in to press charges, officers riding out in squad cars to answers distress calls, criminals brought in. The cops here handle everything from a cat stuck in a tree to the incrimination and apprehension of the most wanted criminal masterminds. Beat officers, undercover units, task force detectives, and even a SWAT team all operate out of this modern-day fortress. The precinct is fully loaded with the necessary gear and armaments cops need to do their duty, not to mention a tempting evidence storage with plenty of cash, drugs, and confiscated arms to go around, but only the most foolish or daring of criminals would dare mount an assault on the district's stronghold of authority.

When you stand on **THE DOCKS**, watching the gray waves roll and listening to the calls of the seagulls and ship horns, you could be fooled for a moment to that the place has a romantic streak to it. Turn around and you'll find grimey loud cranes carrying shipping containers here and there, rusted ships swaying in briny water, and rows over rows of warehouses and hangars, abandoned for the most part. Unaccountable quantities of commodity come in and are shipped out of this port every day, not all on record. Shady deals are closed with a handshake; money then exchanges hands, goods get loaded onto the back of a lorry, and off you go. This godforsaken land at the edge of the neighborhood is the perfect venue to conduct illegal business, and many mobsters and gang leaders have sent their enemies to swim with the fish off these piers.

Ultimately, however, the docklands are the Longshore Union's turf. This legitimate association of dockworkers also happens to be a front for a murderous pack of thieves and hooligans (Red Caps), dextrous with their knives and tommy guns as they are with a forklift. Even powerful underworld names make contact and offer due compensation before operating from the docklands, to avoid encroaching on Union territory.

THE PUBLIC PARK is the City folk's escape from the hustle and bustle of urban life. Spanning a mile or two in each direction, this massive green space includes lawns, ponds, wooded areas, and natural terrain – a welcome respite from the City's asphalt and concrete. During the week it's quiet here, with most people passing on their way elsewhere. On the weekends it's more crowded, with the sounds of open-air concerts and seasonal fairs filling up the air. Designed for leisure rather than efficiency, the paved footpaths wind and coil around the park, making it hard to cut through if you don't know exactly where you're going. Even locals can find this place bewildering as the path often comes to a dead end in the rushes on the shores of the pond or just under a jutting outcrop of lichen-covered rock. There's a teenage gang of little shitheads (the Merry Men) who mug people lost in the park, especially the affluent ones.

Sometime the path leads unexpectedly to a dense wooded area laced with fog so thick you can't see the sun, or anything more than a few dozen feet away for that matter. Any Rift whose Mythos' legend takes place in a forest immediately recognizes this as the Enchanted Forest and turns back, if she's smart. A seemingly innocuous Enclave, the Enchanted Forest strives only to become a place where magical adventures take place. Unfortunately, that has made it the willing home of not one, but several of the most nefarious Rifts this City has known.



LOCALS

JACQUELINE BROWN

JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Jacqueline Brown was a frustrated young supermarket worker living with her sick mom when she was fired for stealing. The next morning she was shocked to discover that out of a can of baked beans that she dropped in the backyard, a 3-foot-wide beanstalk had grown almost as far up as she could see. Experimenting with this, Jacqueline discovered she could grow stalks out of any bean and later reduce the stalk to mere dust with a single strike of her bare hands. Seizing on the opportunity, she scouted the City's penthouses for a window left open and eventually found her target. She stole something very important and valuable, "a goose that lays golden eggs", so to speak. But on her way down the beanstalk, she found the owner of the house, a rich and powerful man, was climbing down after her. When Jacqueline reached the ground, she struck the beanstalk, disintegrating it under the man's feet, fleeing the scene just as she heard the wet, meaty crash. Amazingly, no body was found, yet evidence showed a lethal impact had taken place there. Jacqueline is now on the run from the police who want her for questioning but, unbeknownst to her, she is hunted by a much more dangerous entity, one which seeks her for what she stole.

SAMUEL VALTIERRA

BARON SAMEDI

Samuel Valtierra who was allegedly once a sullen middle-aged cemetery keeper, now runs this neighborhood. Ruler of the local underworld, he and his gang of Skullz occasionally get involved in shady drug and gun trafficking business, but they mostly dominate the neighborhood through extortion, threatening local businesses with violence if they don't pay for their 'protection'. Most stores in the district, and particularly vulnerable businesses like liquor stores and diners, pay homage to Valtierra. "Nobody dies unless Valtierra says so," is the common saying used by his men. And strangely enough, it seems to be true. Valtierra's gangsters have been known to survive gunshot wounds that should have killed them, popping back out of their base at the Guede Funeral Services seemingly unscathed. What's more alarming, Valtierra seems to mysteriously know everything that goes on in the neighborhood, even secrets people swore to take to their graves, so it seems no-one is safe from him. But Valtierra has bigger aspirations than just this blue-collar residential hood and as a result, bigger problems. His alleged ability to safeguard people from death is interfering with the plans of a much more ancient and powerful underworld bigwig, one who is coming to collect.

HUGH FLYNN

PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

Hugh Flynn has always been a popular yet controversial figure in the neighborhood's politics. A sworn activist, Flynn has been personally laboring for the embetterment of local citizens' lives for over a decade and has even had limited success. He is especially concerned with the children's safety and education in this age of pornography and pedophelia. No-one can contest the fact that Flynn is a great public speaker, and he knows it – his office often organizes rallies, public meetings, and press conferences. He is a master at stoking the emotions of his audience, to the point that they are willing to follow with him through thick and thin. Out of those who heard him speak in person, few have not joined his cause. But it's exactly this instant and total faith he inspires in people that sets him up as a villainous cult leader in the eyes of others. Some folks are afraid to attend his speakings for fear of being brainwashed. There's a pack of mallrats that even accused him of abducting their friends, although that's probably just a prank. But what is Flynn's real agenda? And if it's truly to help the district – is a little brainwashing really so bad?

"THE WATCHER"

POLTERGEIST

"The Watcher" phenomenon would make a great study in social sciences or comparative urban folklore (in fact, there is one student in a local college who has been recording it). Over the last few years, people in different parts of the neighborhood started reporting strange incidents of divine intervention, incredible providence, and unexplainable serendipity. All those affected by the phenomenon describe being visited by a benevolent invisible presence who intervened to save them from crisis, danger, or depression. As these reports became more frequent, a social network of those affected began forming, gaining unprecedented momentum. These "Watched", as they call themselves, shared their experiences of being taken over or possessed by this benign force, allowing them to stand up for themselves against mugging, abuse, rape, and even cases of police brutality. Most Watched believe that "the Watcher" is an individual seeking to help this neighborhood. One of their most outspoken members, Maria Bridey, is convinced the Watcher is in fact her missing brother, Nate. Local authorities are unsure how to handle the situation. Dismissing the possibility of truly paranormal activity, this could be a brilliant scheme by Bridey herself: appealing to her neighbors' religious and spiritual needs as a way to kickstart her own political career.

MARTIN "MARTY" BROOKS

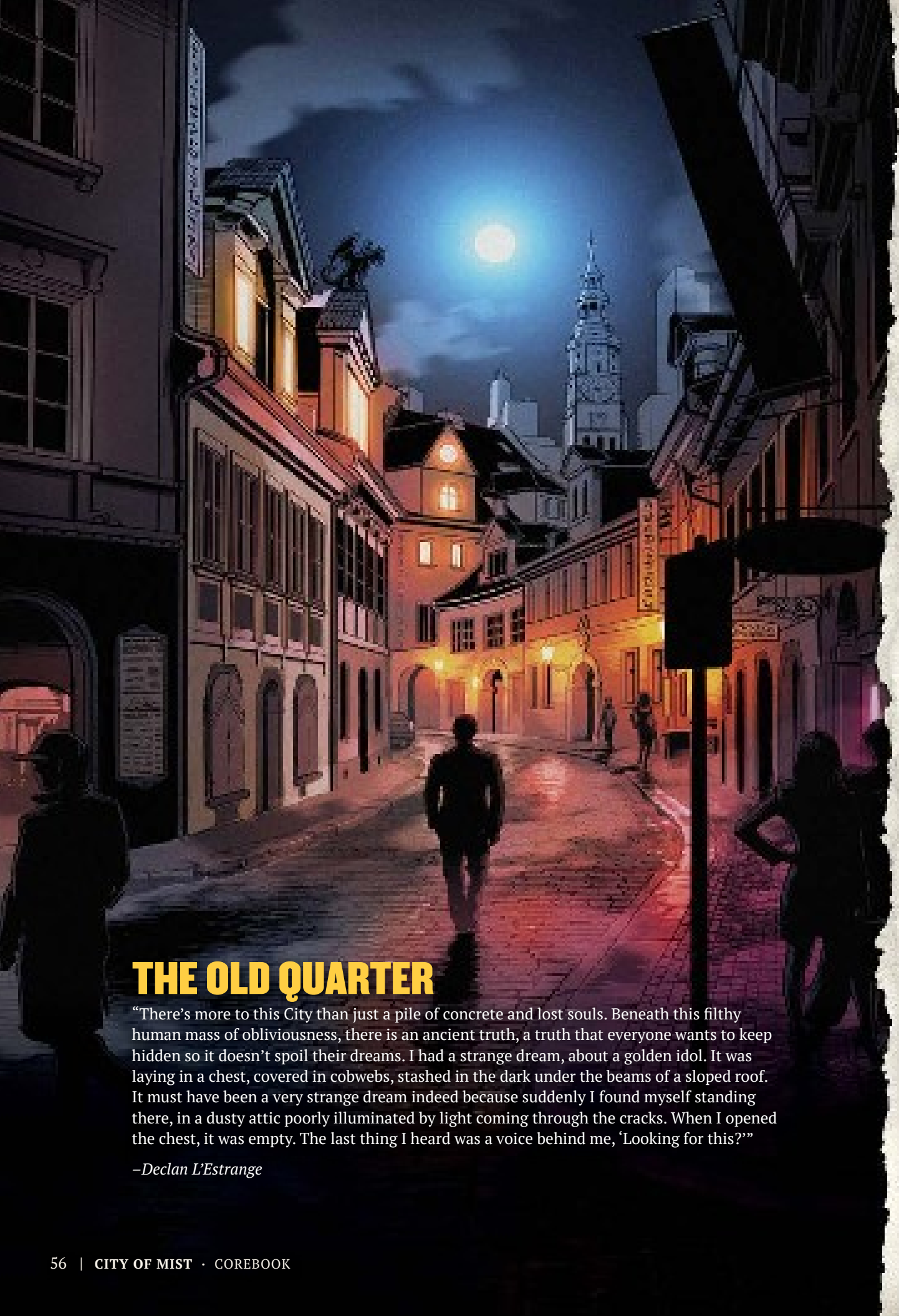
SLEEPER

Marty is always looking for the next hit. Having developed an earnest aversion for hard work from a young age, Marty found that he had to learn how to exploit the gullibility and absent-mindedness of his fellow man. A lot has happened since he started selling baseball cards at ten times their worth in the schoolyard, but nothing really changed. When he lands a windfall, Marty lives the high life with gold-digging women and designer drugs. When he's stuck for money, he plans another, bigger heist or a new scheme to get him solvent again. Marty has been around for decades, he's worked with the best and the worst, and he got out of some serious dire straits, never doing more than a few months in the brig. The only one Marty can't con is Time itself; with a growing waistline and a receded hairline he can't ever seem to hide, Marty is not the playboy he used to be. But he is still as sharp as a knife.

COULD RIFTS HAVE HEARD THE STORIES THEY ARE BASED ON?

Since all other aspects of modern culture exist in *City of Mist*, it's reasonable to assume that ancient legends and stories are also a part of the culture in which the lead characters operate. This means Rifts can identify the legend behind their Mythos or another Rift's Mythos if they have enough details. They can also do some research and easily find out more about this Mythos.

This does not necessary make *City of Mist* a monster-of-the-week game, where the protagonists work to reveal the villain's origin story and find a clue on how to defeat them. While this type of research can be useful and interesting, as it gives new directions for the investigation, remember that there is no telling how a given Mythos manifests in the City. Rifts always have an ordinary and human side, which shuffles the deck and can make them indifferent to certain aspects of their Mythos. Knowing a Rift's Mythos does not necessarily reveal everything about them or their motives. A Mythos can manifest in countless ways, its legendary attributes and weak points appearing in unexpected forms, sometimes not even manifesting at all. Moreover, Rifts are still people, messy and emotional and ambitious. If the players or the characters rely too heavily on legends and fairy-tales, they may be taken aback by what they discover when the whole truth is brought to light.



THE OLD QUARTER

"There's more to this City than just a pile of concrete and lost souls. Beneath this filthy human mass of obliviousness, there is an ancient truth, a truth that everyone wants to keep hidden so it doesn't spoil their dreams. I had a strange dream, about a golden idol. It was laying in a chest, covered in cobwebs, stashed in the dark under the beams of a sloped roof. It must have been a very strange dream indeed because suddenly I found myself standing there, in a dusty attic poorly illuminated by light coming through the cracks. When I opened the chest, it was empty. The last thing I heard was a voice behind me, 'Looking for this?'"

–Declan L'Estrange

Centuries ago, maybe even millennia, migrating people first settled in the area that is now the City. They were met by indigenous tribes, as history tells us, or, if you want the romanticized version, by monsters, spirits, and gods. Their settlement thrived and evolved, growing greater in fortune and population as time went by. Eventually, it became this City you see before you; but it all started here, in the Old Quarter.

Old stone buildings and cobbled streets with wrought-iron street lamps make out this cramped district, giving it the appearance of a place out of time. Landmarks of the City's history are everywhere you look, from pompous historical estates with neatly-trimmed gardens to well-preserved townhouses where someone important once lived. As you venture deeper into the quarter, it becomes harder to navigate by car. Narrow alleyways lead to quaint crafts shops, boutique hotels, glorified bistros, and art galleries, then open up to small squares, decorated with antiquated but masterfully sculpted fountains. The Old Quarter is no less than enchanting; ironically enough, it has the air of something foreign, far from the modern City not by distance, but by time. Everyone you'll meet here has an interesting tale about the Quarter and you can almost breathe in the history that these stones have seen. If you are looking for something eccentric and unusual, you will find it here.

The Old Quarter is a treasure trove of antiques as well as of the arcane. From artifacts brought here long ago from faraway lands by pirates and mariners to parchments and maps recording the early days of the City and pacts of black magic, every attic or basement in this quarter is bursting with ancient knowledge to be uncovered. No wonder then that all the peculiar academics, bizarre street performers, and aspiring mystics end up here. At night, cat burglars wrestle with modern security measures to put their paws on priceless items, overlooking the ancient inscriptions they should really be worried about.

Most of the population of the Old Quarter can trace their heritage to the indigenous people of the City, to its first settlers, or to both. The buildings are almost all owned by old-money families, who have kept the quarter clean from the commercial interests blowing from downtown. Here there is peace, tranquility, and unspeakable secrets buried beneath the ground. No-one talks about these things; those blue-blooded people know how to suffer quietly. But more than one family here has been reputed to carry a genetic flaw in its bloodline, *a curse*, if you will. Then again, it could be simply the product of centuries of inbreeding.

BEYOND THE MIST

The Old Quarter seems to be where the Mist is the thinnest in town. Whether that's due to some mystical property of this quarter is beyond anyone's knowledge, but it might just be that in the Old Quarter the Mist simply has less work to do. The people who live or come here already know this place is weird and they expect nothing less of it. With this reinforced suspense of disbelief in place, the Mist can concentrate its work elsewhere. As a result, the Old Quarter is the district with the most newly awakened people. It is the perfect place for Touched, who can explore their Mythos under the guise of artistic or academic pursuits.

Because so many here are able to remember the legendary, Rifts need to be careful about what they reveal in public. It's a small community where everybody knows each other and what they are, even if little is said explicitly. This makes the Old Quarter less suitable for the insidious operations of the criminally-minded Rifts simply because their victims are too savvy. Instead, the Old Quarter is a melting pot of Rifts of all levels of awareness who clash or collaborate to bring their Mythoi's legend to life.

Another theory could be that the Mist is not weaker in the Old Quarter; it's the Mythoi who are stronger. Beneath the cobbled streets burn the most primordial of Mythoi, myths and fables about the forces that created the world or the essential sins of Man which made it what it is now. Such powers could be strong enough to reach even beyond the capacity of the City's mystic veil. It is all the Mist can do to keep the City intact above ground.

PLACES OF INTEREST

THE MUSEUM is an impressive edifice of stone and marble, erected in a time when history and culture still mattered. Today, most of the City residents regard it as a dull activity reserved for tourists and intellectuals. Others, of a less savory nature, see it as a big pile of money waiting for the one who can bypass its state-of-the-art security systems. They're not wrong; the museum is loaded with famous works of art and ancient artifacts that are worth a fortune on the black market. But that is not what makes this place so special.

What most City residents naturally overlook is that the museum is the largest repository of Relics in the City. Sure, the most powerful Relics, if they ever made it to the Museum, have been stolen or sold long ago. But there are still so many minor Relics stored within the marble-coated walls of this institution that it's practically a mythical armory. Even the mundane exhibits in the museum are so incredibly charged with past and emotion that they make perfect candidates for awakening as new Relics. Most of the personnel working at the museum have no clue about this, but rumor has it that a handful of Rift preservation experts, archaeologists, and even a security guard have banded together to protect the museum from any potential threats to the exhibits. They may have even incorporated some of the Relics into the security measures of the museum.

Interestingly enough, the Relics' true value doesn't lie in their Mythos powers; it's in their history. Relics are Rifts, and as Rifts, they *remember*. Unlike human Rifts, they can endure for centuries and millennia, meaning they could retain authentic knowledge about the history of the City, perhaps even predating the Mist. Such knowledge would only be accessible to the chosen bearer of the Relic, or to someone with enough mystical know-how to wrest it out forcibly.

THE UNIVERSITY is the center of higher learning in the City. Established hundreds of years ago, this educational institution has long spearheaded scientific research and the study of the humanities. Unfortunately, a shrinking budget, faculty scandals, and staunch competition from private research facilities have damaged its long-standing prestige, losing it some of its foremost scientists. Still, this well-respected establishment remains the home of some of the best minds in the City, perhaps ones who are driven more by a passion for knowledge than by self interest and greed. Some academics here will tell you that while they love striding the echoing marble halls and working late in the lab, it is the passion for teaching that truly keeps them here.

The expansive campus, with its many buildings and facilities, takes up a good chunk of the Old Quarter and in fact the newer additions to the university, as well as the residential neighborhoods that house the staff and students, are creeping out into other districts. Still, the beating heart of the university is its centuries-old main hall and the lawns in front of it. Not far from it stands the old library: the largest collection of books, texts, and records in the City. Nerdy researches and inquisitive reporters are often seen here brooding over piles of books and microfilm readers, while in the back of the library colorful mystics flick through dusty tomes. The university's top-notch lab facilities have also featured on the news recently, with some strange accidents and possible break-ins reported in the genetics lab.

THE COBBLED STREET is the heart of the Old Quarter. Possibly the first paved street in the City (or the first worth mentioning), this rather narrow main street has been renovated countless times, but has kept its historical look all the same. Mysterious street performers perform magical tricks that defy logic while musicians play long forgotten tunes that evoke old memories from before you were born. On both sides, stone townhouses stand crookedly shoulder to shoulder in two rows, penetrated occasionally by a shadowy arched passageway. Some of the houses are used as homes, containing anything from cramped attic apartments to plush residences laced with antiques. Some are businesses, from outrageously expensive restaurants to cheap dens where you can get tarot card readings. Others stand empty, abandoned for some ungodly and unspoken reason.

At night this street takes on an otherworldly appearance. Mist creeps in and coils around the lampposts, their lights like hovering lanterns. Silence washes over, seemingly covering the entire quarter, except for the faraway sounds of medieval music. Few walk about, their footsteps muffled and their figures dark and blurry. You get a feeling that something could emerge out of the night and spirit you away to another place, another life, and no-one would ever know.

Old buildings and locations dot the streets of the Old Quarter. **THE HISTORIC RESIDENCE** was once the home of a prominent figure in the City. Whether a founder of the City or of one of its institutions, an industrial tycoon, or a celebrated author or artist, this person has perished long ago and now only his or her estate remains. Most furniture is covered in white sheets, except for a few rooms maintained for public display. There is much to be revealed here about this famous personality: who they were outwardly, what they dabbled with in the privacy of their own home, who they cohorted with, and what else took place during those years. The walls could be hiding stories of ages past or horrible secrets that were taken to the grave.

THE RUIN juts out from the quaint old streets, forlorn and forsaken. In some cases it is a relatively modern building, abandoned after a catastrophe. In other cases, it's an ancient and macabre place: a church, a castle, a stone circle, or a fort. Many such places are Enclaves, showing their ruined version on the outside as a facade intended to fool inquisitive guests. Inside, however, you may find nothing at all or a place carved out of legends – such as a fully-furnished castle hall ready for a feast – depending on whether the Enclave wants to let you in or not. Anything might be buried beneath the ruin: a treasure, a body of ancient knowledge, or an abomination that must never be awakened.

LOCALS

OLD MIRNA

BABA YAGA

Old Mirna is a ubiquitous elderly woman living on the streets of the Old Quarter. Everyone in the area knows she's absolutely mad and tries to stay well wide of her. Unkempt and dishevelled, she wears multiple layers of clothes and her peppered hair is matted into natural dreadlocks. Her breath smells rancid, likely a product of her rotting teeth. Known to hiss away any handouts offered, she seems to respect confidence and courage, not mealy-mouthed kindness.

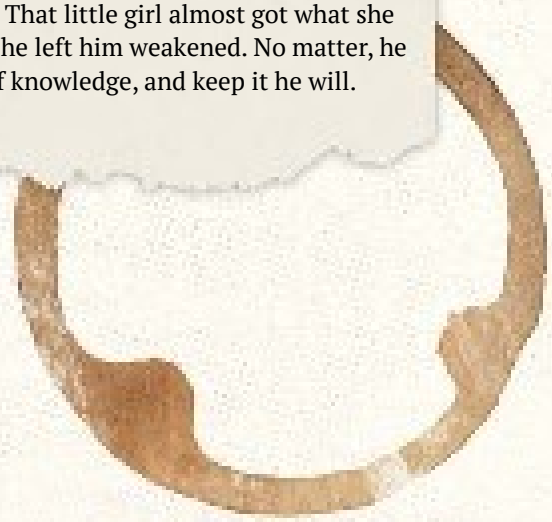
No-one ever sees Mirna set up her tent in the dark of night, it simply appears one day in a courtyard or a small park: a confusing conglomeration of canvas and cardboard put together with surprising stability and roominess. Inside, a tacky battery-powered plastic skull with glowing eyes is fixed over the flap. Scraps of carpet and old newspapers cover the ground. Talismans created from refuse and trash adorn the walls. Piles of old clothes hide who-knows-what under them.

Mirna's piercing stare has a way of terrifying people such that only the boldest or the ones most desperate will approach her; even the police of the area generally stay clear of her. Those who manage to exchange a few words with her and are invited into her tent must be clear about what they want and be willing to pay for it, lest she send them away cursed. Once past her gruff exterior, she is known to help those she finds worthy by reading their palms, telling the future, or providing talismans to bring luck. Mirna is particularly fond of self-assured women and many of the scions of the wealthiest families of the Old Quarter carry special items she gave them: a dirty ragdoll, a bag of poppy seeds, a bundle of tied chicken bones, or a crooked stick. Of course, these debutantes would never admit where they acquired the talismans. Mirna knows, though. She knows and she sees.

FADI MALEK

THOTH

Fadi Malek, perpetually red-faced and frowny, is everyone's favorite librarian. As he patrols the library with his unique swagger, usually balancing up to two dozen books on his belly, the heavyset curly man huffs and puffs at anyone who might be breaking the library rules. Most just choke down a giggle and let Fadi pass by; they know the librarian is harmless and they let him do his routine to help keep the library a place of learning. This is fine for Fadi, who would rather maintain an innocuous facade; it makes it easier for him to do his job. He knows that some of the less frequented wings of the library contain not only sensitive historical records, but also tomes of dark and forbidden arts. There isn't a night goes by that the round librarian isn't fighting off mythical burglars, arrogant Legendaries who think they can just drop in and pick up a copy of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead / Director's Cut*, or cultist zealots who seek the ritual that will restore their banished god. No, knowledge is given to those worthy of it, to those who seek to learn and grow wiser. Everyone else goes on the waiting list. Until now, Fadi's struggle remained mostly clandestine. Recently, however, a handful of university students dabbling in mysticism snuck into the library at night and saw him in action, or more correctly, saw his shadow: he had grown into something huge and furry, with a long tail, bearing his teeth at what seemed to be the shadow of a little girl. Fadi knows who this group is but he has bigger worries. That little girl almost got what she came for, and she left him weakened. No matter, he is the keeper of knowledge, and keep it he will.



ELLA KIRKY

CIRCE THE SORCERESS

Ella Kirky, the attractive 39-year-old owner of Hart Bistro, grew up in the Quarter and is a fierce proponent of its charms and uniqueness. People from across the City seek out her cooking, which has gained her celebrity status; her cookbooks are all bestsellers. Hart Bistro is known for a rich menu of delectable comfort food, particularly her fabled cornbread laced with a bit of red wine, cheese, and honey, which the locals oddly seem to avoid. The restaurant is located in an aging building surrounded by a sizable yard lined with cypress trees and dotted with statues of wolves, lions, and pigs, an inspiration to Kirky who often talks publicly about drawing inspiration from people's animalistic drives and passions. But that's just for the media.

Few know that Ella is the wife of an admiral and daughter to a long line of naval commanders and seafarers. Fostering a nostalgia to the refinement of ages past (as she sees it), she abhors nothing more than lack of dignity and decorum. If her patrons aren't properly respectful, she is more than willing to call on her extensive botanical skills to add a little "something" to the recipes, especially her famous cornbread. There is a strange and of yet uninvestigated correlation between people who misbehaved in Hart Bistro and missing persons reports in the Old Quarter. Ella doesn't feel like she's hurting anyone, she's simply revealing what's there. If they want so much to behave like animals, let them.

THE DUMONTS

THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE-DAME

The Dumonts are both blessed and cursed; sometimes it's hard to tell which. A powerful family of the Old Quarter, the Dumont bloodline is as old as the City itself, but it's a well-known secret they have gypsy blood as well flowing in their blue veins. This is perhaps the source of all of the Dumonts' problems. On the one hand, this family is rich and influential beyond belief, capable of manipulating even the highest rungs of policy makers to do their bidding. This natural knack for foresight, planning, and pulling of strings has allowed the Dumonts to scheme and gain power for generations. On the other hand, there is the affliction that comes with it. Every prodigious leader of the family sires or births a cursed child: a baby made of stone. The Dumonts know the grey pigmentation is just a skin condition but the curse goes deeper than that: whenever one of the afflicted tries to go out in public, whenever they so much set their foot on the street – scandals ensue and the family ends up stripped of its power. As the private chronicles of the Dumonts reveal, this has happened at least half a dozen times in the past. The current leader of the family, Ralph Dumont (Frollo) is trying to prevent that from happening again. Adamant to secure his family's power, he has locked up his son, Paul Dumont (Quasimodo), who is afflicted by the family curse, in their mansion in the Old Quarter. But unbeknownst to Ralph, Paul has found the shared diary of the previous afflicted and discovered the secrets and the purpose of the curse. He prowls the night as a masked vigilante, eager to battle the corruption promoted by his father, but never, ever touching down on the street.

PROF. SAM BALDWIN

SLEEPER

Professor Sam Baldwin is just about ready to pop. For his entire career, he has seen his peers achieve inexplicable scientific breakthroughs again and again, using science that he just could not grasp. The first few times he tried to figure out the theory behind their experiments, whose results were nothing short of miraculous; but their papers were cryptic to him. He used to be sure the enlightenment he was seeking was within reach, that it was just a matter of time, and that with enough hard work he would eventually make a discovery of equal or greater proportions. Those days have long gone. Prof. Baldwin has recognized that he is simply a mediocre scientist compared to the geniuses of his time and that no matter how much he tries, he will never have that *special something* that allows a scientist to truly shine. This realization has devoured him. Now, every news report about a new breakthrough and every comment in his classroom set him off. It's just a matter of time until he finds a way to settle the score.



THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE

"I told her, 'Lady, you gotta believe me! These people are moving some dangerous shit, chemicals or something. They have trucks unloading the goods into a hangar by the refineries. You need to write about this!' She wanted to know how I got into the refineries; said it was a restricted area. What was I going to tell her? That I am wherever water is? That my children in underground pools told me about the chemicals? That I am a god of rain and of rivers? Forget it! I just told her, 'Come with me and I'll show you.'"

–Tlaloc

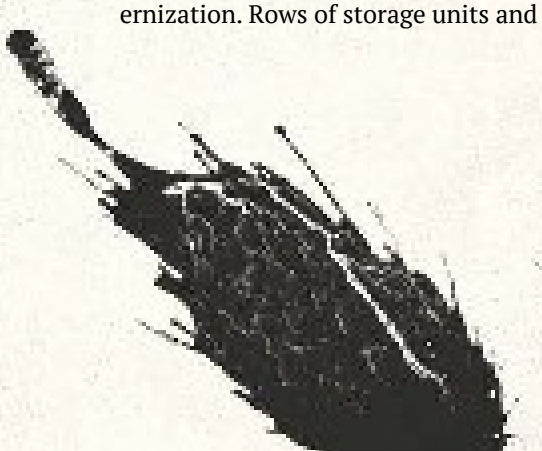
Every day and throughout the night, the Industrial Zone continues its mechanical march. It chugs down copious amounts of raw materials alongside a steady stream of blue-collar workers from the nearby residential districts. Its many workshops and factories, each louder than the other, churn and grind and fuse parts together, and then regurgitate them over to another facility for the next step of the production line. Its tall chimneys and winding pipelines spew out fumes, smoke, and waste, while congested roads slowly push out tired employees and draw in fresh ones. Out of all this ruckus comes an endless variety of products, some mass produced, some crafted with care, some for the zone's own use, others packaged and shipped all over town. When you think about it, the whole district is just one big machine.

Once you get used to the noise and pollution, however, the finer details emerge. The district's area is divided between hundreds of businesses and facilities. In the light industry zone one can find small workshops and garages run by tattooed burly men in wife-beaters and rough ladies in overalls, offering quick repairs and custom adjustments to your wheels and machinery. In the commercial zone, massive hardware outlets sell construction supplies while in their old-fashioned shops, fish-eyed craftsmen work on delicate clockwork or electronics devices behind a magnifying glass. Derelict factories with saw-tooth roofs and filthy skylights house outdated production lines that operate with a skeleton crew, waiting for the inevitable modernization. Rows of storage units and warehouses seem to go on forever. Behind them, vast corporate production complexes and government-funded refineries stretch over miles, some covering an area greater than all the smaller zones put together and housing only god-knows-what.

The nights here reveal a well-known fact: the Industrial Zone is the City's no-man's-land. Though police and environmental compliance inspectors scout the district around the clock, they are regularly understaffed compared to its sheer size, their operations stinted due to lack of public interest (except for a few cheap housing projects for employees working shifts, the district has no registered residents). The underground scene is thriving, with anything from delirious raves to violent pit fights available to the thrill-seeking visitor. Strange gangs and secretive brotherhoods set up their makeshift headquarters around burn barrels in abandoned hangars, spraying their SMGs into the night sky and howling like wolves. Above all that mayhem, the wind blows silently amid silos and cooling towers studded with bright red aircraft warning lights. From way up there, one could easily see that it's not the noisy parts of the Industrial Zone the police should be worrying about – it's the quiet ones.

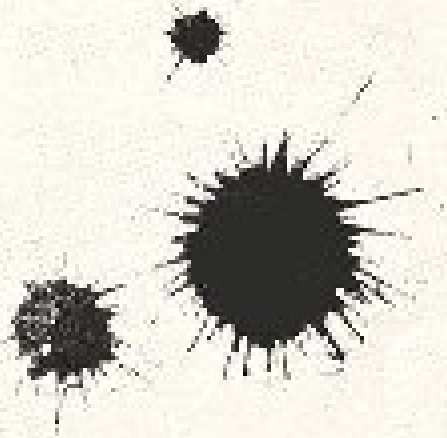
BEYOND THE MIST

There is no district more sidelined, neglected, or desolate than the Industrial Zone, so Rifts just love this place. Whereas in the Old Quarter the Mist's degree of involvement is vague, here it is crystal clear: the Mist doesn't care about the Industrial Zone. It seems to operate here at minimum capacity, masking Rifts barely enough to keep the workforce oblivious and to maintain a steady flow of products into the City. Some have theorized that this is a devious ploy by the Mist to lure Rifts away from the population centers where they can be dealt with permanently without danger of awakening others. But the fact remains that Rifts here feel a release from the burden of the Mist, setting aside their ordinary lives and living free as the agents of their innermost mythical desires. Visiting the Industrial Zone regularly can certainly open up a Rift's awareness; sometimes this awareness even endures when the Rift returns to districts where the Mist is heavier.



This state of affairs has turned the Industrial Zone into somewhat of a wonderland. You never know what you are going to bump into around here. Most Sleepers are terrified of hanging out here at night, especially near the gargantuan factories where there's not a soul to be seen. All over the district, Enclaves have taken root. Doors opens into snow-covered pagodas and chutes lead down to cobwebbed spider lairs. Monstrous mythical creatures, either Familiars or products of some mad Rift's conjuration, prowl the streets like rabid dogs. Sometimes even Rifts wish they had stayed under the comforting blanket of the Mist.

The most expansive of all districts, the most thinly-populated, and the least guarded by law enforcement, the Industrial Zone is also the perfect location for Rifts to set up facilities for their operations. Hidden away in a warehouse or an empty silo, a Rift's secret lab or base of operations might as well be invisible. It's from here that powerful Rifts operate and to here that they retreat when the going gets tough. Deep in the Industrial Zone there are quite a few lairs of the City's mightiest legends, some even unaware of each other's presence.



PLACES OF INTEREST

THE WAREHOUSE is a must-have location for every operation, mundane or legendary. Whether you are a smuggler trafficking arms, a cartel manufacturing drugs, or a sorcerous Rift torturing your enemies, everybody needs a workspace. Amid crates with strange labels and dormant heavy machinery, one can set up a workshop, a lab, a training center, or even a labyrinthine complex of rooms, each with its own deathtrap for one's unwelcomed visitors. A warehouse offers a quiet, under-the-radar place to work and prepare for your next hit. The chances of being found in the Industrial Zone are slim; without the right intel, your pursuers will have to sift through thousands of storage units across the district.

One of these warehouses, the warehouse on 44 Killory Ave. (Mayan Razor House), is actually owned by the police, but not for the right reasons. Seen from the broken cement curbs and potholes of the road, it seems a rather unremarkable building. A second glance, however, reveals the relatively robust security measures, a telltale sign that something is out of place. Inside the dimly-lit building is a treasure trove of evidence from hundreds of cases of police investigations gone bad. It is here that these crooked old-boy cops house anything linking them with suspect mistreatment, police brutality, and even enraged killings on the beat. Stacked and piled with no rhyme nor reason are hundreds of batons, knives, guns, bloodied pieces of clothes, documents, tapes, and whatever else the officer might feel is too hot to have circulating in the City. When anyone who has not been initiated to "the Warehouse" comes in, all the evidence would float in the air as if by invisible hands and bludgeon, stab, shoot, or smother the interloper to death. It is the perfect way to identify and silence any undercover Internal Affairs cop or other unwelcome guests. To become initiated, one must first present the Warehouse with their own incriminating evidence of violence. Recently, however, the senior leadership of an unnamed precinct, who is in the know about the Warehouse, is noticing that what was once a solution meant to protect the City's 'finest' is now becoming a problem in and of itself: the Warehouse's bloodthirst is infecting their cops.

THE SCIENCE HUB is a cluster of privately owned labs and medical facilities. It is here that corporations run intensive research and experiments in a race to find the next miracle drug or technological gamechanger. The staggering worth of the minds working in these facilities combined with the corporations' mutual distrust drives them to keep their own security details as well as some very creative intrusion countermeasures. Each security force not only tackles threats to the company's interest on the premises but also actively investigates, pursues, and shuts down possible risks across the City. One of the most heavily-guarded facilities in the complex is indirectly owned by Helix Labs, a pharmaceutical giant more publicly known through its many subsidiaries, such as Global Genetics or Particle Core. Needless to say, the police have no effective authority here; the scrubbed white walls reek of lawyers and payoffs.

THE UNDERGROUND CLUB is where you want to go to blow off some steam. Set up in decommissioned industrial facilities (like boiler rooms, basements, and emptied out factories) these are spaces of exposed concrete, obscure graffiti, and dark corridors and stairwells that reek of piss and chemicals. Some clubs sport a chainlink fence ring or a fighting pit where combatants – canine, human, or something else – rip each other to shreds or beat each other to a pulp to the roaring cheers of drunk spectators. Others are nefarious drug dens, where the air is laced with smoke and hallucinogens, connected to chill out zones or thudding dance clubs via hidden underground passages. This is where the lowest of lowlifes congregate, criminals of any sort and kind, who use these clubs for recreation as well as for networking. Here, with the right connections, one can buy black market goods, hire a hitman, or send a message to an obscure underworld leader.

One of these establishments, the Bowl, is a Rift-only fight club. Nobody wants some boozy spectator to awaken in the middle of the fight, so the jacked-up bouncers at the entrance test for Sleepers (it's easy when you have a big Unicorn horn on your head that only Rifts can recognize for what it is). Below, Rifts gather around a 20-foot-wide and 10-foot-deep concave dip in the bare concrete floor to watch two angry fighters unleash wild and mysterious powers and clash in a deadly no-holds-barred match. Face masks are common, and the crowd loves them; it's the ones that live a lie that have the most pent-up rage.

THE SHOPPING LANE is where professionals go to buy gear. It's a decrepit row of low commercial buildings that lights up like a neon christmas tree at night, arrows pointing at divey bars and stripper clubs. Those who can resist the temptations can instead call into some of the many workshops and shops around. These usually have a drab and undistinguished facade, offering second-class equipment and weaponry as the first line of defense against assassin wannabes. The second line of the defense is much less subtle, often involving a Rift of some kind. If your street cred checks out, you'll be invited to the back room, where you'll be offered customized, top-grade, and sometimes extremely illegal, gear. Each piece is a work of art, but it's also expensive so you better be able to front the money. Further back or below is the workshop of the truly gifted artisan who makes the gear: a gunsmith, a technician, a mechanic. Hanging on the wall or stashed in a crate in the master craftsman's workshop is the best piece he or she ever made: one of a kind, not for sale, and most definitely a Relic.

Tokugawa Blades is one such store, where master swordsmith Nico Tokugawa (Masamune, the legendary swordsmith) sells her wares behind the front of a moneychanger, where her associate Pravat Khan (Sleeper) vexes any snoopy intruders. Tokugawa's most praised creation is her own sword, Still, a Relic that supposedly can cut through anything. If you ask Tokugawa, she and Still are the only protection the workshop needs.

LOCALS

EDDIE DREAMTIME

ABORIGINAL DREAMTIME

Eddie Dreamtime is the big kahuna at the Bowl. A middle-aged veteran of the Rift underworld of the Zone, Eddie is nonetheless a lean-and-mean fighting machine, well-capable of tackling opponents much bigger and stronger than him. It's not just his top athletic condition; Eddie is a renowned and highly-skilled reality bender, and has only ever been overpowered in a fight twice. These days, however, he is more concerned with the operation of his club. He wants Rifts to have a place where they can be themselves without having to hold back or apologize for their abilities, not even to each other. He believes all Rifts are reality benders and that they are limited only by their modern conditioning and indoctrination. According to Eddie, Rifts are meant to shape reality and partake in the recreation of the world. For now, he is content to run the club and give his fellow Rifts a neutral place to blow off steam. Eddie often employs his powers to patch up the loser in his pit fights; it's a part of the agreement. Sometimes, however, the fights are so violent that someone dies and then it's the end of the line for them. It's not like he can't do it, but Eddie just doesn't want to mess with the wrong people. In the current milieu, bringing people back from the dead will mess up his neutrality and pitch him against more than one major power in the City. He's good, but he's not that good.

LILY CHOW

THE PRINCE FROM IRON HANS

Lily Chow is on the run. She has stolen something from the safe in her mother's office – a Mythos – and she's not giving him back. Daughter to a high-flying city official and a corporate executive, Lily always knew her parents were involved in shady business but she never suspected their downtown penthouse was the prison of a remarkable being: Iron Hans. When she first met him, she was horrified; nine-foot-tall and covered in long shaggy hair, she could describe him in no other words save "a monster". But Iron Hans made a deal with her: if she sets him free, he will show her the world. Since then, they have been running from her parents, who are trying to get her and Hans back, and shacking in different dumps and abandoned spaces around the Industrial Zone. The iron-skinned magic-wielding churl serves both as a bodyguard and as a big brother for Lily, who is both scared and exhilarated by life in this part of the City. Whenever she needs him, she just calls out his name three times and he appears. Hans got Lily to change her rich downtown garb for jeans, a tee, and a leather jacket, but underneath the outfit she is still just a rich girl in a wild land.

Meanwhile, Lily's parents are desperately looking for her and have hired the best professionals money can buy. The psychological profile on her father's desk says Lily is delusional and schizophrenic; the profiler, a member of an organization called Mending the Broken who secretly specialize in Rift psychology, thinks Iron Hans doesn't exist on his own; he's just a projection of Lily's powers created due to Lily's inability to accept her own strength.



DAISY COLT

SLEEPER

Daisy Colt has been bartending in working-class bars and pubs around the district for over 30 years. Her parents both worked in the factories, as does her brother. A butch hulk of a woman, Daisy brandishes faded tattooes all over her arms and neck, and can outdrink any fool who is willing to part with his money. She knows every bar and club around, as well as any bartenders working here, so when rumors start circulating you can be sure she already heard about it. Most of this stuff is bullshit, drunken blathering fairy tales that Daisy has learned to filter out. The other stuff is worth money; one, because people who come ask for it really want it, and two, because it's verified information about business that Daisy heard about, but would rather not get involved in. She knows big underworld players have operations running in every other abandoned space in the district, but she plans to steer well away from them. Right now Daisy is more focused on the owner of Patrick's Bar & Grille where she works. If that wormy slimeball misses a payday again, she'll punch him in the face and go tend at the place across the road.

COLM "SPIDER" JAMESON

SPIDER GRANDMOTHER

Colm "Spider" Jameson is a bounty hunter who specializes in bringing in wanted Rifts. A little rough around the edges, Spider initially comes across as a brute, which often leads his targets to think they could outsmart him. His biker look, his tattoos, and the sawed-off shotgun he carries around only reinforce this perception. But nothing could be further from the truth. Spider works with alarming cleverness and precision, closing in on his mark in an inward spiral that eventually leaves them nowhere to run. What really makes Spider's face one of the most hated in the Zone is his reputable dreamcatchers: glowing starlight spider patterns he can draw in the air, in the dust on the floor, or even using the nets he shoots from his shotgun which have an effect that is completely unique to him, as far as anyone knows. The dreamcatchers suck out a Rift's ability to express their Mythos powers. Once Spider has a prey in his dreamcatcher, he has been known to decommission their Mythos powers for weeks or even months. This ability has lead some fugitive Rifts to consider him too dangerous to live, and they react with extreme violence at the mere sight of him. So far Spider has worked mostly with the police and the court system; he's trying to make a living, nothing fancy. However, his work and especially his abilities have drawn the attention of a number of parties who would love to get a closer look at him. It's just a matter of time until they figure out how to snag him and then the hunter will become the prey.

LISA MONROE

THE BIG BAD WOLF

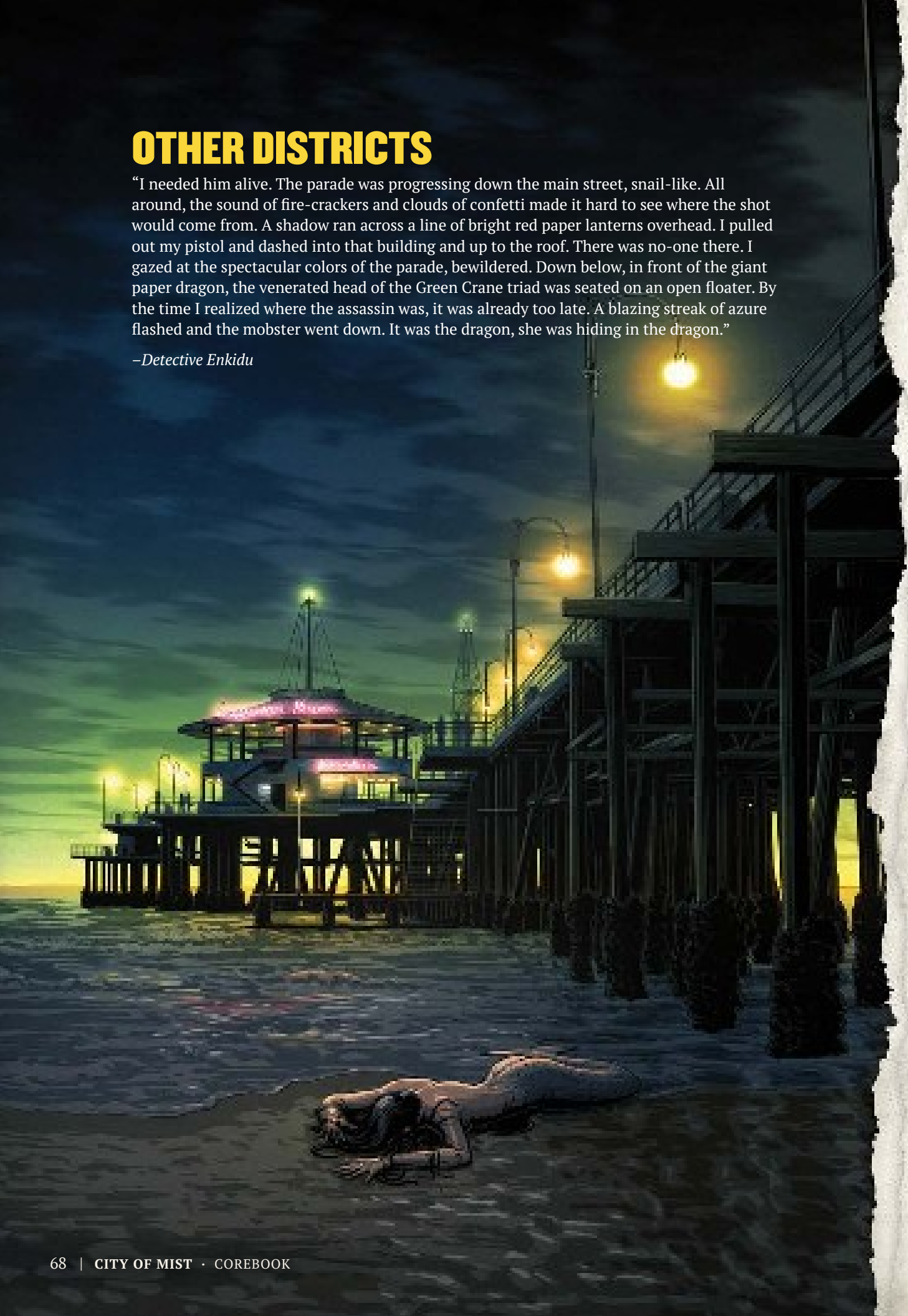
Lisa Monroe is hungry. A forewoman in one of the district's largest food factories, she has been battling her drive to devour everything edible in sight for over a year now. She has tried to satiate her unstoppable hunger many times. One time she chugged down several dozen gallons of corn syrup from one of the factory tanks (secretly hoping to kill herself); she just passed out and lay there with an inflated stomach for a few hours, and when she was up her stomach was as good as new.

Corn syrup wasn't really cutting it; she knew what she craved. At some point, she couldn't resist any longer and ambushed a fellow worker late at night, by the grain silos. Once she tasted blood and the thrill of a kill, the battle was lost. Lisa gave in to the wolf and, with her newfound sense of smell, she caught a whiff of something she craved even more: Rifts. Old scents like the Boy Who Cried Wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, the Huntsman, or the Three Piggies tantalized her taste buds and made her drool over her long yellow teeth more than ever before. All she has to do now is follow her nose.

OTHER DISTRICTS

"I needed him alive. The parade was progressing down the main street, snail-like. All around, the sound of fire-crackers and clouds of confetti made it hard to see where the shot would come from. A shadow ran across a line of bright red paper lanterns overhead. I pulled out my pistol and dashed into that building and up to the roof. There was no-one there. I gazed at the spectacular colors of the parade, bewildered. Down below, in front of the giant paper dragon, the venerated head of the Green Crane triad was seated on an open floater. By the time I realized where the assassin was, it was already too late. A blazing streak of azure flashed and the mobster went down. It was the dragon, she was hiding in the dragon."

–Detective Enkidu



The City is a bustling metropolitan that is constantly growing and expanding. New neighborhoods are built while others are renovated; some quarters are gentrified while others fall into disrepair. There are numerous little spots in the City, each with its own style and subculture. Here are a few more locations around the City you should check out.

THE ETHNIC BOROUGH

(Examples of ethnic boroughs include Chinatown, Jamaica Town, Japantown, Koreatown, Little Italy, Little Greece, The Spanish Quarter, etc.)

The cultural life in this small residential neighborhood revolves around the traditions and heritage of a specific ethnic group. Often close to the inner City, the streets here are busy and cramped and the buildings are far from new, with some areas well-cared-for and others run-down. Overhead, colorful signs in a foreign language are clumped on top of one another, hidden by national flags and decorations for an upcoming or recent festivity. The smell of mouth-watering signature dishes fills the air and often you can find a nearby open-air market swarmed by locals and visitors alike who are shopping for street food, fresh produce, meats, and delicacies. The ethnic borough is a close-knit community; everyone here knows everyone or knows someone who does.

The ethnic borough is home to a variety of practitioners of the ancient arts, such as healers, fortune-tellers, and witch doctors, sometimes operating in the open and other times only reachable through local social connections. One such practitioner is **VANESSA LA BRUJA** (Ixchel, Mayan goddess of midwifery and medicine), a young shaman who operates in a small apartment in the borough, shrouded with strange incense and speckled with jaguar icons and carvings. Vanessa mostly helps relieve the local elders of nagging pains but occasionally she gets a real case. She recently treated a juvenile delinquent who was afflicted by a supernatural illness as part of a local gang war. While Vanessa is tempted to investigate the origin of the dark curse, she is also hesitant as her intuition tells her she might be facing more than she can handle on her own.

Preserving the faith system of its ancestors beneath a brittle veneer of modernity, the borough also needs a constant supply of suitable traditional medicinal herbs, good luck charms, instruments and symbols of worship, etc. **WONG LO TRADING COMPANY** runs a large store full of everything Asian. Jars of expensive roots, dried leaves, mushrooms, and other ingredients line the dusty shelves along with a staggering array of instruments and decorations: bells, bowls, cauldrons, tea sets, calligraphy brushes, ritual knives, pigment, feathered bones, crystals, and coins, as well as tapestries, scrolls, tomes, statues, figurines, and much more. If anyone gives the middle-aged owner, Steven Wong, any trouble, the two obsidian Chinthe statues at the entrance (Relics of Burmese guardian lions) will come to life and scare away the intruders – or do away with them.

THE BEACHFRONT

Dark, gray-blue waves billow against the City's shoreline, leaving behind strands of seaweed and the occasional pile of plastic refuse. Sea spray blows into rows and rows of aging hotels, their paint corroded by salt and sand. Every mile or so a boardwalk stretches into the water, covered in electric lights and funfair rides. During the day, surfers brave the rolling waves and speedboats zoom by with skiers trailing behind. After sundown, the black sea is lit up by massive cruise ships making their way to the docks. People come here to relax, take romantic walks at sunset, and have a drink while looking at the misty horizon; sometimes that doesn't go as planned, when skater gangs like the **JUNKS** (Peter Pan's Lost Boys) or all the all-girl **HARPIES** (you guessed it) loiter about and disturb the peace.

In the nearby marina, fishing boats and yachts wobble in separate ports, surrounded by seafood restaurants, both traditional and trendy. A luxurious member-only boating club takes up a considerable portion of the beach. Further up the beach, amid the rotting, barnacle-covered posts of a decommis-

sioned dock, secret trysts take place, sometimes ending with a body washed upon the shore.

All manners of oceanic Rifts operate here, from giant octopus-like monsters to sirens and mermaids. Rifts of marine or journeying Mythoi may also feel an attraction to this place: it's the edge of the City, and the beginning of something else. The call of the unknown is strong here, accentuated by the salty air and the cries of the seagulls, and many come here to contemplate their questions. **HEATH LARK** (Captain Ahab from *Moby-Dick*) is carefully watching those who come from his regular seat on the beach bar **NAUTILUS**, with a glass of neat rum in hand. He is seeking recruits for a vendetta against one of the most powerful Rifts in the City, someone who has inflicted an unforgivable grievance upon him.

THE CRIME-RIDDEN SLUM

Police sirens wail day and night in this godforsaken neighborhood. It's all for show; the police have long given up on this community and any presence they keep here is for the sake of appearances only. Gunshots are heard regularly from a few blocks over, and sometimes you can catch sight of armed gangs exchanging live fire on the streets as frightened mothers pull their children closer and run for cover. Local business are all protected by grilles, locks, and bars, but owners still open the door when gangsters want to come in, for fear of later retribution. Schools use metal detectors and body searches to curb addiction and violence but still kids manage to smuggle in drugs and weapons. Economically, this place is a black hole, as poverty prevails and the only ones making a buck are criminals that are unwelcome anywhere else; this has the neighborhood on the verge of humanitarian crisis and a subsequent violent intervention by the army. Life in the Blue-Collar Residential can be an uphill battle; here it's a living hell.

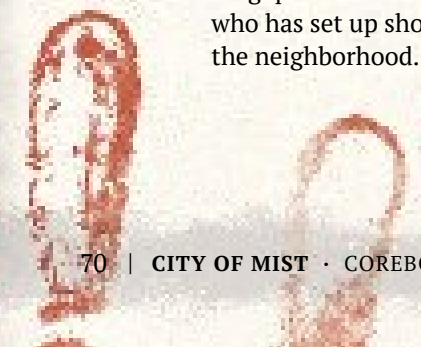
Still, those whose hearts are in the right place always find a compassionate way to share life with others. **SISTER MARY** (Cinderella's fairy godmother) is a flamboyant and often scantily-clad drag queen as well as a designer extraordinaire who has set up shop in an abandoned church in the neighborhood. She is rallying the youth of the neighborhood to help her build a factory for a clothing brand, hopefully keeping them out of trouble and creating new opportunities for them. Evoking responses ranging from disgust to amusement among the gangsters, Sister Mary nonetheless commands respect and her church, while open to all, is a gun-free zone. However, her unremitting ideals have recently pitched her in direct conflict with the gangs recruitment efforts, fighting over the future of one Tony Salucci (Sleeper) and one Diamond Davis (Sylph, the alchemical air elemental), both runners for local gangs. She doesn't want to aggravate the gangs and put her operation at risk, but she just can't give up on these kids.

THE GATED COMMUNITY

There is a part of the City that is surrounded by a high stone wall. Security cameras along the wall ogle anyone moving in the street below. Behind the wall, you can see treetops swaying in the breeze and hear birds chirping. If you follow the wall, you will likely be stopped for questioning by local security before you even reach one of its few openings. If you're lucky, you'll be able to glimpse some of the driveways and neat lawns through the ornamental golden gate before they drag you away.

The gated community is home to high-value properties, some of the City's finest residences. The affluent residents of this neighborhood work in different areas of the City, but prefer to live and raise their families in a secure environment, shielded from the crime and misery of the general population. Every day parents drive expensive cars through the gates to their workplaces and back. The kids go to a private school inside the community or are driven to their schools in the City. Meanwhile, friendly constables in neat uniforms patrol the streets, a part of a top-grade private security firm employed by the community. Life is good, and every amenity one desires is easily accessible. Isolation, however, is not without a price. Cut off from the rest of the City, people here develop all forms of social alienation and anxiety as the image of the other is gradually demonized, becoming a threat behind the wall.

GRAHAM MORGAN (Sleeper) is the leader (or technically, the CEO) of one of the most luxurious



gated communities in the City. He likes it when things are quiet, but years on the job proved to him that there is no such thing. The best of the best, he and his team foil attempted kidnappings, burglary, and vandalism on a regular basis. Last month, however, the unbelievable happened: he was outsmarted. He still doesn't know how the kidnapper got in or out. Fortunately for him the kidnapped lady was returned unharmed by some ragtag crew of private investigators from downtown. Still, the incident will very likely cost him his job (a third-party investigation is still underway). Having gone over the details of the event again and again, Morgan now suspects more than just foul play. He's been going outside off-duty and asking around. If he awakens, he may have new ideas about how to protect his community.





JUST OUT OF TOWN

"Through the door, he asked me 'Are you sure you're not a salesman?' and I mean, look at me – do I look like a salesman in these overalls? I told him no, I was there to check the water main. As soon as I walked inside, something triggered my amphibian senses. Like second sight, I could tell there was a large body of water underneath that innocent-looking white-picket-fence house, but it was contaminated: thousands of little creatures were crawling around it. 'You got termites here?' I asked the old man. He locked the door behind me and grinned. 'Pixies,' he said as he put his spell on me, 'and they're hungry'. God I hate the suburbs."

–Salamander

The City stretches over miles and miles, a dense concrete jungle of buildings, power cables, and street lamps. Eventually, though, skyscrapers and high-rise projects give way to lower buildings and then to private homes. The sky seems to open up above you, and the air seems fresher. You're just far enough to see the City glisten in the night or, during daytime, looming out of the fogbank in the distance. This far out of the City, you feel like you fell off the face of the Earth. This place feels deserted, like no-one ever comes here, even though you know people live here. It's a place in-between, enshrouded in mist and dreamlike. Whatever it is you came here to do, you do it quickly and head back to civilization.

Just-out-of-town locations are special. While technically outside of the City, they are just close enough to be incorporated into your story without disrupting the **Nothing Beyond The City** effect (see page 41). They represent a narrative respite (whether forced on the lead characters or voluntary) from the hustle-and-bustle of City life, from the eminent threats hovering over the crew, and from the lead characters' inner struggles. They allow the lead characters to take a sidestep from the main plot and momentarily experience something completely different and reflect on the state of affairs in the series. Still, just-out-of-town locations should not be used regularly in your series or they will lose their appeal and shift the focus of the series away from the City proper. At most, the lead characters should solve a single case here once per season (see Chapter 3: Working the Case, page 202).

SUBURBIA

Precious cookie-cutter houses with white picket fences stand silent in empty circles and estates. In the playground, the swings quietly screech as they pendulate back and forth. The laughter of children is heard all around, but it always seems to come from the next street, out of sight. A doll is lying on the pavement, next to a tricycle. Before nightfall, honest breadwinners drive their cars into the garage and are welcomed into the house by their loved ones. A dinner is waiting at the table and everyone eats together. Some superficial teenage drama ensues but it quickly blows over. It's an idyllic simple scene not easily found in the City, but it's almost robotic. The people here are polite and kind when they greet visitors, but many City folk can't shake the creepy feeling that suburbanites are playing a scripted role. Could there be skeletons in the perfectly-made wardrobes of this neighborhood, or is it simply that the Mist's make-up is flaking here at the edge of town?

COLETTE JENKINS (Sleeping Beauty) is a suburban housewife whose life is falling apart. A stranger broke into her home while she was alone, an unkempt fugitive in rags who the police later said had escaped from a mental institute. She said Colette had been sleeping for a very long time, that she had to wake up from the dream she was living in. Then, as if remembering all at once what was pursuing her, she took off, leaving both Colette and her glass front door shattered. Since then Colette has been haunted by a disturbing feeling like there's something she forgot to do. She started noticing strange things about the neighborhood, like a black car with tinted windows parking regularly outside her house. For now she is keeping up appearances for her husband and children. She still hopes this will all blow over, even though she knows it won't.

THE CHEAP MOTEL

When people get in trouble in the City, they skip town. But in truth, no-one really leaves; life in this City is everything for its residents and sooner or later they all come back. Runaways just need a place to lay low for a while, which is exactly what the cheap motel is for. Often located in a perpetual downpour of rain, the motel can nevertheless be recognized by the flashing roadside neon sign. The apathetic guy or gal at reception has seen it all and without a second glance welcomes the usual

suspects: fugitives, vagrants, dead-men-walking. A handful of vending machines provide pissy coffee and snacks to keep you company. Other than that there is nothing to do here.

Inside the room there is an unidentifiable strange odor. The mattress is stained, on both sides, with what appears to be dried blood. There are cigarette burn marks on the furniture and the crumbling walls, which are thin enough to hear whatever is going on in the next room. The days here are rainy, empty, and boring. Sometimes, time does not seem to go by at all.

Existing in limbo can has its advantages. When you're out of time, the past and the future are just as close as the present – and there is someone here who can help you make use of that. **RODNEY** (Witch of Endor) can be found in the lobby, strangely illuminated by red lights. A preppy man in his late 20s, Rodney will tell you he is a very old soul. He offers his help to visitors who maybe want to get some closure on their past. For a price, he can conjure anyone you name to appear before you. More interestingly, he can conjure their past or future selves, at your request. Whether these people later have memories of their meeting with you is hard to tell; most people choose to talk to those they'll never be able to see again, or to versions of people who no longer exist or may never exist. It could also be that Rodney is a charlatan who spikes people's drinks with a dangerous psychoactive drug. But hey, if it makes them feel better, he's happy to help.

THE OFF-LIMITS FACILITY

There's a back road that leads out of the City, studded with signs that first warn you not to take any pictures, then not to come near if you are pregnant or have a pacemaker, and finally instruct you to turn your car around. Tunneling through a tall cover of trees, this road ends in a perimeter made of several electric chain link fences, crowned with barbed wire and security cameras. Sometimes military jeeps or slick black government SUVs patrol here, turning back (or bringing in, according to some rumors) any curious individuals who wander around. Those who venture further are taking their lives in their hands.

Nobody knows what is inside the complex. Neither satellites nor any form of airborne reconnaissance can get a visual on this location from above and any city records of it are classified. There is no doubt that something big is happening here; City officials clearly know about this place but keep it under wraps, a sure sign that the true use of the facility is potentially scandalous. Tin-foil capped conspiracy busters have produced some fuzzy photos taken from a treetop of what may be antenna and a dome-like structure, but it's hard to make out the details or ascertain the authenticity of the photos. One fabled brave soul managed to penetrate the perimeter fence while radio broadcasting a report of what she found. She was starting to vaguely describe the second line of defense and some of the visible complex buildings when a shrill scream took over the broadcast. Heaving and shuddering, the courageous interloper was last heard mumbling, "Where is it? Where is it?! This thing, it splits up… there must be at least twenty of them" and then "Oh no–". All recordings of this broadcast have since mysteriously disappeared.

THE MANSION

Sullen bare trees and a high stone wall mark the beginning of the grounds owned by the proprietor of this estate. As you drive by, an unkindness of ravens takes flight; when the feathers settle down, you see an old manor house on the hill. The closer you come to the building, the more you're taken by a strange gut feeling, though you know not why. From the courtyard, the grey mansion seems sombre and foreboding. When you knock on the door, a peculiar butler will try to drive you away, kindly or with a death trap, but will eventually show you inside.

Every mansion has an owner, either living or dead. The owner is a unique individual or group: a powerful Rift, the awakened ghost of a deceased Sleeper, a bizarre family of Mythos-worshiping cultists, or a mysterious transcendent entity completely beyond the City's game of sleep and awakening. Whoever the owner is, they have something that cannot be normally obtained in the City, a game changer: knowledge of the origins of a powerful villain, a solution to an impending monumental

threat, or a Relic that could set things straight. Whether they share it with the lead characters and for what price remains to be seen.

One such mansion, **STARLING MANOR**, sits atop a hill overlooking a lake. It's owned by the little known but ridiculously rich **EDWARD WINTERS** (Sleeper?), once a celebrated filmmaker. Winters' films, while poignant and personal, often broached philosophical and metaphysical questions. Some say he has travelled the world to research the subjects of his films, while others insist he has never left Starling Manor. In old newspaper photos, you can see something truly rare in the cinematographer's eyes: a glint of contentment. And in all of them, in every single photo of him, you will find the same old, dusty typewriter.

THE VILLAGE

On the other side of town, one of the roads leads to a village. As the view changes from industrial to agricultural, the road bends and turns up a small hill until it ends in a little quaint hamlet hidden in a labyrinth of greenery. Stone cottages start few and far between and gradually huddle together as you near the main square. Each of their windows boasts a colorful and well-tended flower box, but still the place looks *wild*. Behind the wooden gates and fences, you can see vegetable gardens and sheds where home-brew alcohol is fermenting. Sometimes you see a sheep, a goat, or a few chickens guarded by an ominous-looking black housecat.

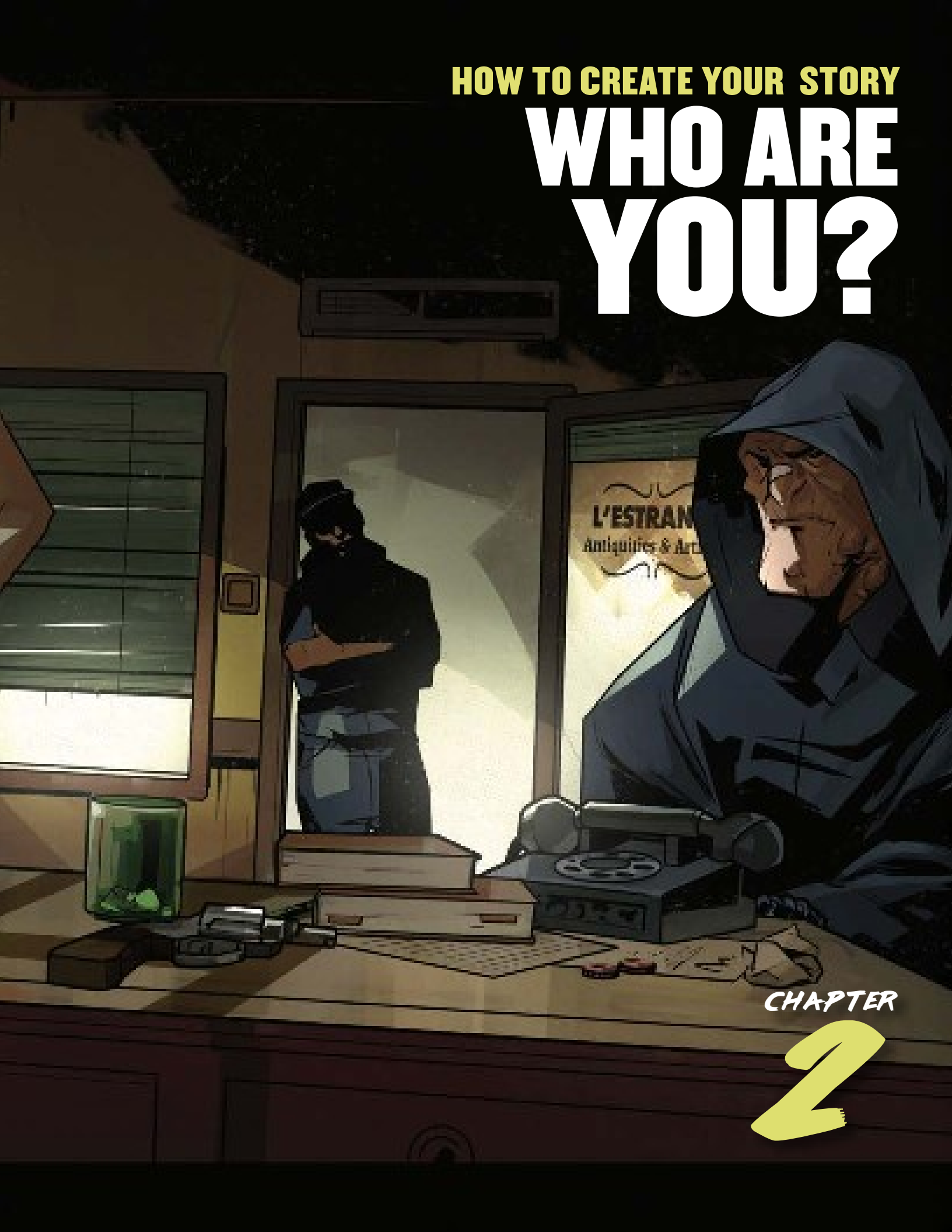
City folk who think suburbanites are weird will find the villagers utterly deranged; they don't even pretend to be normal. Although the village neighbors the City, they seem to have their own dialect, overflowing with words and expressions that mean nothing to City slickers. The attitude towards City folk is a mixture of amusement, suspicion, and superiority; it always feels like villagers are savvy to some profound secret or some obscure mystical truth that City folks are oblivious to. Whenever a City resident walks into one of their drinking holes, they all hush as if they were talking about something urbanites won't understand. When you meet them around the village, they wipe sweat and dirt off their forehead and it's clear they have been toiling to some mysterious end, but they would tell you that they were just having tea and would you like to join them. Something sinister is happening here.

THE WOODS behind the village are hazy on warm days and misty on cold days, so that you can never quite see what's on the other side. A stream flows nearby, but the gurgle of the water is muffled by the dense foliage. Crows caw from gnarled trees, their trunks covered in moss. Some fallen trees have primitive symbols etched on them, while ritualistic fetishes of bones, beads, and bright ribbons hang from branches by threads. Somewhere there lies the Wishing Well, older than anyone can recall. What lies within is impossible to describe; it is the heart of the unknowable.


"THERE'S A LOT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF, DETECTIVE HARRIS."
IT'S RIGHT OVER THERE.
GRRRRR
"THERE'S MORE TO LIVING IN THIS CITY THAN YOU MIGHT THINK."
"EVERYTHING YOU THINK MAKES YOU WHAT YOU ARE."
"... YOUR JOB, YOUR HOME..."
"... YOUR LOVED ONES..."
NOW ... IT'S JUST A JOB
"THEY ARE ALL JUST MASKS."
LET'S BRING HER IN.
"... A DARKENED ROOM."
"WITHIN EVERY PERSON IN THIS CITY, WITHIN YOU, THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CANNOT BRING TO UNDERSTAND..."
"A LEGEND."


BANG!
AAAAAAAAA
GGHH!!!!!!!!!!!!!
"AND IT'S WILLING TO TEAR WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE TO SHREDS IN ORDER TO ENDURE."
"DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE, DETECTIVE?"
BECAUSE IF YOU THINK YOU DO, THIS CONVERSATION IS OVER.
I WOULDN'T BE HERE IF I DID.
THERE WAS A TIME I WAS... FERAL. I HURT SOME PEOPLE. I'M NOT PROUD OF IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I AM, MR. L'ESTRANGE.


I'M HERE TO FIND OUT.


HOW TO CREATE YOUR STORY
WHO ARE YOU?
CHAPTER
2



In *City of Mist*, you take the role of an ordinary modern-day individual in whom an ancient myth, a legend, or a story has awakened. In your day-to-day life, you could be anyone: a young doctor struggling to save lives in the ER, a drug addict stealing to get another fix, a concerned parent bent on keeping the family together, or a professional hitman killing for money and sport. But you're not just that, you are more: an angel in disguise, a volcano god whose blood is constantly burning, a gentle soul who can unexpectedly turn into a monster, or the unwilling bearer of the fabled sword which will reunite the kingdom.

Who are you really? What do you truly want? What can you achieve with the powers your Mythos grants? How do your ordinary abilities and resources limit or further your goals? What does your Mythos want from you and what do you want for yourself? Why do you work with others like you and what are you all hoping to achieve? It's time to answer all these questions.

This chapter explains how to put together the details you'll need to know about your characters' lives, histories, and abilities, as well as the environment they operate in, in order to begin your story in *City of Mist*.

THE EXPOSITION SESSION

In *City of Mist,* the initial details of your story are created collaboratively with everyone in the group. While each player creates the details of their own character, going through character and crew creation together allows you to compound your creativity and tweak the story so it piques the interest of everyone at the table. You can brainstorm ideas for your character and for the crew with your fellow players and MC, and work out the details of your characters' relationships. The MC and the other players can ask you key questions about your character and help you flesh her out.

The first session of a game series or campaign is called the **Exposition Session** (or Session Zero). It is dedicated to defining the nature of your story, creating the lead characters and crew, and collecting some interesting facts and features you can use later on in your story. It's a good time to also work out the social agreement (see page 17) as well as the technical details of your sessions such as the schedule, location, and snacks (very important!). The Exposition Session can also include a taste of the action: a brief sample in which you play out a day in your characters' lives. This gives new players the chance to try out the basic rules of the game.

Before the Exposition Session, the MC should read this chapter to familiarize herself with the process and spend some time planning the session, possibly picking out some suggestions and jotting down a few ideas to get the discussion going. These ideas may or may not be selected by the group, but can nonetheless be useful inspiration or fallback in case the players are not quite sure where to start.

THE STEPS

During the Exposition Session, the MC takes the role of the host, directing the conversation. Go through the following steps one by one:

- **Establish the series concept**
  Decide on the nature of the story you are about to tell in *City of Mist*: what type of crew you are, what brought you together, and what kind of investigations will be at the center of your story. You continue to flesh out the concept and rework it throughout the Exposition Session.
- **Create your characters**
  Players come up with their individual character concepts and use themebooks to create their themes, power tags, weakness tags, the personal Mysteries their Mythos is urging them to explore, and the Identities that define their mundane life.
- **Finalize the crew**
  The players create the crew theme and define the relationships between the characters.
- **Play "A Day In The Life"**
  Play a short improvised gameplay depicting each character's life situation, daily routine, and everyday challenges. This helps fill out the missing parts and get a handle on the basic rules.



THE ROLE OF THE MC: THE EXPOSITION SESSION

The Exposition Session is where your series is born. As the MC, you have the role of running cases for your group. To do so, you will need to prepare locations, characters, and clues or adapt ready-made materials to your series. You will also become the lead characters' biggest fan, so you'll want to know them well. During the Exposition Session, you will gather all the information you need to start your prep work for the series. Therefore, in addition to directing the conversation, you have several other responsibilities in this session:

1) Don't prepare game content in advance. It's recommended to immerse yourself in books, films, TV series, and comic books of the neo-noir genre. However, this session works best when you, the MC, arrive with no plans about the series. This book contains enough series concept seeds to get the discussion started (see page 85). Furthermore, your group has more than enough creative power to provide everything you'll need. Try collaborating with the rest of the group to create the series's concept and elements, rather than dictating them. Be open to the players' suggestions about the series, hear them out, and suggest counter-ideas. Build upon one another's suggestions. Remember, this is the players' most significant opportunity to influence the direction of the series, since later on they'll mostly be investigating the cases that you'll write.

2) Take an equal part in the discussion about the series. Even though you're the MC, you are a part of the group, which means you should feel free to suggest ideas about the series (just don't come with anything in advance, see point 1!). Since you are going to be the 'showrunner' of the series, it's vital that you agree with the concept that is eventually decided upon, and be excited by it. Suggest your thoughts and opinions about the characters, their lives, the crew, and the environment in which they operate.

3) Take ownership over the series, for everyone's enjoyment. As the 'showrunner' of the series, you're in charge of directing the flow of this brainstorming session. Make sure the series concept is clear, coherent, and engages everyone. Make sure any new details match the chosen concept and style of play and that its details or ideas don't contradict or conflict with one another. If it appears the group is leaning toward a different direction than originally agreed upon, let them know and adapt the concept as necessary, together.

4) Ask interesting and provocative questions. Help the players create the details of their crew and characters by **asking them for details**. When someone presents a concept or an aspect of their character, help them make it more granular and real by asking questions about it. For example, when a player describes their character as a slob living in a crummy downtown apartment, you can ask questions like:

- Do you have any roommates?
- Who collects the rent? Who pays it?
- What kind of a street do you live on?
- What is the worst thing about your apartment?
- What is crawling in the walls?

If the group decides the characters are all members of an ancient order, you can ask:

- What is the purpose of your order?
- How much do you know about the order's history?
- Who is your mentor or superior within the order?
- Where do you meet with your mentor?
- Are you an independent cell within the order or are you spread out across the organization?

While anyone can ask these questions as part of the collaborative process, the players are usually busy with creating the details of their characters. Stay attentive to anything that catches your interest, any detail that might seem "missing". Work off your natural curiosity about the characters and the crew. When a player asks you a question about the setting, make a suggestion or turn it back to them:

Player: Is the City located by the ocean?

MC: I don't know — is it?

Player: Yeah, I think it would be best, because my character is based on the Siren Mythos. I need some space to swim in, and boats to sink.

MC: Great. Then oceanside it is.

Shooting questions across the table gives the players great opportunities for honing and developing their ideas. Note, however, that the conversation should stay interesting, so avoid going into *too much* detail. A rough outline with a couple of interesting facts or anecdotes is enough to start the game with. Many things will remain unclear, but that's okay – you can discover them during the game, as explained under Play to Find Out (page 338).

5) Fish for interesting story hooks. The Exposition Session contains a plethora of interesting details that can turn into cases and even entire story arcs. During the session, think like a showrunner who's in charge of planning the plot of the season ahead and write down interesting questions and ideas you may have about each character and the story as a whole. For example:

- When a player shares their Mystery, "How can I return to Neverland?" you can jot down in your notes: "What or where (or who) is Neverland in its modern form? Who knows a way back? Who else wants to get there?"
- When a player shares their Identity, "I'll never sell my store to the syndicate." you might write "What are the syndicate willing to do to get the store? What is the real reason they want it?"
- When the players decide to play a private investigation firm and mention that they have an office, you could make a note of possible story hooks such as "Office space. The building has a middle-aged Sleeper caretaker on the verge of awakening. Every time they do something unusual in the building they bring him closer to becoming a Rift. Is he going to be their arch-nemesis? What is his Mythos?"

These **story seeds** will later serve you in writing or adapting the cases and story arcs for the series.

6) Take notes, take a ton of notes. As the 'showrunner' of the game, you should have all the details about the lead characters, any non-player characters involved, locations central to the series, etc. Write down important ideas, names, and facts. Throughout the Exposition Session, note down ideas about the future of the series, such as concepts for villains, possible plot developments, etc. Read more about how to organize your notes into categories (burning questions, story elements, plot ideas, and style guides) using the Series Resources Sheet under Designing a Series (page 387).

At the end of the session, make a copy of each player character's theme and the crew theme for yourself. Fill out the MC Tracking Sheet at the end of the book, which will help you keep a handle on the game elements that you can use, such as weakness tags, Mysteries, and Identities.


THE
SERIES
CONCEPT

There are countless stories you can tell in *City of Mist*. Maybe you are all members of the police force, working day and night to solve the City's strange cases and protect at least some of the residents from things that go bump in the night. Maybe you are mercenaries, selling your extraordinary abilities and expertise to the highest bidder, until a job goes wrong and shit starts hitting the fan. Or perhaps you are all victims of the same villainous Rift, brought together in an attempt to capture your mutual enemy and possibly enact revenge upon him or her.

***City of Mist* assumes that your characters already know each other** and that they work together (for any number of reasons). At the beginning of the Exposition Session, when you set out to create your story, the first question the MC presents to the group is:

? WHO ARE YOU, AS A CREW?

The answer defines the focus of your series. If you decide to be a group of outcasts and rejects living in the forsaken and derelict parts of town and surviving against oddities and monstrosities at the edge of the Mist, then this is what your series will be about, for the most part. You won't be *regularly* hired by high-flying officials to silence their political opposition, not because it's impossible (this could actually be the subject of an interesting case or story arc) but because this is not the focus of your game. On the other hand, if you are a team of hitmen, assassinating political targets may be your bread-and-butter activity.

Brainstorm some ideas and discuss them. Ask each other questions about each idea to develop it. You can choose one of the following as your story concept and elaborate on it.

CASUAL DETECTIVES

Investigating doesn't have to be a full-time job. I mean, you have your work, your family, your hobbies. Every now and then a peculiar story just seems to fall into your lap, just as you're about to have your lunch break, so you spend some time looking into it and hopefully help someone out. Sure, sometimes things get messy right when you have to pick up the kids or walk your dog, and the weirdest stuff seems to happen just when your mother-in-law is visiting. But somehow, everything turns up okay. It's all fun and games, right? Until somebody loses a dead body…

Series focus: everyday life

Characters: prosaic or mundane jobs, stay-at-home parents, kids

Possible cases: investigating neighborhood drama and foiling the small-time schemes of local Rifts while juggling the characters' everyday life

COMPANY MEN

A fishy insurance claim in the suburbs. A medical case that just doesn't make sense. A tax audit where the numbers don't add up. It's your department's job to investigate these cases for your company and bring the (right) truth to light. You're the best at what you do, probably because you can see things other people can't. It's no wonder then that the strange cases just seem to pile up on your desk. You grab your blazer or handbag, keys to the company car, and head over to check out the scene. Nobody has to know if you're asking a few extra questions, personal questions. You help the company, and the company is only looking for results. That is, until they tell you to drop a case that you have a special interest in.

Series focus: an all-powerful organization

Characters: white-collar professionals, resourceful secretaries, undercover agents, terminated employees, failed experiments and rejects

Possible cases: obtaining evidence without the company's knowledge, going back to cold cases to find a lead, identifying and recruiting allies within or without the organization, exposing deep-rooted mythical involvement in the company



CONSPIRACY BUSTERS

It's an ugly lifestyle, but if you can stomach living in the back of a van, sipping cold coffee and chewing on dry donuts, you're more than likely to catch sight of some strange things happening in the City, things the media will never report. There seems to be a connection between the world behind the Mist and high-ranking government officials, filthy rich tycoons, and power-hungry oligarchs. You're just sitting there with your camera, under the bridge, on the docks, at the parking garage at night, waiting to snap that shot which will prove it all. Maybe you're crazy, but your heart tells you that the truth is out there. Watch out for yourself and don't be naive; the people you're after certainly aren't. They will do whatever it takes to cover up their involvement. If you try to blow the lid, you'd better be prepared for some serious heat.

Series focus: government-level conspiracies

Characters: journalists, tech experts, alien believers, inadvertently involved down-to-earth City residents

Possible cases: stakeouts gone wrong, finding new ways to spy on targets, confronting Rifts and other goons sent to get rid of you, breaking into a top-secret facility, finding someone who will run the story (and keeping them alive)

DABBLERS IN THE MIST

Strange cases are not confined to modern times. Living legends have always walked the streets of this City and have left a plethora of evidence for you to find. If you search the City's museums, old buildings, ruins, and forgotten tunnel systems you will come up with ancient artifacts, crumbling manuscripts, and cryptic riddles that will lead your crew to the answers you seek. Perhaps your crew includes a two-bit mystic looking for the real deal or a religious zealot seeking redemption. Maybe you have onboard an eager academic, a greedy smuggler, or simply someone curious about the story behind their Mythos. But beware: there are things buried in the Mist that are better left untouched. Beneath the city streets, dark cults and lunatic priests may be calling upon forces far beyond your grasp. You dabble at your own peril.

Series focus: the occult

Characters: mystics and mediums, people of the cloth, new-age hippies, archaeologists

Possible cases: following a trail of riddles and prophecies in ancient manuscripts and artifacts, investigating supernatural occurrences, dealing with rich and ill-intending collectors or mystics, delving into the ancient places in search for answers, facing the spiritual forces that threaten to take over the City

THE EVENT

After it happened, you were never the same again. Sleepless nights, working overtime, and indulging in all kinds of distractions didn't work for any of you. Flashbacks still haunt you of that day, blurry memories. You couldn't leave it behind. You



wanted to know, to understand, to find a solution or a way out, so you decided to get to the bottom of it. Soon enough you discovered that you're not the only one. There are others like you, others who have been there too, and they too are looking for answers. Together, you have a better chance at finding out what the hell happened there and put an end to this. Permanently.

Series focus: a traumatic or life-altering event shared by everyone on the crew

Characters: a mixed group of people from all walks of life

Possible cases: locating other people who were involved, overcoming Rifts who set out to hide the evidence or rogue Rifts related to the event, discovering the Rift or mythical operation behind the event and fighting to bring them down

"MASKED VIGILANTE" INVESTIGATIONS

There's too much crime in this city and your goddamn conscience won't let you just turn your head the other way. Someone has to make things right, but the police are bogged down with bureaucracy and corruption, helpless in the face of organized crime and street gangs. Somewhere in the pit of your stomach, you all know that crime is thriving because its getting help, help that ordinary law enforcement can neither perceive nor tackle down. So it's up to you to hit the streets and do the dirty job. Whether you are beat cops, police detectives, lawless vigilantes, private eyes, concerned citizens or anything in between, you've all gathered for one reason: to fight crime and protect the residents of your City. But what happens when you have to break the law to do so?

Series focus: crime

Characters: hard-boiled detectives and private eyes, vigilantes, related police or office staff

Possible cases: tracking and busting delinquent Rifts, fighting police corruption, working through the ranks to uncover a large-scale Mythos-powered crime organization

MODERN GODS

You're not mortals anymore; you haven't been for a while now. Inside you, the ancient gods of a forgotten pantheon have awakened and grown. All or most of you have embraced your Mythos as your true identity, and perhaps you even mock those among you who have allowed themselves to get mixed up in mortal life enough to forget their divinity. But secretly you each know it is not so simple to let go of your old false selves. Mortal life has its allure and it is calling each and every one of you to relinquish your power for the wonder of living in the moment. And as if that isn't enough, there may be other pantheons operating in your turf, waiting for your power to fail. How will you prevail?

Series focus: gods, their divinity, and their domains

Characters: gods of war, beauty, wisdom, sea, sky, fertility, underworld, storm, fire, etc.

Possible cases: running a personal life while taking action to fortify or expand your domain(s): cutting a deal with another god, directly attacking other gods or their personal lives, hiring Rifts to do your dirty work, plotting to affect hosts of Sleepers, joining forces to survive a danger which threatens all gods

THE ORDER

For centuries, your order has been tasked with a secret mission. It was founded long ago, by those who have identified the workings of the forces beyond the Mist. Are you protecting the unaware Sleepers from shadowy marauding Rifts? Do you hunt monsters, undead, demons, and their likes? Or will you discover you've been used as an instrument to achieve a much darker objective? All you know is that your life belongs to the order. Perhaps you were recruited after your awakening, or maybe you were a member even before. Is the order somehow responsible for your awakening? You wouldn't put it beyond them; maybe you'd even understand. For those sworn to the order, anything is justified in the name of the cause.

Series focus: the battle between light and dark

Characters: monster hunters, bounty hunters, veterans, history buffs, weapon experts, martial artists

Possible cases: carrying out missions for the order, hunting down an enemy of the order, dealing with a traitor within the order, digging into the past of the organization, becoming renegades and survive attacks by the order, facing the ultimate mythical enemy of the order

THE PROS

There's always a need for professionals who can get a job done. A team of Rifts can accomplish great things and there are plenty of wealthy movers-and-shakers willing to pay you to do their dirty work. Are you a group of ex-military warfare experts? Or an assortment of con artists capable of pulling off the most elaborate heists? Perhaps cat burglars and safe crackers? Whatever it is you do, someone will pay for it: you can get rich or die trying. And there's more: when you get involved in this line of work, you invariably get to know people who know people and who can lead you to what you're looking for. But always remember – one wrong turn and your powerful employer will be coming after you.

Series focus: operations and heists

Characters: (ex- or para-) military, smooth operators, expert thieves and burglars, masterminds, demolition experts

Possible cases: procuring special gear needed for a job, gathering intel on a target, overcoming Rift-powered opposition or competition while trying to achieve mission objective (assassination, abduction, burglary, fraud, extraction, etc.), helping a team-member on a personal mission, secretly trying to uncover the identity of your employer

THE GANG

You're more than just investigation partners: you're friends. Whether you are high-school friends, university chums, elderly home roommates, or just hanging out together, you've known each other for a while and possibly even helped each other go through your awakenings. It seems whenever you hang out together, strange things start happening around you, things that are connected to your own personal questions. Can you help those around you restore the peace while solving the mysteries of your own Mythoi? You may not have fancy headquarters, a great deal of resources, or the slightest clue what you are doing, but hey - you have each other!

Series focus: the relationships within the crew

Characters: students, teachers, or other City residents who are friends, classmates, roommates, or family members

Possible cases: investigating bizarre incidents within your social circle (e.g., school, apartment block) that at first seem insignificant, tackling others within your social circle who use their Mythos powers immorally or against you, discovering that one or all of you are of special interest to some big players in the City – and dealing with it



YOUR CITY

Another aspect of the story to consider is the City itself. Different stories may be set in different versions of the City of Mist. While one may be set in modern times, with access to all the latest technological advancements (or even more sophisticated technology), another may be set in a classic early 20th century film-noir setting, with phones connected by operators and art-deco buildings. One may be based on an existing city while another is a strange hodge-podge of cities from around the globe.

The second question the MC presents to the group is:

? WHAT IS OUR CITY OF MIST LIKE?

This question can be answered at the most minimal level in order to complete the series concept, or it could even be left for the MC to decide. Answering it lets everyone at table know what kind of place the story is set in and therefore what kind of characters to create, as well as what details could fit the story better. For example, it would be impossible (or at least irrelevant) to be a computer expert in a 1930s setting, while a mobster in modern times is unlikely to wield a tommy gun.

Use the following options to help better define the style, time, and place for your story.

TRUE NOIR

Your story is film noir in its purest form. Gents in raincoats and fedoras and dames in glittery evening gowns foxtrot and exchange gunfire in a strictly black-and-white City. Art deco is all the rage in interior design. The police are corrupt and the City is forever in the clutches of organized crime. The technology in a true noir setting usually does not exceed that of the 1930s, so you don't see any computers or mobile phones.

NEON NOIR

Your story is a variation on film noir, still with a strong retro flavor, harkening back to the 80s. With bleached mullets and denim jackets or colorful suits with shoulder-pads, your crew is almost too pretty to be anti-heroic. Slick red cars with gull-wing doors leave a cool phosphorous trail as they go by, and everything is lit up by the glow of neon. Confidential information is stored on tape cassettes and floppy disks, and phones have keypads.

THE DREARY PRESENT

Your story is a noir-inspired detective story set nowadays. All the challenges of the world as you know it are included: an overcrowded city, growing social alienation to the point of mass psychosis, unchecked consumerism. The ghost dimension of the Internet is superimposed on all aspects of life (although it may not be a focus of your series). People live in an almost impenetrable bubble of distraction, giving the Mist a whole new interpretation.

GENERIC COMIC-BOOK METROPOLIS

Your story is set in a city that looks and acts like most cities in comic books. Usually modelled after a major American city (and specifically New York), your City copies the style and locations typical to its inspiration but nonetheless does not have the specific landmarks of any city in particular. Instead it has fictional, often generic establishments: the Royal Plaza Hotel, Municipal Institution for the Criminally Insane, or 'The City Herald' newspaper.

EXISTING CITY

Your story is set in a city that is a copy of an existing city, whether as it is today or as it was in the past. This relates to all or almost all features of the real-world city such as landmarks, municipal services, language and cultural trends. Of course, being a City of Mist it is hard to tell if the City in your story is actually the real City or a figment of the Mist. Furthermore, modern cities being so globally connected, you should keep in mind that it's virtually impossible to leave the City, at least for the lead characters.

TAPESTRY OF REALITIES

Your story is set in a city than isn't really a single well-defined place but a patchwork of cities from different places and different times, all bent and moulded together into a amalgamated metropolis that epitomises cities: the City of Cities. Sleepers of course have no reason to suspect this make-up and even Rifts may be completely accepting of this meta-city assuming they have always lived here. Perhaps the reason for this is that the Mist connects all cities, like the all-pervasive Ether. This option allows you to use elements from different cities in your story without worrying about consistency.

REALISTIC MIST

In your story, the Mist is not a mystical force but a social phenomenon. There is no metaphysical juju preventing people from seeing the truth: they just don't want to see it. Clearly, Sleepers know that there are living legends in the City, but they refuse to acknowledge it or discuss it, sometimes even at the price of their lives. Have they been brainwashed or are they just afraid? Is it a form of McCarthyism enacted by the authorities, or a widespread psychological response to the unknown? Either way, this conspiracy of silence has the same manifestation as the mystical Mist, except it's just in people's heads.

ADDING DETAILS TO THE CITY

During the Exposition Session, going into further details in describing the City is entirely optional and should focus on details that arise from the crew and character creation. For example, when creating a fugitive Rift, one player might raise the question whether the police have a special unit for dealing with 'strange cases'. This should be decided with the rest of the group or the group can agree to leave this to the MC.

It's generally recommended to leave all other details about the City to be added during the game, or

for the MC to think up during prep. You can skim the list of city aspects given in the previous chapter (page 39) to see if there are any other important questions about the City that should be answered at this point.

SERIES CONCEPT EXAMPLE: LAKESIDE DRIVE

Jerry, Megan, Lamar, and Alice the MC have met up for their Exposition Session. After discussing a few options, they chose to go with a crew that is centered around a major event (The Event).

In their series, a catastrophe has destroyed a massive area in the neighborhood their characters lived in. But something strange happened thereafter; the Mist started covering up the event very quickly and very aggressively. The expansive crater left by the event filled up with water and became a small lake, or pond, around which the City has built a park. The neighborhood was aptly renamed after the new road around it, Lakeside Drive. The thing is, no-one remembers any of this. The entire City thinks the pond has always been at the heart of Lakeside Drive.

The debris and remains of buildings at the bottom of the pond now seem like old archaeological ruins to Sleepers, who believe they have been there for centuries. Most alarmingly, people who have lost their loved ones believe completely different things about the circumstances of their disappearance: one person died in war overseas, another upped and left his wife and kids, a third fell in with the wrong crowd.

The lead characters, being Rifts, remember the incident and are dumbfounded at the blatant forgetfulness and blindness that struck their neighborhood. They are adamant to get to the bottom of this, even if they are just regular Janes and Joes who are facing something much greater than they understand. Having known each other previously and upon discovering that they all remember the catastrophe, they decide to investigate together.

To top it all off, the pond, situated at the heart of what's left of their neighborhood, has become a dark and eerie place. Its deep green water turned turbid and there are rumors of strange things skulking on its shores. Few ever go there after dark; few but our protagonists, of course.

The group would like a slight touch of retro on this series, so they decide to go for a neon-noir story inspired by the 80s and set in a generic comic-book metropolitan.





CHARACTER CREATION

In *City of Mist,* you will take the role of one of the lead characters, a Rift in the Mist. On the one hand, your character is a person living in the City: a bank teller, a kid who dropped out of high-school, an ex-military mercenary. Your character may be a completely unexciting person or she may be living a very dangerous or complicated life. Either way, she was an ordinary person – that is, until her awakening. At some point, your character became aware of a Mythos inside her, a living legend that grants her miraculous powers. Who did she become when her ordinary and legendary selves came together?

This section contains everything you need to create rich and interesting *City of Mist* characters from start to finish. Depending on how much time you'd like to invest, you can opt for the full character creation process or quickly draft a character without getting into all the nitty-gritty details. You can also pick up a pre-generated character from the *City of Mist Starter Set*.

WORDS OVER NUMBERS

In *City of Mist*, characters, objects, places, and qualities are described using only words. Unlike many other role-playing games, there are no numerical values describing how fast, strong, or charming your characters is. Instead, you simply note in words the qualities and things you wish to have. For example, you note that your character is strong, or better yet, the ways in which she is strong: maybe she's good at lifting but not at punching or hurling, or vice versa. (The only exception to this is the number used to describe the severity of a Status, as explained in Chapter 3: Working the Case).

CREATING A RIFT

Every *City of Mist* character is made out of **four major aspects,** called **themes**, that describe either her legendary powers or her ordinary life. Themes that describe a character's legendary powers are called **Mythos** themes; themes that describe her ordinary life are called **Logos** themes.

Each theme includes:

- **Power tags**, short descriptive items that describe specific **useful** things in your character. Power tags are used to boost your actions. For example, the power tags *old revolver* or *accurate shot* can boost your action when you try to shoot a pistol.
- **Weakness tags**, short descriptive items that describe specific **limiting** things in your charcter. Weakness tags limit your actions but are used to improve a theme, granting Attention points. For example, the weakness tags *afraid of guns* or *weapon jam* can impede your action when you try to shoot a pistol.
- A **Mystery** or an **Identity**, a question or a statement that motivate your character to act. Mysteries are questions your character wants to answer, such as *Who is behind the downfall of my family's empire?* Identities are statements that define your character, such as *I will not let the truth escape me again*!

Note that all of the components of your characters are descriptions; however, they are descriptions of different kinds and they are used for different purposes in the game. In some of the game rules, there's significance to the number of components you have of a certain type. For example, the Core Moves ask you to count the number of power tags and weakness tags you have that fit your action. Other moves ask you to count the number of Mythos or Logos themes your character has.

To create your character, follow these steps:

- Step 1: Think of a concept for your character.
- Step 2: Choose four themes.
- Step 3: Use the themebooks to choose theme components.

The following sections provide guidelines on each step of character creation.

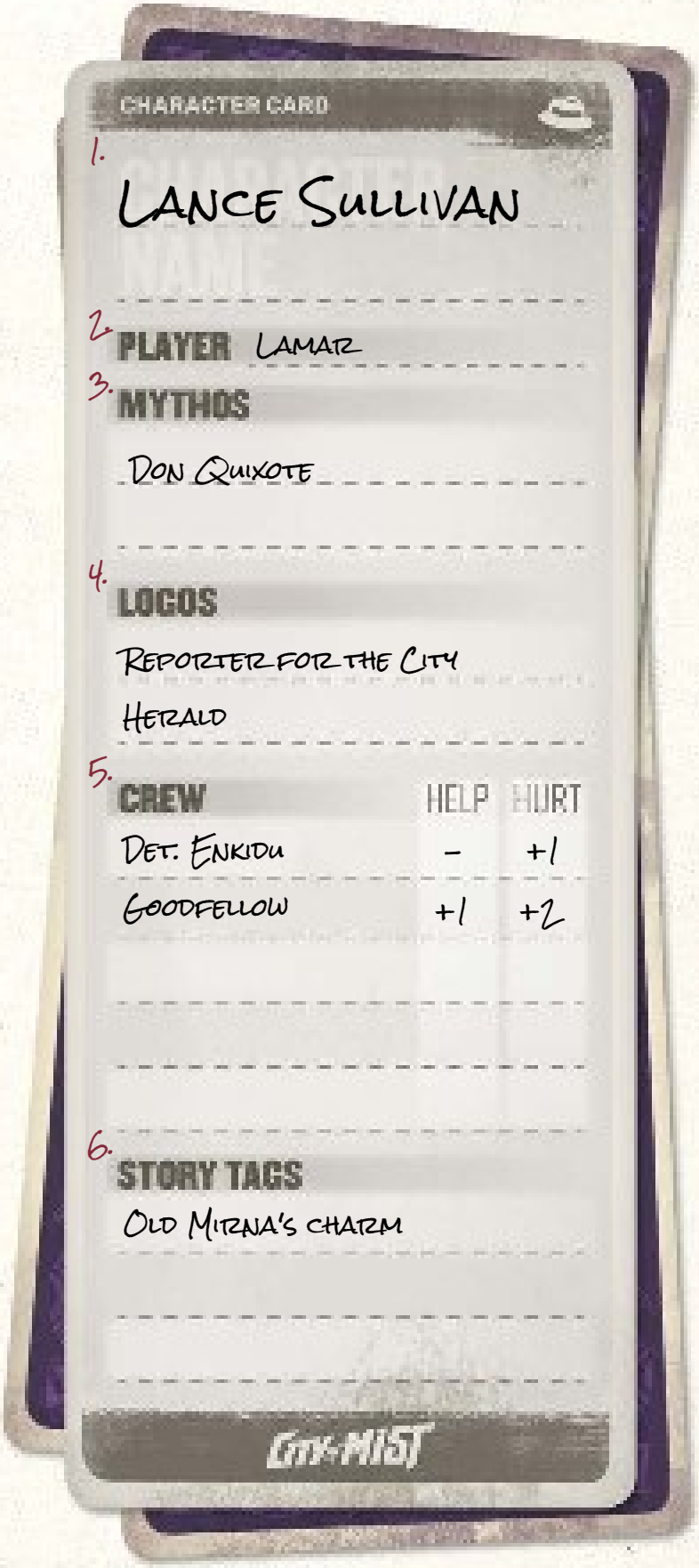
QUICK CHARACTER CREATION

Player characters in *City of Mist* are rather simple: they are made of a total of 16 or 18 tags and 4 questions or statements. Once you are familiar with the character creation process described below (such as the theme types and limitations on tag selection), you can quickly draft new characters in a few moments. A starting character in *City of Mist* has four themes of different types, each with 3 power tags, 1 weakness tag, and a Mystery or an Identity (depending on the theme type). You can choose to have an additional power tag in one of your themes, but you must also then take an additional weakness tag in the same theme. Write down your themes' title, tags, Mysteries, and Identities on your theme cards, and you are ready to go.

CHARACTER AND THEME CARDS

To keep track of your character, use the *City of Mist Character and Theme Cards* or the Character Sheet, which is also divided into cards (you can find a copy of the character sheet at **cityofmist.co/download** or make copies of the sheet at the back of this book). This book assumes that you are using cards to track your character's details.

Every character has a single character card:



CHARACTER CARD FRONT

1. **Character name**
   Your character's name, alias, or codename
2. **Player name**
   Your name
3. **Mythos**
   The name or description of the legend within your character
4. **Logos**
   A description of your character's mundane persona
5. **Crew**
   A list of your crew members, and the Hurt and Help points you have for each
6. **Story Tags**
   A space for other permanent tags you might acquire during the game



CHARACTER CARD BACK

7. **Build-Up**
   A track of your overall character growth. When it's full, you reset it and choose a Moment of Evolution.
8. **Moments of Evolution**
   The list of Moments of Evolution to choose from
9. **Nemeses**
   A list of the Nemeses you gained by losing themes

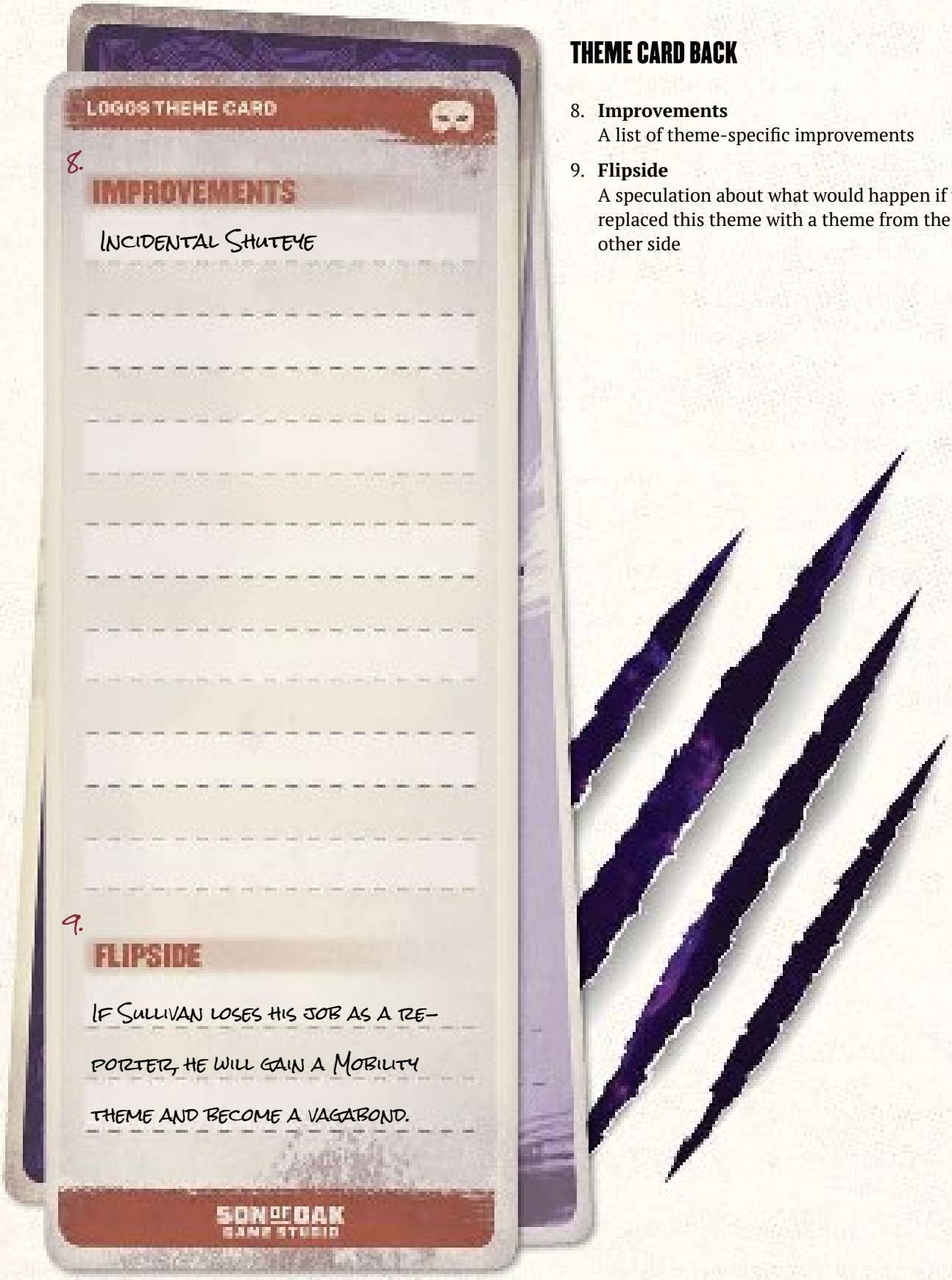


Every character has four theme cards:

THEME CARD FRONT

1. **Type**
   A theme's type, which defines its nature, chosen out of the 14 theme types
2. **Title**
   A descriptive name for the theme
3. **Attention**
   A track for the theme's growth. When it hits three, you reset it and choose an improvement.
4. **Fade or Crack**
   A track for the theme's deterioration. When it hits three, you replace the theme.
5. **Mystery or Identity**
   A question or a statement that drives your character
6. **Power tags**
   Seven slots for power tags, the letters of the questions that were used to create them, and their 'burn' status
7. **Weakness tags**
   Three slots for weakness tags and the letters of the questions that were used to create them (also, a checkbox to mark if you invoked them this session, see optional rule on page 220)





THEME CARD BACK

8. **Improvements**
   A list of theme-specific improvements
9. **Flipside**
   A speculation about what would happen if you replaced this theme with a theme from the other side

STEP 1: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Your *City of Mist* character is built around an inner conflict between the legendary and the ordinary, her **Mythos** and her **Logos**. At the same time, your character can combine her Mythos and Logos aspects to achieve her goals. To create a solid *City of Mist* character concept, answer the following questions for your character:

? WHICH LEGEND HAS TAKEN ROOT IN ME?

The answer to this question is your **Mythos** concept.

? WHO AM I IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE CITY?

The answer to this question is your **Logos** concept.

Once you established your Mythos and Logos concepts, write them in brief on your character card.

MYTHOS

Your character's Mythos is the legend growing inside her. It is most often an element of an existing real world story, such as:

- **a human character** whether they possess supernatural powers or not
- **a supernatural being**, such as a god or a fairy
- **a legendary creature or monster**
- **an anthropomorphic animal** (like the puss in *Puss in Boots*)
- **a magical item** or an object of great significance
- **a magical location**
- etc.

The story from which you draw your Mythos can be:

- **a mythology,** such as the Egyptian, Celtic, Aztec, or any other
- **legend or folklore**, such as Arthurian legend or West African Ashanti folklore
- **a fairy tale**, such as the Grimm brother's fairy tales or *The Little Mermaid*
- **a folk story**, such as the tales of the lumberjack Paul Bunyan
- **a ghost story**, such as Bloody Mary
- **a famous literary work**, such as *Peter Pan*, *Frankenstein*, or *The Wind in the Willows*
- **an urban legend**, like the Sewer Gators or the Hook
- **a religious tale**, such as the stories about saints in Christianity, Sufi masters in Islam, or bodhisattvas in Buddhism
- **a real world occurrence** that has received legend status, such as Jack the Ripper

Your character's supernatural powers, abilities, and items are derived from her Mythos. If in the legend your Mythos was resistant to fire or could climb a wall like a spider, your character may have received these powers through her Mythos. However, your Mythos does not necessarily have to have obvious supernatural powers. Even subtle qualities such as remarkable beauty and grace or the ability to understand the workings of any device can become legendary attributes that are amplified in your modern-day character.

Note that your character is not identical to her Mythos. Instead, you decide how to interpret the Mythos and how it is expressed in your character. Some features of the Mythos may not be manifested in you. For example, you could have the Mythos of Robin Hood but not be an excellent bowman. Other features may be only visible to characters who are able to see your Mythos. For example, if your Mythos is a troll, Sleepers may see you as burly and a little on the crooked side, while Rifts who know you and have seen your powers at work could start noticing your stony skin and moss-strewn hair, and perhaps see you as a monstrous troll when you use your Mythos powers at maximum power.

You can choose how certain aspects of your Mythos manifest in you and even give them a spin. For example, if your character has the Mythos of Snow White, who ate a poisoned apple, you could decide that her Mythos makes her vulnerable to poison or, just as well, that having been poisoned, she is now more resistant to poison, or neither of those.

Most importantly, the fate of your Mythos in legend will not necessarily be your character's fate. Jack from Jack And The Beanstalk eventually escaped his pursuers, but this may not be true about his modern-day version. While the destiny of a Mythos in the mythical account may be sealed, a Rift is a new and independent individual who may or may not come to the same end.

THE NATURE OF A MYTHOS

Your Mythos is largely unknown or unfathomable to your character – it is a part of herself that she can never fully understand, something growing inside her that is at once different from her but also the same. A Mythos is often shrouded in darkness, mystery, or confusion, not necessarily because it is evil (although it may be), but because it is miraculous and unpredictable. It can manifest and evolve in any number of ways, surprising even you, the Rift who is channeling it. Furthermore, a Mythos is forever veiled by the Mist, even within the psyche of your character. It is, in a way, a thundering open question, the mystery that lies at the heart of your character's existence. It is calling your character to step out of her ordinary self and explore. Inevitably, and whether or not your character consciously knows this, its agenda is to help you open up more and more to its mystery, letting go of your ordinary life for the ultimate existence it offers.

MYTHOS IS...

The unknown: questions, doubts, dark places, subconscious, the void, a search for a higher or deeper truth, intuition, clues, visions, symbolism, loss of touch with daily life, and specifically the **mystery** in your character's existence:

- questions your character has about herself and her place in the world
- things your character senses or feels but are vague and impalpable
- symbolism that fascinates her
- a wish to be more than what she is
- what attracts your character to the edge

LOGOS

Your character's Logos is her everyday persona, her ordinary life. Where Mythos represents the mystery in your character's existence, Logos represents what your character definitely knows about herself, who she really is – or at least who she believes she is. This includes her occupation, relationships, interests, habits, and background.

The ordinary aspects of your character can be just as interesting as her legendary aspects. Your character can be a very mundane person, with a regular nine-to-five job and a normal family and circle of friends, but what does that really mean? Every job requires certain skills and confers certain benefits that can become handy or interesting during the game. No family is like another, and a normal relationship is often fraught with challenges and complicated feelings. So even though your character's Logos represents her ordinary side, it actually tells us the interesting things about her: who she loves, what's special about her as a person, where she fails, and what her secret pain is. Logos makes your character more real by giving her texture and depth.

This does not necessarily mean that your Logos concept should be lukewarm and unexciting. Even in our real 'ordinary' world there is so much diversity, so many different walks of life, it's dazzling. Your character's Logos could be that she is a depressed forklift operator, a dry and arrogant tax auditor, or a happy-go-lucky university student. But it could also be that you are a bookie, a bounty hunter, a backpacker, a martial arts expert, a Hollywood actress, a drag queen, a drug lord, a serial killer, a nature reserve ranger, etc. Logos, therefore, has its color as well.

The real difference between Mythos and Logos lies in two points. First, your Logos is always decidedly unmagical. It can stretch the limits of what is accepted as ordinary (for example, a meditation which somewhat accelerates healing could perhaps still fall under the Logos of a Zen monk), but ultimately it covers only things that can be easily explained by the scientific and technological understanding of lay people in the City. In that regard, any extraordinary genius or hyper-advanced technology that you possess fall under your Mythos.

Second, your Logos is who you believe and know you are. Where your Mythos present you with questions, your Logos offers you answers. It is what you rely on in life, the fundamental understanding of what you should be doing every morning when you open your eyes. Even if your Logos concept is that you are a bitter alcoholic who does nothing but complain about her miserable life, then that much is clear to you, that part of your life is stable and constant and makes you feel sane. It's also what the Mist most utilizes to distract you from your real questions, but in a way you are thankful for that. When things get too deep, intense, or outright deranged with your Mythos, you embrace the safety of your Logos, knowing that whatever happens, at least you have this, at least you know who you are. However, as you'll see in the game, what you believe staunchly to be your stable identity may be more fragile than you know.

LOGOS IS...

The known: answers, convictions, decisions, definitions, values, attachments, habits, clarity, safety, stability, and specifically your character's **identity**:

- what your character knows about herself
- how your character defines herself
- what's important to your character
- what your character appreciates, values, or loves
- what makes your character feel safe in an unpredictable world

Here are two questions that can help you come up with your Logos concept:

? WHY DID MY MYTHOS MANIFEST THROUGH ME?

While no generalization applies to all Mythoi, they often seem to choose Rifts with backgrounds that resonate with their legend. Therefore, some of the elements in your Logos concept could echo qualities of your Mythos. For example, if your Mythos is a monarch or a member of the nobility, like the Queen of Sheba, it may have chosen you as

a Rift because your are a wealthy person, a political leader, or an influential celebrity. However, Mythoi can also manifest through unlikely candidates. The aforementioned queen could just as well come to life in a socially-rejected teenager from the slums. A closer inspection of the Rift's life story may reveal other, unexpected similarities to her Mythoi (such as strong character), but sometimes the relation between Mythos and Logos remains obscure.

? WHAT IS MY SECRET PAIN?

To exist is to experience an endless variety of sensations, but human beings seem to always emphasize one above all others: pain. In the noir genre, characters often carry an emotional burden: perhaps something in their past is haunting them, maybe they see a bleak image of the present, or they could be afraid of the future. Some characters are aware of their pain while others have covered it up with layers of defense mechanisms, but mostly, noir characters don't talk about their pain. They avoid it, succumb to it, drown it in all sorts of manners, but they rarely confront it, and if they do, they do so alone.

Establishing your character's secret pain can give her depth and help you better understand her motives. You can describe her pain as a statement or a mantra that she repeats in her head (perhaps unconsciously), but rarely reveals to others, such as:

- **I have to be perfect or I'll be condemned for my mistakes.**
- **Unless I make myself useful to others, I'm worth nothing.**
- **I only feel I exist when I have success, fame, and the adoration of others.**
- **I am defective, broken beyond repair.**
- **People are overbearing, I must keep my distance.**
- **You can't trust anyone or anything. Trust leads to complacency.**
- **I would rather lose myself in distraction than have to deal with my life.**
- **You either kill or get killed; that is the law of the jungle.**
- **Please don't be upset with me, I'll do anything!**

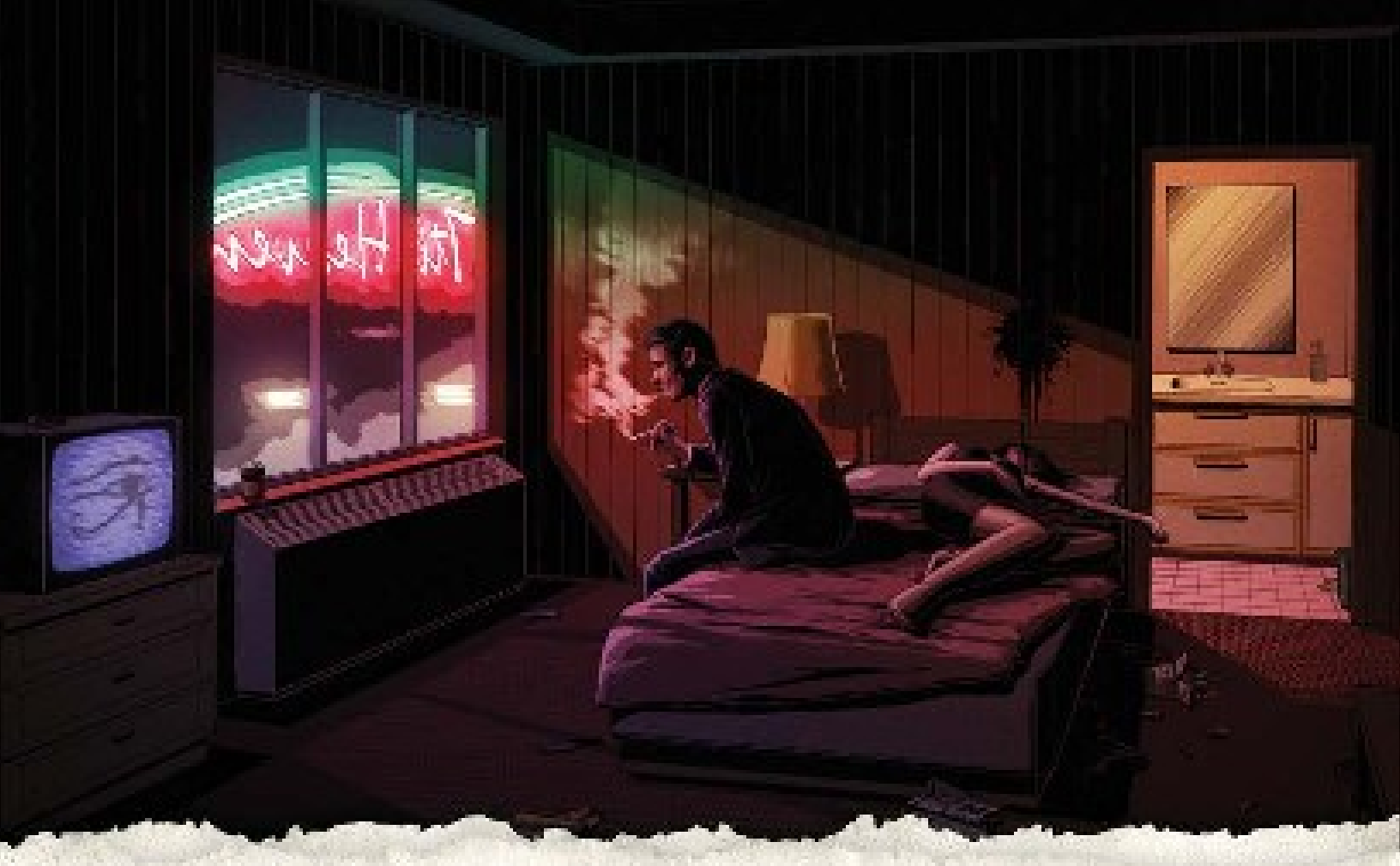
At your option, you can use your secret pain statement as one of your Identities when you create your individual themes in Step 2.

LANCE SULLIVAN, REPORTER FOR THE CITY HERALD (DON QUIXOTE)

Lamar is building a character based on the Mythos of Don Quixote, the delusional Spanish nobleman who decided to become a knight and fought windmills along with his rather saner helper, Sancho Panza. Thinking of his Mythos, Lamar decides that his character will be able to conjure a spectral suit of armor and a lance right out of his imagination.

Moving over to the character's Logos, Lamar decides that his character will be a reporter in his 40s who oscillates between bouts of romanticism and bitter disillusionment (he's not quite manic-depressive, but he's not too far). When he's in the zone, Lance wholeheartedly believes there is more going on in the City than meets the eye. When the investigation hits a dead end, he is prone to moodiness and melancholy. Followed around by his skeptical and reluctant photographer, Alejandro Sánchez (a snoring Sleeper), they often dig into the stories of victims of the pond incident (based on Lamar's group series concept, Lakeside Drive, see page 91), trying to trace down their relatives who vanished unexpectedly. Only unlike his Mythos in the Don Quixote legend, the windmills in Sullivan's mind are often very real, just obscured by the Mist so that Sánchez can't see them.

Lance is trying to prove that what he sees is real, that he is not insane. His entire life and sense of worth is hinged upon his investigation into the pond incident. His secret pain can thus be phrased as: **I'm a poor excuse for a man; chasing windmills gives my life meaning.**



STEP 2: CHOOSING THEMES

A **theme** is a major aspect of your character. It describes a central, important, or dominant part of the character's life that you want her story to revolve around. This is in part determined by what is important to the character, but also by what you would like to bring to the forefront during the game.

Each character is made out of four themes; each theme is associated with either Mythos or Logos. A character begins the game with at least one Mythos theme and at least one Logos theme. The balance of Mythos and Logos themes in a Rift determines how awake she is:

- a Rift with one Mythos theme and three Logos themes is **Touched**. For the Touched, ordinary life plays a bigger role than their Mythos, which they only tap into when absolutely necessary. Touched always run the risk of losing contact with their Mythos and becoming **Sleepers** again.
- a Rift with two Mythos themes and two Logos themes is a **Borderliner**. Borderliners are walking the line between becoming a glorious exemplar of their legend and maintaining their ordinary identity.
- a Rift with three Mythos themes and one Logos theme is a **Legendary**. Legendaries have almost entirely opened up to the Mythos in them, becoming more powerful and to some extent taking less interest in mundane life. Nevertheless they are still dependent on one last thing that makes them human. Losing it would end their humanity and make them a willing vessel of their Mythos: an **Avatar**.

Choose four themes for your character from the list of theme types below. Choose at least one Mythos theme and at least one Logos theme. To make your character richer and more interesting, it is recommended not to repeat theme types. Different player characters can choose the same theme type.

Take a theme card for each one of your themes. Write down the theme type in the respective space.

AIRTIME

In movie and TV jargon, "airtime" is the total time someone or something is seen on screen and therefore an indication of how much attention it receives. For example, a character who only shows up once throughout the series is said to receive little airtime. Similarly, in *City of Mist*, **airtime** refers to the amount of attention a certain character, aspect, or detail receives in the game: how often it comes up in your story and what significance it holds.

PLAYING THE AWAKENING

A game of *City of Mist* usually revolves around characters who are already Rifts, and have been Rifts for at least a short while; at the very least the lead characters are Touched and have managed to muster some control over one aspect of their Mythos powers. As an alternative, you can create characters that are in the early stages of a gradual awakening, characters who are just now starting to discover their powers. Playing an awakening character in a crew of fully-operational Rifts can give your character a different angle and role among the lead characters. Playing an entire crew of newly-awakened Rifts could be the foundation for a series concept.

To create an **awakening character**, choose three Logos themes and one Mythos theme, just as you would when creating a Touched character. However, your Mythos theme starts as a **nascent theme**, a theme with just one power tag instead of three. This tag represents the only manifestation of Mythos powers that the character has experienced so far, or the first she will experience during the game.

Remember that awakening characters don't know much of what is specified about the Mist in Chapter 1: The Lowdown. If you are playing an awakening character, it's very likely that your character is still a total noob when it comes to the life of a Rift. Your character may also have no clue about the nature of her Mythos as it is just starting to emerge. You can choose to leave your Mythos completely unknown and choose your nascent Mythos theme and power tag only when it reveals itself for the first time in the story.

As an aside, note that not all Rifts awaken gradually. While playing awakening characters can be interesting, the fact that some Rifts awaken slowly does not preclude the possibility of other Rifts gaining immense Mythos powers immediately upon their awakening. You can play a character that has just been awakened and still use the rules for Touched, Borderliners, and Legendaries.

MYTHOS THEME TYPES

Mythos theme types represent aspects of your Mythos powers and the different ways you can use them to affect the world. Adaptation and Relic are set aside because they describe slightly more complicated power sets.

The **BASTION** theme type (page 120) represents powers that allow you to survive harsh conditions and protect yourself and others from harm, such as a body made of stone, invulnerability, or magical protection.

The **DIVINATION** theme type (page 124) represents powers that allow you to know or learn things beyond normal perception, such as special senses, the power to read minds, or the power to communicate with the dead.

The **EXPRESSION** theme type (page 128) represents powers that you can project or unleash to affect or influence the world, such as a warrior's rage, blasts of ice, a healing touch, or mind control.

The **MOBILITY** theme type (page 132) represents powers that allow you to move easily, fast, and unobstructed, such as the power to fly, to turn your body into water, or to miraculously escape confinement.

The **SUBVERSION** theme type (page 136) represents powers that allow you to act discreetly and hide your intentions and deeds such as trickery and illusions, invisibility, and the power to beguile others.

The **ADAPTATION** theme type (page 140) represents powers that can change according to the situation or a powers with many different uses such as sorcery, shapeshifting, or gadgeteering.

The **RELIC** theme type (page 144) represents an object in your possession that channels the powers of your Mythos such as a magic ring, a flying broom, or a diabolic mask.

CHOOSING MYTHOS THEMES TYPES FOR YOUR POWERS

Your Mythos powers should stem from your Mythos concept, the legend you chose for you character. For each set of powers or abilities that come from your Mythos, ask yourself this:

? WHAT IS THE MAIN USE OF THIS POWER SET ?

If it is to protect, choose Bastion; to sense or access information, choose Divination; to attack, influence, or shape the world, choose Expression; to move, choose Mobility; and to act deceptively or secretly, choose Subversion. For powers that change based on the situation, choose Adaptation. Choose Relic if the focus of the theme is the fact the powers come from an object.

If your power set is mixed, choose the most important power in the set and answer the question based on that. Don't worry about the theme type limiting your power set; each themebook offers options that touch on other types of themes. For example, you can use your Divination powers defensively or use your Mobility powers to ram opponents.

LOGOS THEME TYPES

Logos theme types represent aspects of your ordinary life:

The **DEFINING EVENT** theme type (page 148) represents a pivotal moment or period in your life that has changed you irrevocably, such as a near-fatal accident, an earth-shaking revelation, or time spent at an orphanage.

The **DEFINING RELATIONSHIP** theme type (page 152) represents a relationship with a person, a group, or an organization that is at the center of your life, such as your mother, your mentor, your gang, or the cult you belong to.

The **MISSION** theme type (page 156) represents a goal you have set for yourself and that you strive to achieve, such as finding a cure to a disease, avenging your brother, or bringing a killer to justice.

The **PERSONALITY** theme type (page 160) represents your character, temperament, or personal style, such as being charming, hard-boiled, flamboyant, or paranoid.

The **POSSESSIONS** theme type (page 164) represents anything important you have in your possession, such as your fortune and assets, your old car, or an arsenal of firearms.

The **ROUTINE** theme type (page 168) represents your main everyday activities such as a job, caretaking duties, going to school, doing research, or just bumming around.

The **TRAINING** theme type (page 172) represents the expertise you have acquired in a given field, such as medical training, martial arts, or cooking.

CHOOSING BETWEEN LOGOS THEMES TYPES

Your character's personal story most likely contains the elements of all the Logos theme types. She almost certainly has a personality that's worth mentioning, a daily routine, several key relationships, possessions, and a backstory including training and a defining moment or two. Maybe she even has a mission. How then to choose which parts of your character should become themes?

The question that should guide you in choosing Logos themes is:

? WHAT SHOULD GET MORE FOCUS DURING THE GAME?

For example, if your are deliberating between a theme about your character's wife (Defining Relationship) and a theme about your efforts to find a cure to her mental illness (Mission), think which would you prefer to play more often: scenes in which your character's wife participates or scenes where you are seen searching for a cure.

Similarly, if you work as a medical doctor and you can't choose between your medical training (Training) and your actual work at the City Central Hospital (Routine), try to establish which would you prefer to play more often: scenes in and out of the hospital where you mostly show your medical expertise or scenes about the daily events in the hospital.

Choosing one over the other doesn't change your character's story; he is still married and working on a cure; she is still a trained MD and works at the hospital, even if you didn't take both themes. But making one of these aspects into a theme means it will come into play and be the focus of the game more often.

DEMI-GODS AND STREET CLEANERS: ABSOLUTE POWER LEVEL VS. NARRATIVE POWER LEVEL

Depending on the balance of Mythos and Logos in their themes, the characters in your crew could range anywhere between a simple **Touched** street cleaner who is only beginning to open up to his Mythos powers and an almighty demigod **Legendary** who boasts various mythical powers, with little to hold him down. At a first glance, this may seem like a potential imbalance among the lead characters and their abilities.

That may have been true if the *City of Mist* rules revolved around absolute power measurements. From that perspective, the demigod is far more powerful than the awakening street cleaner and could therefore achieve much more. However, the *City of Mist* rules deal with **narrative power**, the power to influence the story.

Think of stories where heroes incredibly weaker than the challenges they face still manage to overcome them and reach their goal. The heroes often don't have the sheer power of their opponents but they have other qualities or abilities that allow them to prevail over adversity. Those qualities receive the same airtime as the incredible powers they are pitted against. While they seem to be weaker in absolute terms, they in fact have the same power to change the course of the story.

In *City of Mist*, **power tags** are the currency of narrative power because they improve your chances to succeed in making moves that influence the story. Mythos and Logos themes have the same number of power tags (three, to start with) and therefore all the lead characters at the beginning of the game have the same number of power tags and the same narrative power, regardless of whether they are Touched, Borderliners, or Legendaries.

While the descriptions of their power tags may vary, the so-called demigods and street cleaners player characters in *City of Mist* are not all that different: they have the same capacity to steer the course of the game. Some do so with a green poisonous ray they shoot out of their glowing third eye while others use their reliable broom and a heart of gold, but their narrative power is the same.

THE GAME EFFECTS OF YOUR THEMES

The subject of a theme, represented by its title, has no game effect (e.g., it does not affect the rules during play). However, the subject of a theme serves as a framework for the power tags, weakness tags, Mystery or Identity, and other features included in it. Furthermore, the type of the theme affects the character's Mythos and Logos balance, as well as the type of improvements available to her, since different themes types offer different improvement options.

LOSING AND GAINING THEMES

The themes that make up your character can change dramatically during your *City of Mist* series. Whenever you choose to take an action that conflicts with one of your themes, you gradually erode that theme's stability. This erosion is represented by the Fade or Crack tracks on each theme. When the track is full, you replace the theme and everything it in. You permanently discard the theme card for that theme; you then pick a new theme card and fill it out using a themebook.

You always replace a Mythos theme with a new Logos theme and vice versa, so whenever you replace a theme you also change the balance of Mythos and Logos in your character, inevitably driving yourself closer to one of the two poles. If your Logos ever fully overcomes your Mythos, you become a Sleeper again; if your Mythos ever overcomes your Logos, you become an Avatar. The game does not stop there for your character; there are special rules that kick in when you go over the edge in each direction.

Moreover, these rattling changes in your character's life help her grow in a deeper way. The more themes you replace, the closer you bring your character to an explosive Moment of Evolution, gaining a dramatic insight, story development, or improvement.

Read more about replacing themes and character development in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.

LANCE SULLIVAN, REPORTER FOR THE CITY HERALD (DON QUIXOTE)

Lamar is choosing themes for his character. He decides that Sullivan will be a Touched character, because the reporter is more concerned with his ordinary life and investigation than with the supernatural power that has awoken within him. So he needs to pick one Mythos theme and three Logos themes.

Lamar starts with the Logos themes, since he already has a solid idea about them. The main point about Sullivan is that he's a reporter who spends most of his time investigating, so Lamar chooses **Routine.** Then there is his photographer and partner, Ale Sánchez, who plays a major role in his life and often saves him from trouble, so Lamar chooses **Defining Relationship.** For his third and last Logos theme, Lamar ponders between Personality and Possessions. He ends up choosing **Possessions** because he feels it can reflect Sullivan's personality better: things like a worn-out brown leather jacket, a beat-up old Mustang, etc.

Sullivan's Mythos is Don Quixote, the valiant knightly protector of a special damsel in distress (even if that distress she's in is rather imaginary). After some consideration, Lamar decides that since Don Quixote is a protector, **Bastion** would be the best fit.

Lance Sullivan's themes types are therefore:

- **Routine (Logos)**
  investigative reporter
- **Defining Relationship (Logos)**
  Sánchez
- **Possessions (Logos)**
  retro car and gear
- **Bastion (Mythos)**
  knightly protector

Lamar takes the four respective theme cards and writes down the theme type and tentative title on each card.

CHARACTER TROPES (PRE-MADE BUILDS)

Character tropes are pre-generated sets (or builds) of themes based on commonly used character types. Each trope describes a character typical to myths and legends (for Mythos tropes) or modern detective stories (for Logos tropes) and offers three theme types typical to this character. You can use these tropes to help you quickly pick out your character's four themes.

To create your character using tropes, choose a Mythos trope and a Logos trope. Then decide whether you are Touched, a Borderliner, or a Legendary. From your Mythos trope, choose the first theme type if you are Touched, the first two if you are a Borderliner, and all three if you are a Legendary. From your Logos trope, choose the first theme type if you are a Legendary, choose the first two theme types if you are a Borderliner, or all three if you are Touched. Once you have your four themes, you may need to add some details to customize your character.

CHARACTER TROPES EXAMPLE

Megan wants to quickly create a new character for herself. She goes over the character tropes and picks out *Mischievous Fairy/Spirit* for Mythos and *Retired Citizen* for Logos. She's going to play a knavish elderly man who is secretly pulling pranks on the tenants in his building. She calls him Goodfellow, after the mischievous sprite. She decides this character is a Legendary, so she takes all three Mythos themes and only the first Logos theme (1).

If Goodfellow was a Touched character, she would take just the first Mythos theme and all the Logos themes (2).

If Goodfellow was a Borderliner, she would take the two first themes from both her Mythos and her Logos tropes (3)

MYTHOS CHARACTER TROPES

A MAGIC SWORD

Relic
(Magic sword)
+
Divination
(Reveal destiny)
+
Bastion
(Protective powers)

BEAST OR MONSTER

Bastion
(Durability)
+
Expression
(Strength, claws, horns)
+
Divination
(Acute senses)

COMMONER THIEF

Relic
(Stolen item)
+
Mobility
(Swiftness)
+
Subversion
(Thievery)

ELEMENTAL CREATURE

Mobility
(Traveling through element)
+
Expression
(Projecting its element)
+
Adaptation
(Manipulating its element)

FERTILITY GOD/DESS

Expression (Life force)
+
Adaptation
(Many forms and shapes)
+
Relic
(Life giving vessel e.g. chalice, cauldron)

GHOST

Bastion
(Has no body)
+
Mobility
(Walk through walls)
+
Divination
(Voices of the dead)

GOOD FAIRY / SPIRIT

Bastion
(Magical protection)
+
Expression
(Healing magic)
+
Adaptation
(Fairy magic)

HUNTSMAN / WOODSMAN

Divination
(Tracking)
+
Expression
(Fabled archer)
+
Subversion
(Stealth)

KING OR QUEEN

Expression
(Leadership or dominion)
+
Adaptation
(Immense wealth)
+
Bastion
(Castle and guard)

KNIGHT OR WARRIOR

Expression
(Remarkable fighting)
+
Bastion
(Armor or shield)
+
Relic
(Legendary weapon)

MISCHIEVOUS FAIRY / SPIRIT

Subversion
(Magical pranks)
+
Relic
(Cherished magical asset)
+
Expression
(Furious state)

NATURE SPIRIT / GOD

Adaptation
(Plant and animal life)
+
Expression
(Plant growth)
+
Mobility
(Transport between trees)

PRINCE / PRINCESS

Expression
(Charm & beauty)
+
Subversion
(Acting in secrecy)
+
Mobility
(Loyal steed)

SCOUNDREL OR PEDDLAR

Subversion
(Deception)
+
Relic
(Magical item)
+
Adaptation
(Steal others' traits)

SUN GOD/DESS

Expression
(Light)
+
Bastion
(Invulnerability)
+
Mobility
(Chariot)

SWASHBUCKLER

Mobility
(Athletic stunts)
+
Relic
(Rapier)
+
Subversion
(Beguiling words)

TRICKSTER GOD/DESS

Subversion
(Trickery and illusions)
+
Divination
(Watch victims from afar)
+
Adaptation
(Witchcraft)

WIZARD / WARLOCK / WITCH

Divination
(Divination)
+
Adaptation
(Sorcery)
+
Subversion
(Vanishing tricks)

LOGOS CHARACTER TROPES

ALCOHOLIC / ADDICT

Possession
(Booze or drugs)
+
Defining Event
(that made him/her drink)
+
Defining Relationship
(who hasn't given up)

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Routine
(Legal advisor)
+
Personality
(Shrewd and manipulative)
+
Mission
(Bring justice to the City)

BEAT OFFICER

Training
(Police training)
+
Defining relationship
(Partner)
+
Mission
(Clean up the streets)

CAT BURGLAR

Training
(Burglary)
+
Possessions
(Special gear)
+
Routine
(Scouting a target)

CLASSIC DETECTIVE

Routine
(Detective work)
+
Personality
(Hard-boiled)
+
Defining Relationship
(Family or love interest)

CRIME LORD

Routine
(Criminal operation)
+
Mission
(Eliminate competition)
+
Personality
(Tough as nails)

CULT MEMBER

Defining Relationship
(Guru and cult)
+
Training
(Knowledge of the occult)
+
Personality
(Deceptive or innocent)

DOCTOR

Training
(Medical training)
+
Defining Event
(Saving a life)
+
Routine
(Work at the hospital)

DRAB ACADEMIC

Training
(Academic field)
+
Personality
(Objective scientist)
+
Possessions
(Laboratory or library)

DRUG DEALER

Possessions
(Drugs)
+
Personality
(Big dreams)
+
Defining Relationship
(Bodyguard)

FILTHY RICH SCUMBAG

Possession
(Wealth)
+
Defining Relationship
(Business partners)
+
Personality
(Egotistical scumbag)

GETAWAY DRIVER

Possession
(Fast car)
+
Training
(City driving)
+
Personality
(Ice cool)

HOMELESS HOBO

Defining Event
(that made him homeless)
+
Routine
(Living on the streets)
+
Possessions
(Shopping cart)

JOURNALIST

Routine
(Investigative journalism)
+
Personality
(Bold and dauntless)
+
Mission
(Win a Pulitzer)

LOCAL POLITICIAN

Defining Relationship
(Constituency)
+
Defining Event
(Past allegations)
+
Mission
(Political agenda)

MASKED VIGILANTE

Mission
(Bring down a crimelord)
+
Training
(Martial arts)
+
Defining Event
(that started vigilante life)

MOBSTER OR GANGSTER

Routine
(Life of violence)
+
Possessions
(Brass knuckles and revolver)
+
Defining Relationship
(The big boss)

RETIRED CITIZEN

Defining Event
(Heyday adventure)
+
Personality
(Suspicious)
+
Training
(Former occupation)

SCHOOL BOY/GIRL

Routine
(Attending school)
+
Defining Relationship
(Best friend)
+
Possessions
(Stuff kids pick up)

STAGE PERFORMER

Personality
(Glamorous)
+
Training
(Performing arts)
+
Mission
(Get enough money for…)

STREETWALKER

Routine
(Working the streets)
+
Defining Relationship
(Concerned friend or relative)
+
Defining Event
(Something witnessed)

STEP 3: THEMEBOOKS

Themebooks are questionnaires that help you put together the details of each of your character's themes, including its power tags, weakness tags, Mystery or Identity, and title. Themebooks also offer some ideas on how to describe your character's relationships with the other crew members. Finally, they list the **theme improvements**: additional improvements that are unique to each specific theme type. There are 14 themebooks, one for each of the 14 theme types described in the previous step.

Having established your character's themes, go through each respective themebook and follow the instructions to complete each theme's details, noting them down on your theme cards. Before you do so, however, read the guidelines below on how to choose each component of your theme.

THE CONCEPT SECTION

Just like your series and character, each themebook begins with a few questions to help you clarify the concept for the theme you are creating. The concept section is optional and has no bearing on the game; it's there to help you hone your idea of the theme before answering tag questions (see below). Answers to questions in the concept section do not translate into game elements and are not tracked on your character and theme cards.

WHAT ARE TAGS?

Tags are short and specific descriptions, usually 1-3 words long (but sometimes longer) of a discrete quality, ability, object, situation, or thing in the game. Most tags in the game belong to the lead characters' themes (read more about other tags under Game Resources on page 217).

Tags have a dual role: they both describe your character and influence her actions. If your character has the tags *top physical shape*, *can breathe underwater*, and *combat knife*, it means she is in great shape, has no problems breathing underwater, and always carries or has access to a combat knife. It also means that when she attempts an action related to these descriptions, she is more likely to succeed.

The common way to use tags is to include them in a move. For example, you may be trying to survive falling off a moving subway train, using the fact you are at *top physical shape* to boost your Face Danger move.

THE ROLE OF THE MC: AGREEING ON INTERPRETATION

While the players are creating their characters, themes, and tags, the MC continues with her role of asking interesting questions and making suggestions. In addition, the MC should go over the tags, Mysteries, and Identities created by the players and verify two things: first, that they follow the guidelines in this section; and second, that she understands the player's interpretation of these elements.

Different people have different ways of expressing ideas, so players will describe their character's tags, Mysteries, and Identities in a variety of ways. The MC should encourage this and avoid limiting the players' creativity. Within reason, the MC should put less emphasis on literal wording and instead try to understand what a player is trying to express with his tags, questions, and statements. Use the questions in this section to help the player fine-tune these descriptors.

Once the player and the MC agree on the interpretation of a theme component, this interpretation cannot be changed unless both the MC and the player agree to it, so that the game can run smoothly. This does not mean tags and other descriptors can't be used creatively, but that a clear and mutual understanding of the tags serves as a good baseline for the game.

However, remember that tags are also descriptions. For example, the MC can say that one of the NPCs, a police officer, notices your character's top physical shape. Perhaps he is searching for a suspect who matches your description or maybe he is impressed by your character's physique or training regime. This can propel the story forward and give it flavor, even if it doesn't have any specific effect on the rules of the game. Read more about how to use tags in Chapter 3: Working the Case.

TAG QUESTIONS

Each themebook includes **power tag questions** and **weakness tag questions**. When you select a question and answer it, the answer becomes a tag in your theme.

For example, if you answer the **power tag question**:

? **WHAT PARTICULAR TRAIT OF YOUR DEFENSE MAKES IT USEFUL?**

with the answer "it's bulletproof", then *bulletproof* becomes a power tag in that theme.

Similarly, if you answer the **weakness tag question**:

? **WHO OR WHAT IS HAUNTING YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR DEFINING EVENT?**

with the answer "the Big Bad Wolf", then *the Big Bad Wolf* becomes a weakness tag in that theme.

Each theme starts with three power tags, so in each themebook you answer three power tag questions. **You must select and answer the first power tag question of each themebook**, because it represents the core tag of the themebook. Then select two more power tag questions to answer. Write down your three power tags on the theme card. Note the letter of the question that generated each power tag next to the tag on the card, for future reference.

Each theme starts with one weakness tag, so in each themebook you answer one weakness tag question. Write down your weakness tag on the theme's card. Note the letter of the question that generated the weakness tag next to the tag on the card, for future reference.

NASCENT THEMES

A nascent theme is a theme that has recently emerged in your character's life. Most commonly, you receive a nascent theme then you replace a theme: one element in your life is lost and in its wake a new element presents itself. Since this new element has not yet developed, the theme that represents it is not a full-blown theme with three power tags. Instead, nascent themes have just one power tag. Another use for nascent themes is when playing awakening characters, in which case your single Mythos theme is a nascent theme with a single power tag (see page 103).

All other elements of a nascent theme are identical to those of a regular theme: it is either a Mythos theme or a Logos theme, it has a type, a single weakness tag, and a Mystery or an Identity.

When you replace a theme with a new nascent theme, choose a theme type, find its themebook, and create the theme as normal. However, you choose only one power tag for that theme, not three, so you always answer only the first power tag question in the themebook.

Just like any other theme, a nascent theme can grow and gain additional power tags as improvements. However, nascent themes grow faster than regular themes. Read more about nascent themes and their development in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.

ANSWER JUST ONCE

The tag questions leave you with a lot of room for creativity. To keep your character diverse and balanced, **you should not answer the same power tag or weakness tag question more than once**. This applies both during character creation and when you gain new tags as improvements later on. When you answer a tag question, give just one answer.

ADDITIONAL TAGS

At your option, in one of your four themes, you may choose an additional power tag question to answer (and therefore gain a fourth power tag). If

you do, you must also choose an additional weakness tag question to answer in the same theme (and therefore gain a second weakness tag). This option is only available during character creation.

CHOOSING POWER TAGS

Power tags are the fundamental currency of *City of Mist*. Whenever you take action in the game using one of the Core Moves, each power tag that you have and is relevant to your action adds one point of Power to your move. This both improves your chances of succeeding and increases the effectiveness of your action. For example, if you try to **Convince** a bureaucrat to let you look at confidential archive files, and you have the power tags *convincing* and *bureaucracy* (or *cut through red tape*), they add two points of Power to your roll.

Power tags can be anything, but they are always something useful to your character. Being blind, for example, usually serves as a limitation and impedes actions. Therefore, *blind* is not a suitable description for a power tag. If being blind has helped your character develop *heightened senses* or *sympathy to the suffering of others*, these can be power tags in and of themselves.

When the MC wants to help a player clarify or fine-tune a power tag, she can ask:

? WHAT ACTIONS WOULD THIS POWER TAG BOOST?

Answering this question helps define what exactly is helpful in a power tag and how the player is expecting to use it during the game. Sometimes answering this question may also bring the player to rethink and rephrase his tag.

Examples of power tags:

- **Useful qualities**: *cunning negotiator*, *mesmerizing beauty*, *7-feet tall*
- **Abilities:** *acute sense of smell, danger sense, hypnotism*
- **Powers:** *breath of fire, invulnerability, speak with the dead*
- **Skills**: *forensics, rock-climbing, excellent chef*
- **Special maneuvers**: *mean right hook, whirlwind katana attack, flirty glances*
- **Useful personality traits:** *charming, indomitable, empathetic*
- **Training:** *master swordsman, bomb defusing, acrobat*
- **Knowledge:** *ancient history, knows every street, banking & investment*
- **Background and occupation:** *rocket scientist, crime scene investigator, private eye*
- **Privileges**: *federal security clearance, ex-celebrity, access to the church, cushy bank account*
- **Allies and contacts**: *inquisitive boyfriend, underworld contacts, helpful fox spirits*
- **Gear or special items:** *standard issue pistol, a magic ring of invisibility, Bow of Artemis*
- **Qualities of your powers:** *penetrates magical wards, spray fire, stronger at night*
- **Apt catchphrases:** *the more the merrier, fortune favors the bold, Murdocks always get up*

BROAD VS. SPECIFIC TAGS

Power tags can contribute to the Power of your moves in a variety of ways and situations, depending on how you interpret them.

The best tags are **specific**: they represent a positive or useful element that can help your character in a limited field, a well-defined situation, or a unique manner. Specific tags give your character more color and inspire you to use them creatively.

Consider the types of scenes your character can take part in: crime scene investigation, social interaction, car chase, fist fight, etc. Most specific tags are useful only in specific circumstances, like a social gathering or when taking a physical hit, or in a limited set of circumstances. The examples in the list above are of specific tags.

Broad tags are tags which are useful in a wide spectrum of situations. A tag is considered broad if it's useful in a variety of different scene types. For example, the tag *cunning* can be interpreted as being useful when getting a witness to talk, when deceiving a city official, and perhaps when feigning a blow in a fight.

While broad tags are useful for the character, they tend to be less colorful and inspire less creative solutions. They can also potentially give the character an unfair advantage. Therefore, **your character can have only one broad tag**.

Tags that are useful in all or most situations, or tags that are useful in any type of scene, are **too broad**. For example, the tag *lucky* can be used in almost any situation. Players cannot choose tags that are too broad, unless the MC approves it. The MC may do so in case the tag encourages interesting descriptions. For example, an MC may feel that while *mysterious reality bending* can be used in almost any situation, the player's descriptions when using this tag will contribute to the story. If this is the case, the tag is considered to be broad and therefore takes up the single broad tag allocation available for the character.

Alternatively, the MC may ask the player to make a tag less broad in one of the two ways described below. Doing so downgrades a "too broad" tag to a broad tag, and a broad tag to a specific tag.

The first and simpler way is to add words to the tag to make it more specific, e.g. *cunning* → *cunning negotiator*.

The other way is to agree in advance that using the tag requires a **Change the Game** move, a Core Move that is used to create new tags (explained in Chapter 3: Working the Case). For example, when using a *spellbook* tag to smite her opponent down with a dark and deadly curse, the player cannot add the *spellbook* tag directly to her **Hit With All You've Got** move. Instead, she must first make a **Change the Game** move (presumably to find the right spell) with the *spellbook* tag to create the temporary tag *dark curse* and use it to power her **Hit With All You've Got** move. The move **Change the Game** represents the character's attempt to adapt her powers to her current needs – an attempt which may get her into trouble or even fail horribly. If she does succeed, the *spellbook* tag is not used again, in the following move (in this case **Hit With All You've Got**). Later, the same character might try to find a love potion spell; to do so, the player should make the **Change the Game** move again, this time creating a *love potion* temporary tag to use in whatever follow-up move is most relevant.

This way, the tag must always be adapted to different situations in a way that receives its own airtime, holds the risk of failure, and takes time and effort on the character's part (just how much is up to the MC).

Other examples of too broad tags that can be downgraded this way include *strategic mastermind* (who can generate temporary tags like *battleground superiority* or *one step ahead of you*) or *the bag that has everything*. When the MC and the player agree that these too broad tags require a **Change The Game** move to generate specific effects, these tags can be considered broad.



CATCHPHRASE TAGS

Catchphrase tags can help you describe an attitude or disposition that characterizes your character or her abilities. They add color to your story by encouraging you to use your tags in certain situations, with a certain intention, or in a certain spirit, that match the look and feel you envision for your character.

Catchphrase tags can be invoked when you make a move in the spirit of the catchphrase. For example, *all life is one* could be used when you act in harmony with all living creatures. If you backstab an opponent in order to promote yourself, *survival of the fittest* may be appropriate.

Catchphrases have various interpretations and could easily become broad or even too broad tags. The MC should limit the invocation of such tags to their specific circumstances. For example, *knowledge over power* could be invoked when you choose to learn more about a situation by **Investigating** rather than charging in and **Hitting with All You've Got**, but only when such a choice is eminent. It should not be invoked for all your **Investigate** moves simply because you seek knowledge.

CHOOSING WEAKNESS TAGS

Weakness tags add interesting complications to the game while driving your character's growth and development. Whenever you take action in the game using one of the Core Moves, each weakness tag you have that is relevant to your action removes one point of Power from your action. This both reduces your chances of succeeding and weakens the effectiveness of your action. For example, if you try to **Take the Risk** and drive your truck through a police roadblock, having the weakness tags *flat tire* and *chicken*, will reduce your Power for this action by one for each weakness tag activated.

While your weaknesses often get in your way, they also help you grow. When one of your weakness tags is activated by you or anyone else at the table, you gain a point of Attention on the theme it belongs to. When you accumulate three points of Attention on a given theme, you can choose an improvement for that theme, such as a new power tag or a theme-specific improvement. To achieve a good balance between short-term success and long-term character growth, make sure you choose weakness tags that are not too specific or too broad, such as those in the examples below.

Weakness tags can be anything, but they are always something that gets in the way of your character's actions. Possessing (and controlling) *the strength of ten men* is often useful, so this would not be an appropriate weakness tag. If your character is *compelled to help others*, it may get her in trouble but it does not impede her actions – it spurs her into action. Therefore, this would not be a good description to use as a weakness tag (but it might be a good Identity; see below).

When the MC wants to help a player clarify or fine-tune a weakness tag, she can ask:

? WHAT ACTIONS WOULD THIS WEAKNESS TAG IMPEDE?

Answering this question helps define what exactly is limiting in a weakness tag and how the player expects to use it during the game. As with power tags, answering this question may also bring the player to rethink and rephrase his tag.

Examples of weakness tags:

- **Impeding qualities**: *lazy bastard, sticks out like a sore thumb, aggravating smirk*
- **Limitations:** *sore joints, poor hearing, slow on the uptake*
- **Power weaknesses:** *must touch the ground, uncontrollable, easy to detect*
- **Power side-effects:** *monstrous, darkened heart, glows brightly*
- **Flaws in methods**: *exposed after mean right hook, sloppy technique, can be traced*
- **Impeding personality traits:** *nervous, suspicious looking, wallflower, overly regimented*
- **Obsessions and compulsions:** *pain killer addic-*

tion, freezes when sees Kaito, cleanliness freak

- **Lack of knowledge:** *never been outside, outdated intel, can't read*
- **Background:** *snobby rich kid, broken home, stuck-up academic*
- **Denied privileges**: *convicted felon, known vigilante, black market heat*
- **Rivals and dependents**: *"the competition", the relentless detective Enkidu, family man*
- **Gear or item weaknesses:** *choppy reception, bloodstained blade, only works with a kiss*
- **Apt catchphrases:** *when it rains it pours, the devil is in the details, off with her head!*

WHAT ARE MYSTERIES AND IDENTITIES?

Mysteries and Identities are questions and statements that drive your character to take action. While Mysteries are questions for which your character seeks answers, Identities are statements that define her. Both Mysteries and Identities are also game elements that affect your character's development during the game. Neglecting your Mysteries leads you to mark Fade and eventually to replace your Mythos themes. Acting in contradiction to your Identities leads you to mark Crack and eventually to replace your Logos themes. Replacing a theme constitutes a dramatic change in your character: you receive a new theme instead of the one you discarded and possibly an additional major improvement, a Moment of Evolution.

For this reason, Mysteries and Identities are central to your character's story.

When you establish your Mystery or Identity, write it on the theme's card in the respective space. Each themebook has examples and ideas for creating its theme's Mystery or Identity. You may only choose one Mystery or Identity for each theme.

CHOOSING MYSTERIES

A Mystery is a question that your character is seeking answers for. During the game, your character will be driven to investigate the City in order to find the answers to her Mysteries. Only Mythos themes have Mysteries; they represent your Mythos' pull towards the unknown, the mysterious, and the hidden.

While a Mystery may come from your Mythos, it is at the same time an honest, deep, or burning question that your character is personally invested in and will go to great lengths to answer. It could be:

- **a question about your nature, existence, or powers,** such as "Am I still human?"
- **a philosophical or unfathomable question,** such as "Where do our memories go when we die?"
- **a question from your Mythos**, such as "Who is the White Rabbit?"
- **a question from your ordinary life**, such as "What is my sister running away from?"
- **a moral question**, such as "What am I willing to sacrifice for the truth?"

A Mystery is always a real question that the character cares about, never a rhetorical one, a cynical one (such as "Who do you think you are?"), or an insignificant one ("What should I wear today?").

The MC can help players think of interesting Mysteries by asking them:

? WHAT DOES YOUR MYTHOS WANT YOU TO FIND OUT?

QUESTIONS VS. STATEMENTS

A character's Mythos represents the mysterious and unknowable forces within her, forces that necessarily drive her to question her current position in life and in the world. Therefore, a Mythos theme revolves around **a question** that the characters seeks answers to – a Mystery.

A character's Logos stands for her persona, the ordinary person she is or at least believes she is: everything that is stable in her life and in her psyche. Therefore, a Logos theme is built around **a statement** that the character must adhere to – an Identity.

For Borderliners and Legendaries, who have more than one Mythos theme and therefore more than one Mystery, each Mystery can cover a different aspect of the Mythos or the character's life.

Remember that during the game, foregoing the search for answers to your Mystery for too long will make your Mythos fade away and force your character to replace the Mythos theme to which this Mystery belongs. The powers described in that theme then become lost, unavailable, or less important; they will receive little to no airtime from now on. **Each Mystery should therefore be directly or indirectly related to the powers of the theme** so that abandoning the search for answers can somehow be tied to abandoning the associated powers.

OPEN-ENDED MYSTERIES

It is preferable to start a Mystery with the question words *who, what, where, why, when,* or *how* because they make for open-ended questions to which the answer is complex and engaging. Questions to which the answer is Yes or No may end up being anti-climactic.

For example, the Mystery "Can I be stronger than I am now?" may only be answered by "Yes" or "No" (or "It depends.", but is it really an answer?). The Mystery "**How** can I become stronger than I am now?" can have a variety of answers that can inspire a more entertaining story, for example "By embracing your own power." "By drinking the blood of a Chimera." "By bringing the ghosts of your past to rest."

CHOOSING IDENTITIES

An Identity is a statement that your character strongly believes in. During the game, your character will be driven to take action in accordance with her Identities. Only Logos themes have Identities; they represent your character's ordinary persona: who she thinks she is, what she knows about herself, and what she believes in.

Your character's Identities are the center of gravity of her ordinary life. They represent her deepest beliefs or most dominant convictions, those around which everything else revolves and before which all other aspects of life bow. An Identity could be:

- **a conviction about yourself or your life**, such as "I don't need anyone else!"
- **a promise, oath, or commitment**, such as "I will find the cure, whatever the cost."
- **a preconception or prejudice**, such as "Rich people can't be trusted."
- **a restriction, limitation, or red line**, such as "If you don't have the money, I can't help you."
- **a greater wish, hope, or dream**, such as "I want to be the very best, like no one ever was!"
- **a strong feeling or emotional baggage,** such as "I've been betrayed too many times."
- **a belief about the world in general,** such as "Everything is better when you put on a smile."

An Identity is always an earnest and sincere statement that the character takes seriously (even if the players and MC are entertained by it). Your character does not have to be vehement about what she believes, only that internally, in her head, this statement is very strong.

An Identity should always be directly or indirectly about the character and how she believes she must act or not act. It is never an unrelated sentence such as "The grass is green," unless that has a specific meaning for the character which the player can explain.

Note that Identities do not necessarily have to revolve around mundane things; your character can have an Identity about fighting the supernatural monsters in her neighborhood. However, such an Identity should be associated with a Logos theme that represents this activity, for example Monster Hunter (Routine).

The MC can help players think of interesting Identities by asking them:

? **WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER THINK OR FEEL ABOUT THIS ASPECT OF HER LIFE, OR BECAUSE OF IT ?**

If you defined your character's **secret pain** at the concept phase, you can work it into one or more of your Identities.

Remember that during the game, acting in contradiction to your Identity too many times will make your Identity crack, until eventually your character will replace the Logos theme to which this Identity belongs. Everything described in that theme will then become lost, unavailable, or less important; it will receive little to no airtime from now on. **Each Identity should therefore be directly or indirectly related to what is described in the theme** so that breaking this Identity by acting against it can somehow be tied to losing the abilities, qualities, knowledge, relationships, or possessions associated with the theme.

CREW RELATIONSHIPS AND THEME IMPROVEMENTS

The Crew Relationships and Theme Improvements sections of your themebooks are not used during character creation. The Crew Relationships section is used when you finalize the crew in the next stage of the Exposition Session while the Theme Improvements section is used during play when your character gains an improvement. Theme improvements refer to various player rules and expand on them. These rules are explained in Chapter 3: Working the Case and Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

BASTION

CONJURE AN ARMOR OR A SHIELD · INVULNERABILITY · MAGICAL PROTECTION · IMMUNITY TO VARIOUS KINDS OF HARM · AN UNBREAKABLE BODY, WILL, OR SOUL · BEING UNTOUCHABLE BY THE LAW

Becoming manifested in reality comes with its share of trouble. A Mythos that manages to find a Rift will often want to make sure that the Rift stays open, or in other words, remain alive and intact. After all, a Rift is a Mythos' foothold in reality, one which should be fortified against attacks, whether from Sleepers, other Rifts, or the Mist itself.

Rifts with a Bastion theme are not granted such powers simply to stay alive but also to protect the agenda of their Mythos. Whether they do so by securing people, places, or objectives depends on their legend. The Rift of a Knight could conjure a spectral suit of armor and a shield; the Rift of Talos, the Bronze man, could be resistant to injury, while a Rift channeling a Poltergeist might be immune to all physical harm. This is not to say all Bastion themes should provide physical protection. Some Mythoi bestow powers of mental, spiritual, magical, and even social protection.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, was your Mythos responsible for protecting something? Was she able to withstand punishment or endure great toils? Was she a unique being or creature with superhuman durability? What exactly were her powers?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? HOW DOES YOUR MYTHOS PROTECT ITS AGENDA?

- It makes me impervious to _____.
- It allows me to ward off _____ with _____ .
- It renders _____ ineffective by _____ .

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT QUALITY OR ABILITY GRANTED BY YOUR MYTHOS MOST OFTEN PROTECTS YOU?

grow bone armor, can't die – already dead , ghost – no physical body , radiates authority , regrow organs , dragon scales

B WHAT MEANS DO YOU HAVE OF EXTENDING PROTECTION TO OTHERS?

a great golden shield , summon ghostly guardians , ward off darkness

C WHAT PARTICULAR TRAIT OF YOUR DEFENSE MAKES IT USEFUL?

impressive , reflective surface , both astral and physical , unbreakable , change skin texture and color , absorbs life force

D AGAINST WHAT TYPE OF ATTACK OR INFLUENCE IS YOUR DEFENSE ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE?

does not breathe , impervious to mortal weapons , maze-like mind , eternal youth

E HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR DEFENSE ACTIVELY?

a body made of fire → flames lash out , a great golden shield → throw shield , always held in high esteem → biting retort

F WHAT SECONDARY DEFENSIVE EFFECT DOES YOUR DEFENSE HAVE?

dragon scales → resistant to fire , grow bone armor → harden internal organs , invulnerability → harm only makes me stronger

G WHAT OTHER EFFECT OR QUALITY, NOT NECESSARILY DEFENSIVE, CAME WITH YOUR DEFENSE?

godlike invulnerability → inhuman strength , made of clay → melt into the earth , dragon scales → fire breath , ghost – no physical body → possess others' bodies

H WHO OR WHAT WERE YOUR POWERS MEANT TO PROTECT?

protector of the weak , guardian of Shangri La , Dulcinea (of Don Quixote)

I WHEN IN A CLINCH, HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR DEFENSE TO CHANGE THE ODDS IN YOUR FAVOUR?

grow bone armor → grow roots , cloak of protection → glide through the air , beauty that cannot be tarnished → inspire change of heart

J WHAT TACTICS DO YOU EMPLOY WHEN YOU USE YOUR DEFENSE?

hunker down , provide cover for others , furious rage , stampede , scare tactics , embrace the enemy

NEW POWERS VS. SECONDARY ASPECTS OF THE SAME POWER

When you choose your power tags you are actually choosing how much focus you want each detail in your character to receive during the game. You are also choosing how much Power you will be able to muster from actions related to your power tags.

When you choose different power effects for each tag, you divide the airtime and the Power between them. For example if you choose *dragon scales* and *flying*, you will be both armored and mobile, but you will have a single tag for protecting yourself and a single tag for flying feats. Therefore, each such move will be rolled with a Power of 1 (for one power tag).

When you choose secondary aspects of the same power, they can add up. For example, if you choose *dragon scales* and *resistant to fire*, it may seem like a waste because *dragon scales* presumably already protects you from fire. However, it would mean that when defending from harm that involves fire, such as a gas tank explosion, you will have both tags to use in your **Face Danger** move, giving you a Power of 2.

When choosing your power tags, remember this: unrelated tags give you greater versatility at the cost of Power; related tags stack up to give you greater Power in certain situations, at the cost of versatility.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A HOW DO YOUR DEFENSIVE POWERS AFFECT YOUR APPEARANCE?

monstrous, *corpse-like visage*, *shining armor is easy to spot*, *bronzen*

B WHAT ARE THE UNWANTED IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR DEFENSE?

cumbersome, *ghost – cannot touch the world*, *blindspot*, *wears off quickly*

C TO WHAT ATTACKS IS YOUR DEFENSE SUSCEPTIBLE?

"I can't protect them all!", *holy water*, *bludgeoning*, *mystical weapons*

D WHAT PERSONALITY TRAIT DERIVED FROM YOUR DEFENSE GETS YOU INTO TROUBLE?

foolhardy, *paranoid*, *cannot feel emotions*, *savior mentality*, *ravenous*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Talos) "Why do I feel like I'm different?"
- (Poltergeist) "Who killed me and why?"
- (Fairy Godmother) "What is the dark force rising in the City?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- Wondering who or what you were meant to protect
- Questions about the threats you are meant to protect from
- A dark desire to find out what could be your undoing

Write your Mystery on your theme.

The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you. Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Talos) Bronzen Construct
- (Poltergeist) Untouchable
- (Fairy Godmother) Protector of the Light

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- You once protected something very dear to one of them, possibly even from them. If they were grateful, take a Help point on them. If they were not, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them makes you feel weak and vulnerable or one of them actually has the capacity to break through your defenses. Take a Hurt point on them.
- You feel as if one of them is the one you are meant to protect. Take a Help point on them.

BASTION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

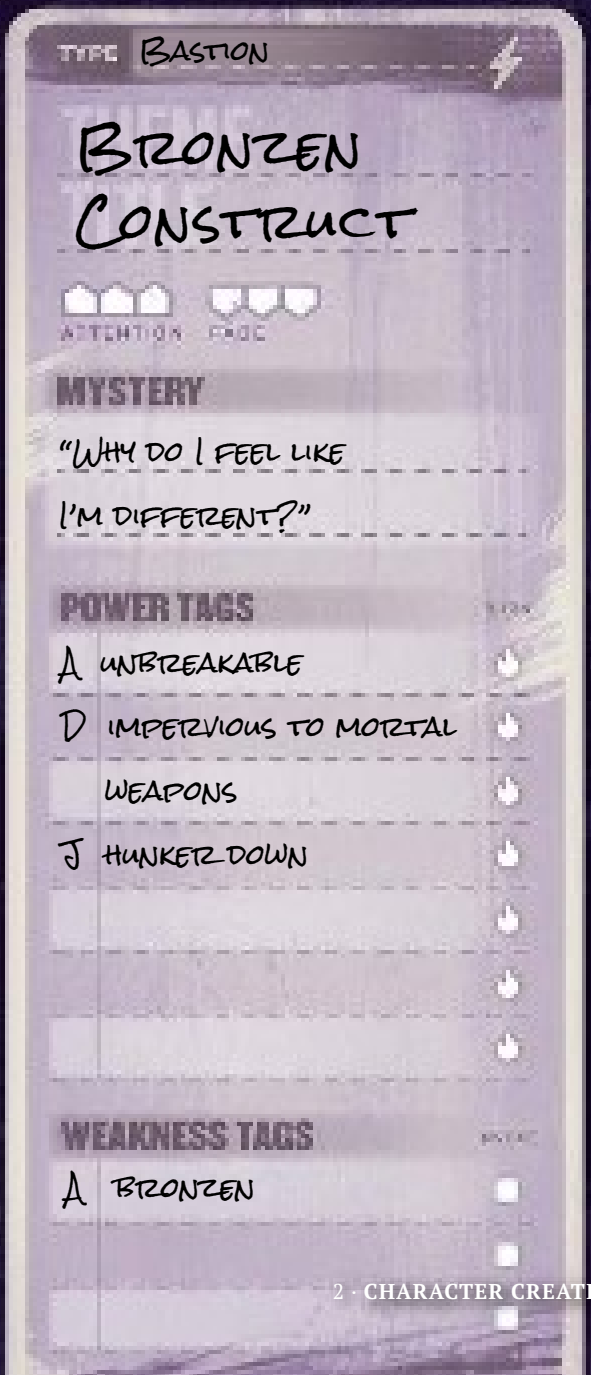
☐ **Unbreakable**
When you Face Danger with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Got your Back**
When you burn a tag in this theme for a hit in order to **Face a Danger** affecting you and your allies, allies who can benefit from your protection don't roll **Face Danger** but use your result instead.

☐ **Sacrifice**
When you get a hit on **Face Danger**, you can always choose to extend the outcome to one person or object around you that you can protect, at the cost of exposing yourself. On a 10+, they take no status and you take the status with -1 tier. On 7-9, they take the status with -1 tier and you take the full status. If the move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you can choose to fully protect both of you (instead of one of the other 12+ options).

☐ **Sorry, was that your gun?**
When your **Face Danger** move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you can choose the following option instead of the other options: you absorb the harmful effect or disable its source, granting either you or your opponent an appropriate temporary tier-2 status of your choice.

☐ **Redirected Hostility**
When your **Face Danger** move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, if you choose to reflect the status you were given, you can redirect it to any target, not just your attacker.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

DIVINATION

CLAIRVOYANCE · SPECIAL SENSES · FORTUNE TELLING · A MYSTICAL SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE · MAGICALLY FINDING A PERSON, AN OBJECT, OR INFORMATION · PSYCHOMETRY · COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER REALMS OR BEINGS

To be in the world, a Mythos must know the world. It must be aware of things near and far, know of things that were or things that are yet to come. It must understand the nature of its environment, or it will be outsmarted, vanquished, and cast into non-existence once more. In order to stay ahead of the game, Mythoi grant their Rifts the ability to sense the world and grasp it beyond what their mortal cognition would allow. A modern-day witch could peer into a boiling pot of instant-soup and see what her adversaries are up to. The Rift of Baron Samedi could speak with the dead and learn what they know. The spirit of Wenchang Wang, the Chinese Godly King of Flourishing Language and Culture, could allow its Rift to assimilate written text with but a touch. And the horrible Wendigo naturally develops acute senses with which it hunts its prey. Whatever form they take, Divination powers allow Rifts to gather useful information.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, was your Mythos able to know or sense things beyond what was humanly possible? Was she in touch with a special source of information? Could she communicate with otherworldly beings? How so?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? HOW DOES YOUR MYTHOS LEARN ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND IT?

- It enhances my senses, such as _____.
- It allows me to communicate with _____.
- It allows me to taps into new sources of information such as _____ .
- It gathers information from _____ by _____.

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT ALLOWS YOU TO UNCANNILY KNOW THINGS YOU WOULDN'T NORMALLY KNOW?

flashes of what was here before, *a wolf's instincts*, *instant book reading*, *premonitions*, *torment poor souls*, *read minds*

B WHAT OTHER TYPE OF KNOWLEDGE CAN YOU ACCESS WITH YOUR POWERS?

flashes of other parts of the City, *sniff out intruders*, *psychometry*, *sense a person's guilt*

C WHAT SUBJECT IS THE EASIEST FOR YOU TO LEARN ABOUT?

perfect spatial sense, *knows all about hunters*, *whispers of ancient history*, *expose hidden secrets*, *secrets taken to the grave*

D WHAT ITEMS OR SUBSTANCES SERVE AS A CONDUIT FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE?

consciousness expanding pills, *book of shadows*, *in vino veritas*, *mirrors*, *the blood reveals all*

E WHAT QUALITY OF YOUR DIVINATION MAKES IT ESPECIALLY EFFECTIVE?

undetectable, *covers the entire City*, *I can smell it as well*, *the stronger the emotion – the more I see.*

F WHAT ADVANTAGE DOES YOUR DIVINATION GIVE YOU IN A FIGHT?

predict a foe's next move, *sense minute earth tremors*, *a marksman's eye*

G IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOUR NORMAL SENSES BEEN ENHANCED BY YOUR MYTHOS?

see in complete darkness, *can hear a pin drop*, *gut feeling when being deceived*

H WHAT CREATIVE WAYS OF USING YOUR DIVINATION HAVE YOU DEVELOPED?

shoot around corners, *"I can tell you like me..."*, *ouija board scam*, *blind driving*

I HOW CAN YOU AFFECT OTHERS WITH YOUR POWER?

put someone in a time-loop, *deafening roar*, *suck up all the light*, *terrorize with a glimpse of one's death*

J WHAT NEW FRONTIER OF KNOWLEDGE LIES AT THE EDGE OF YOUR DIVINATION?

flashes of beyond, *visceral sense of danger*, *sisterhood of all women*, *secrets only the Void knows*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR DIVINATION OVERWHELMS YOU?

disturbing flashes of coming horror, *sensory overload*, *haunted*, *the pain of knowing.*

B WHAT CAN HINDER OR BLOCK YOUR DIVINATION?

cannot penetrate fog, *blind in sterile environment*, *"Thou shall not pass my sigils!"*, *"The hearth protects them..."*

C WHAT IS BEYOND THE REACH OF YOUR DIVINATION?

too long ago, *the future is fickle*, *one little boy*, *only as far as the eye can see*

D WHAT MUST YOU HAVE IN ORDER TO USE YOUR DIVINATION?

a pouch full of beads and bones, *must touch skin*, *I need more time*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Witch) "Where can I find the Book of Shadows?"
- (Baron Samedi) "Do the dead deserve another chance?"
- (Wenchang Wang) "How can I battle ignorance?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- Burning questions about something your Divination can't pierce
- Investigation of something only you were able to uncover
- Concerns about the beings or sources your powers consult

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Witch) Hubble Bubble
- (Baron Samedi) The Dead Don't Lie
- (Wenchang Wang) Master of The Written Word

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- You used your powers to learn a shocking secret about one of them, without their knowledge. If it made you feel closer to them, take a Help point on them. If you were disgusted or horrified, or if you plan to use it against them, take a Hurt point on them.
- You used your powers to reveal a weakness of one of them. Ask them what it is. If you're going to protect them, take a Help point on them. If you're going to exploit it, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them came to you for advice regarding their Mythos and you decided to help them (why?). Since then, they take your advice very seriously. Take a Help point on them.

DIVINATION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

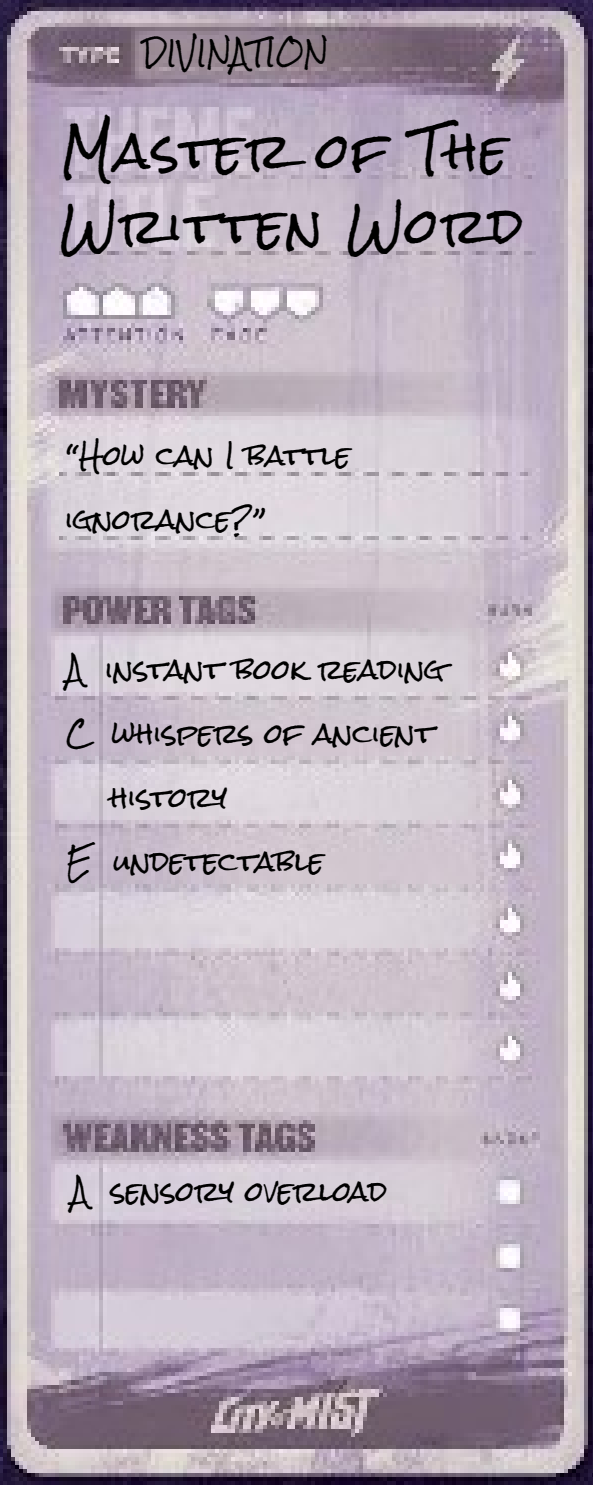
☐ **Open Book**
When you **Investigate** with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Ahead of the Game**
Once per scene, you get one free Clue.

☐ **Seasoned Investigator**
Whenever you **Investigate** with power tags from this theme and score 7-9, choose one of the MC's options in the **Investigate** move. The MC can't choose this option this time.

☐ **Prophetic**
When you use a Clue to ask the MC "*What's going to happen next?*", the MC can't give you just a hint and must instead give you a straight answer. If you use the MC's answer to your advantage on your next move, you gain an appropriate temporary tier-1 status.

☐ **A Fighting Chance**
You're more than just a bucket of knowledge or a hub of heightened awareness. When push comes to shove, you can fend for yourself. Choose a power tag question from the Expression or Bastion themebooks and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

EXPRESSION

ELEMENTAL OR PHYSICAL PROJECTION (E.G., FIRE, ARROWS, THOUGHTS) · LEGENDARY STRENGTH · SUPERIOR WARRIOR PROWESS · OVERPOWERING PRESENCE · HEALING POWERS

An Expression theme represents the ways in which your Mythos wants to directly influence the world and the powers it gives you to do so. Most commonly, these powers either project outwards as matter, energy, or magical effects, or alter you in a way that would help you leave your mark on the world around you. Maybe the Mythos of Pestilence, the Horseman of the Apocalypse, allows you to infect anyone you touch, or even an entire room, with a horrible disease; or the Mythos of Paul Bunyan grants you inhuman strength, the ability to turn into a giant, and the power to summon a formidable axe to match. You could lash out with blizzards of freezing cold as the Snow Queen or play soothing, hypnotic melodies as the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

An Expression theme is about changing the world overtly and directly. What exactly is expressed is entirely up to your Mythos.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, was your Mythos responsible for a major change in the world around her? Was she able to control an element or even create it out of thin air? Was she a great warrior or somehow able to influence others? How did she do that?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT CHANGE DOES YOUR MYTHOS WISH TO EFFECT IN THE WORLD?

- It wants to turn all _____ into _____.
- It wants to fight _____.
- It wants everyone to become _____.
- It wants to spread _____.
- It wants to control or shape _____.

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MOST COMMON WAY YOU USE YOUR MYTHOS TO AFFECT THE WORLD?

burning whips, *bless with good fortune*, *turn solid matter into liquid*, *psychic blasts of pain*, *uncanny charisma*, *ultimate fighter*

B WHAT USEFUL REVERSE EFFECT CAN YOU EXERT?

take away good fortune, *turn liquids into solids*, *quench fire*, *cure diseases*

C WHAT USEFUL QUALITY DOES YOUR MAIN EFFECT HAVE?

intense heat, *bigger explosions*, *airborne spores*, *irresistible*, *armor-piercing*, *soothing presence*, *indomitable*

D WHAT CONDITIONS OR SITUATIONS ENHANCE YOUR MYTHOS' EXPRESSION?

better in damp conditions, *the more the merrier*, *feeds off fear*, *back-to-back fighting.*

E AGAINST WHAT TARGETS ARE YOUR EXPRESSION POWERS MORE EFFECTIVE?

reduce buildings to rubbles, *good for abducting children*, *easily manipulates metals*, *"you can run but you can't hide"*

F WHAT SPECIAL VARIANTS OR SPECIFIC USES OF YOUR MYTHOS' MAIN FORM OF EXPRESSION HAVE YOU MASTERED?

burning whips → *bright flare*, *blow freezing cold* → *encase someone in ice*, *celestial martial arts* → *falling star roundhouse kick*, *infect with disease* → *latent infection*, *plant growth* → *poisonous biting plants*

G WHAT ADDITIONAL EXPRESSION, NOT NECESSARILY RELATED TO THE MAIN ONE, DOES YOUR MYTHOS HAVE?

super strength → *summon lightning weapon*, *(play hypnotic tune* → *deafening blast*, *burning whips* → *underwater propulsion*

H WHAT TRICK SHOTS OR SPECIAL MANEUVERS CAN YOU DO WITH YOUR EXPRESSION POWERS?

bounce arrows off walls, *selectively hit targets in an area*, *affect through walls*

I WHAT ATTITUDE DO YOU ADOPT WHEN EXPRESSING YOUR MYTHOS?

firebrand, *ruthless*, *icy demeanor*, *terrifying, trustworthy appearance*

J HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR POWER TO SHIELD YOURSELF, ESPECIALLY FROM SIMILAR EFFECTS?

plasma barrier, *absorb electricity*, *impenetrable mind*, *parry*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT SITUATIONS OR CONDITIONS WEAKEN OR SUPPRESS YOUR MYTHOS' EXPRESSION?

weaker in dry conditions, *cannot operate in the light of day*, *only effective against a single opponent*

B WHAT TARGETS ARE IMMUNE OR RESISTANT TO YOUR MYTHOS' EXPRESSION?

does not work on gods or spirits, *cannot shape organic matter*, *weaker against loved ones*

C WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LOSE CONTROL OVER YOUR MYTHOS' EXPRESSION?

uncontrolled firestorm, *can't tell allies from foes*, *entangled in plants*

D WHAT ARE THE REPERCUSSIONS OF BRINGING YOUR MYTHOS INTO THE WORLD?

icicles everywhere, *signature markings on victims*, *over-zealous thralls*, *people find me repulsive*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Pestilence) "How can I control my desire to consume all?"
- (Snow Queen) "Is there any warmth left in my heart?"
- (Pied Piper of Hamelin) "Where should I lead my followers?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- Doubts about your power's effect on the world and how to best use it
- Fears about what wielding such powers might do to you
- Questions about the identity of your sworn enemies or how to fight them

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Pestilence) Touch of Decay
- (Snow Queen) A Frozen Heart
- (Pied Piper of Hamelin) Play Them Like A Flute

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them once witnessed you expressing your Mythos at full power. Ask them what they thought about it. If it scared them, take a Hurt point on them. If they appreciated it, take a Help point on them.
- You feel like one of them wants you to hold back and refrain from expressing your Mythos. Ask them what is their reason. Take a Hurt point on them.
- To your Mythos, one of them seems like the modern-day version of a character in its legend. If they were your foe in the legend, take a Hurt

point on them. If they were your ally or loved one, or if you were their rescuer, take a Help point on them.

EXPRESSION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

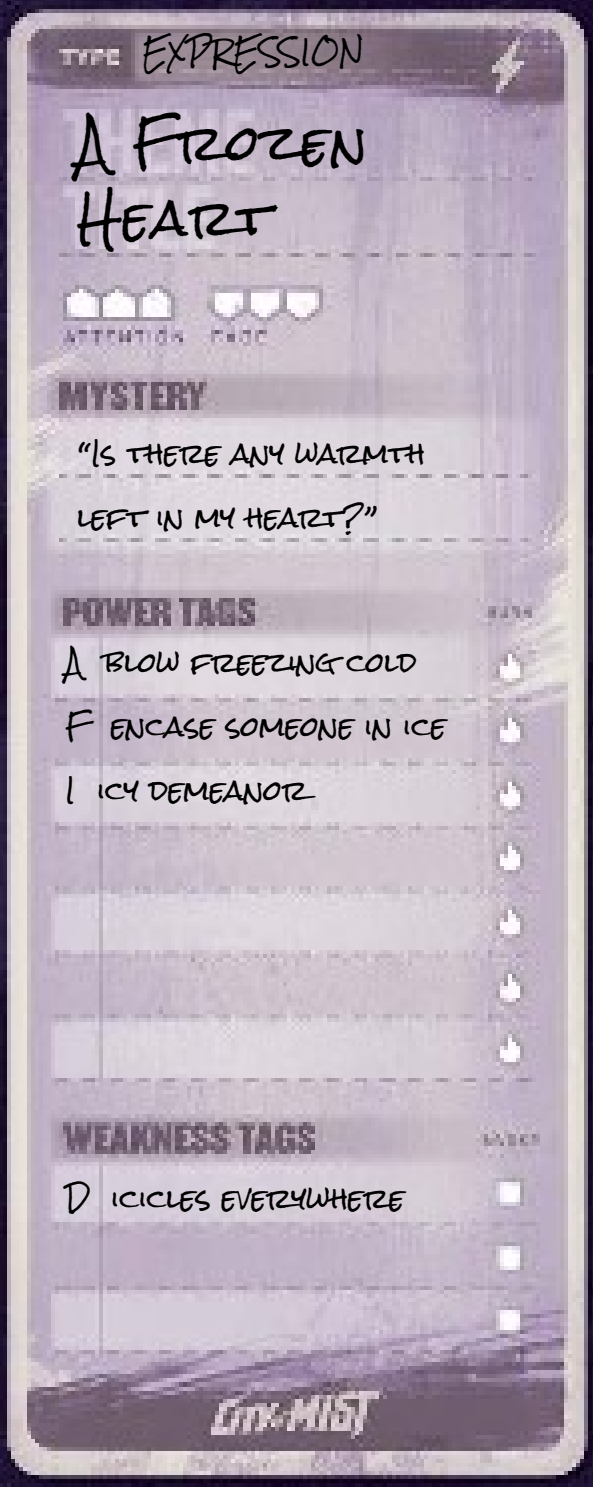
☐ **On Fire**
When you **Hit With All You've Got** with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Ruptured Rift**
When you burn a tag for a hit in this theme, you can mark Crack on one of your Logos themes instead of marking that tag as burnt.

☐ **Mythos Mastery**
When you Hit With All You've Got, you always get to control the collateral damage.

☐ **Contain the Surge**
When you make the move **Stop. Holding. Back.** with your Mythos' Expression powers, if you roll 6 or less, treat it as 7-9 instead.

☐ **Ripples**
You can either sense something related to your Mythos' expression or prevent others from sensing something by means of your expression. Choose a power tag question from the Divination or Subversion themebooks and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

MOBILITY

NIMBLE, GRACEFUL, OR DEXTROUS MOVEMENT · SUPERNATURAL SPEED · FLIGHT · TRAVELLING AS A CLOUD, A DROP OF WATER, OR A RAY OF LIGHT · RIDING ON MYTHICAL CREATURES · MAGICAL TRANSPORTATION

Taking shape and form in the material world has the immediate effect of limiting one to a single point in space and time, a state both alien and undesirable to any Mythos. The Mythoi therefore bestow upon their Rifts the ability to travel from one place to another wondrously, whether through physical movement or magical transportation. This is essential for the Mythos' wish to spread its influence across the City. Mobility powers may also allow a Rift not only to transport themselves and others from one place to another but also to move unobstructed and overcome obstacles.

The modern-day incarnation of Tlaloc, the Aztec rain god, could appear out of water anywhere in the City, or even turn himself and others into water. The legendary Arabian Roc could fly over great distances easily carrying a burden as heavy as a bull. And the Rift of the Monkey King might have gained some of the freedom of action possessed by her Mythos, who could not be restrained by any ordinary or divine means, bar the palm of the Buddha himself. The Rift of Jack could grow beanstalks that took him above the clouds and Rapunzel could use her long flaxen hair to help others reach her.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, did your Mythos travel from one place to another in a miraculous way? Did she possess the power to transport or move others? Did she display the ability to avoid or escape confinement?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? HOW DOES YOUR MYTHOS MOVE YOU OR OTHERS?

- It can run / jump / swim / fly / tunnel / glide / catapult / jet / etc. at great speeds or to a great distance.
- It can transport itself / others by means of _____.
- It can propel itself with _____.
- It easily overcomes obstacles such as _____ by _____.
-

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question

A WHAT IS YOUR MYTHOS' MOST USEFUL FORM OF MOVEMENT?

super-speed, *uncanny parkour artist*, *emerge out of bodies of water*, *enormous wings*, *grow giant beanstalks*

B HOW DO YOU GO INTO OVERDRIVE?

tear space-time apart, *merge with a large mass of water*, *fury of the roc*, *unrestrained growth*

C WHAT ALLOWS YOU TO AVOID RESTRAINTS OR CONFINEMENT?

act just before it happens, *makeshift katana*, *turn into water*, *powerful beak and talons*, *lockpicking vines*

D WHAT SECONDARY MODE OF MOVEMENT HAVE YOU LEARNED TO USE?

short-range teleportation, *move in the shadows*, *skim the water*, *claw through barriers*, *roots can tunnel into the earth*

E WHAT STYLE OR TECHNIQUE OF MOVEMENT HAVE YOU MASTERED?

good catcher, *nimble as a fox*, *flow down narrow spaces*, *deadly swoop*, *beanstalk acrobatics*

F WHAT SPECIFIC HARMFUL EFFECTS DOES YOUR MOBILITY ALLOW YOU TO AVOID?

dodge bullets, *block martial art strike*, *expel blood toxins*, *thick plumage*, *beanstalk breaks the fall*

G HOW DO YOU USE YOUR MOBILITY TO GAIN ADVANTAGE IN A FIGHT?

surprise from behind, *katana whirlwind attack*, *flashflood*, *wing bash*, *catapult around stem*

H WHAT ALLOWS YOU TO MOVE OTHERS?

bestow superspeed, *secret ninja shortcuts*, *turn others into water*, *the strength to carry a bull*, *bridges out of vines*

I HOW CAN YOU USE YOUR POWERS TO RESTRAIN OTHERS' MOVEMENT?

put someone into a time-loop, *darts with numbing ointment*, *engulf in a waterspout*, *pin down with giant foot*, *coiling vines*

J WHAT SPECIAL RESOURCE DOES YOUR MOBILITY GIVE YOU ACCESS TO?

out-of-time pocket dimension, *hidden vantage point*, *communicate through water*, *a convocation of loyal eagles*, *a window left open*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IMPEDES YOU OR SLOWS YOU DOWN?

temporal distortions, *slippery foothold*, *strong water currents*, *bad weather*, *concrete pavement*

B WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU GO TOO FAST, TOO FAR, ETC.?

space-time overload, *overlooked details*, *uncontrolled liquidation*, *exhausted by dogfighting*, *vertigo*

C WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT?

claustrophobia, *fragile*, *susceptible to evaporation*, *aggressive behaviour*, *criminal record*

D WHAT RESIDUAL EVIDENCE DOES YOUR MOVEMENT LEAVE ON YOU, ON OTHERS, OR IN THE ENVIRONMENT?

flickers in and out of time, *neighborhood sightings*, *clothes always wet*, *leaves a trail of feathers*, *persecution complex*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Tlaloc) "Who can I trust to protect the Fifth Sun?"
- (Roc) "Where have they hidden my egg?"
- (Jack and the Beanstalk) "What is up there?"

You can try exploring the following Adaptation-related options:

- Questions about things that are hidden or inaccessible in the City
- Wondering how far, how fast, or how deep you can travel
- Seeking a way to outrun or outmaneuver a threat

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Tlaloc) Wherever there is water, there I am
- (Roc) Feathered Fury
- (Jack and the Beanstalk) Magic Beans

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- Whether out of love, greed, power-trip, or concern, one of them is trying to slow you down, constrict your movement or freedom of action, or tie you down. Why? And how do they do so? Take a Hurt point on them.
- You took one of them on a "magic carpet ride", a trip they will never forget. What happened there? Ask them if it made them feel closer to you. If so, take a Help point on them. If they kept their distance since, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them once pushed you to go as fast or as far as you can. What were the circumstances? If it ended well, take a Help point on them. If it ended badly, take a Hurt point on them.

MOBILITY THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

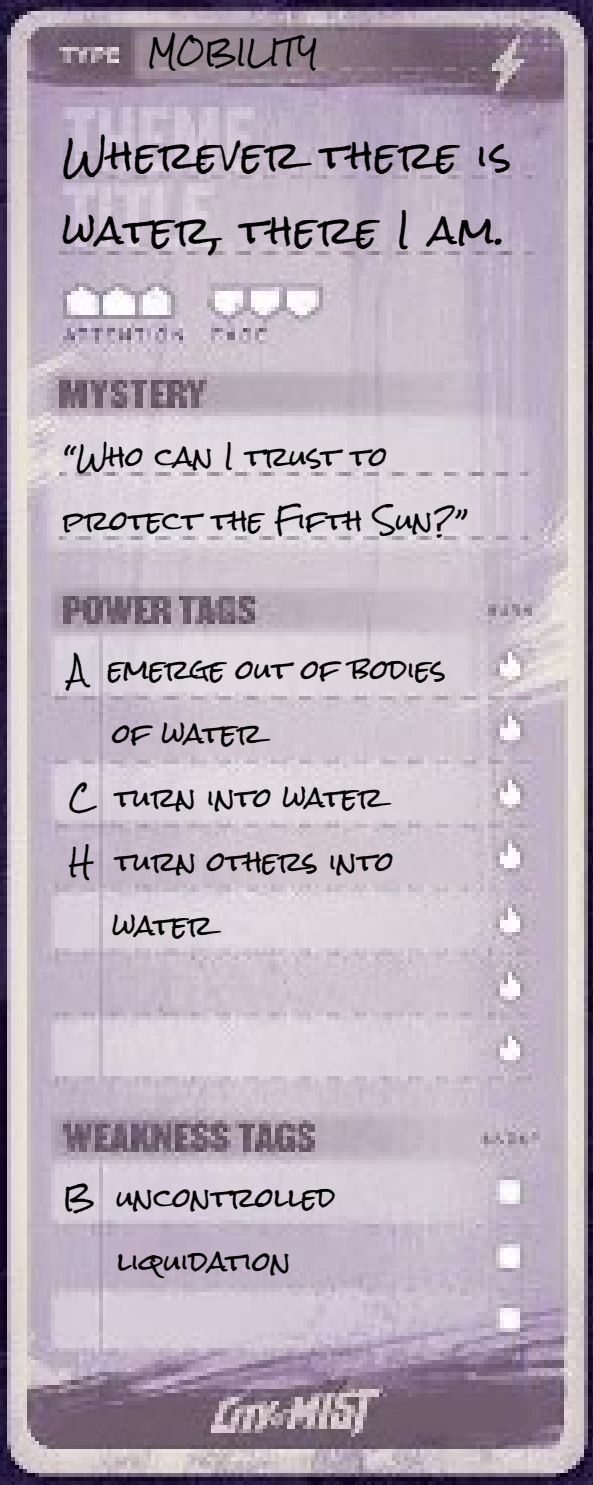
☐ **Nine Lives**
When you **Take a Risk** with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Do Try to Keep Up**
Once per session, when you or someone rolls 6 or less and the MC makes a move, you can make a single (additional) move before the MC's move takes place. You move is considered to precede the MC's move and can affect or even nullify it (*e.g.*, by reducing its tier, granting you a status, or simply changing the circumstances).

☐ **Ain't No Mountain High Enough**
Once per session, you can have your character show up or already be at a scene anywhere in the City (including cutscenes). Alternately, you can ask the MC to start a scene anywhere in the City, with your character present.

☐ **Hit the Brakes**
You can stop just before things get messy. Once per scene, when you score a 7-9 on **Take the Risk**, after hearing the MC's hard bargain or ugly choice, you can choose to forego the success of your feat and walk away unharmed.

☐ **Rev Up**
Once per session, if you can ready yourself for an action involving your mobility powers, you can choose to take an appropriate tier-2 status.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

SUBVERSION

INVISIBILITY · TRICKERY AND ILLUSIONS · THIEVERY AND STEALTH · HYPNOTISM AND SUBTLE MANIPULATION · HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT · SECRECY AND COUNTER-DETECTION

Not all Mythoi blast the world directly with their legendary tale. In a city haunted by the Mist, Mythoi have learned that gifting their Rifts with the ability to act secretly can help them secure a deeper and more lasting influence. Other Mythoi are simply subversive in nature, legends and stories of forces operating in the shadows, whether benign or insidious. Their powers are those of deception, secrecy, illusion, and trickery.

The Rift of the Puss in Boots could have the power to strangely make others think she is someone of importance; Siegfried of the Song of the Nibelungs could conjure a cloak of invisibility; the trickster god Loki could fashion life-like illusions with his thoughts; the Scottish Shifty Lad could steal anything from anyone; the Devil's Advocate could seduce and corrupt even the purest of souls; while a Changeling could rob your identity.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, did your Mythos operate secretly or deceptively? Was she able to move and act undetected? Did she use her powers to undermine authority or erode stability of either people or organizations? How so?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? HOW DOES YOUR MYTHOS HIDE ITS ACTIVITY IN THE WORLD?

- It can mask or veil _____.
- It can secretly tamper with _____.
- It employs cunning _____.
- It's difficult or impossible to detect by _____.

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE ABILITY YOU USE TO MASK OR HIDE YOUR ACTIONS?

illusory appearance, *a false air of importance*, *cloak of invisibility*, *miraculously sneak in and out of anywhere*, *corrupt those who hold power*, *take another person's identity*

B HOW DO YOU USE YOUR POWER TO DISTRACT OTHERS?

induce hypnotic trance, *beguiling boots & garb*, *echo of my voice*, *bewitched absent-mindedness*, *mistaken for an angel*, *memory wipe*

C WHAT USEFUL QUALITY DOES YOUR MAIN EFFECT HAVE?

make hypnotic suggestion, *produce fake gold*, *threatening whispers*, *"let's bet on it"*, *demonic seduction*, *appear like one's close confidant*

D WHAT DO YOU DO BEST UNDER THE COVER OF SECRECY?

waltz in unregarded, *sway them to shower me with gifts*, *smite with the strength of twelve men*, *impossible thievery*, *weaken one's faith*, *silent kill*

E WHO IS MOST LIKELY TO FALL PREY TO YOUR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY?

stronger against simple-minded people, *the rich will be poor*, *"You are blinded by your pride"*, *the king will never catch me*, *corrupt the purest souls*, *just an unpretentious Joe or Jane*

F HOW DOES OPERATING SECRETLY ALLOW YOU TO LEARN NEW INFORMATION?

mind reading, *intuit every detail of one's wealth*, *see the invisible*, *sense one's darkest desires*, *steal their memories*

G WHO ARE YOU IN LEAGUE WITH?

summon fox helpers, the pizza parlor owner's youngest son, Alberich's biker gang, the Master Thief, Lucifer himself, unwitting loved ones

H WHAT IS UNLIKELY TO AFFECT YOU THANKS TO YOUR POWERS?

laws of Man don't apply to me, *"Oh please... you don't expect me to fall for that?"*, *protected from scrying*, *can't steal from a thief*, *divine immunity*, *masked true identity*

I WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES OR CONDITIONS IMPROVE YOUR ABILITY TO ACT UNDETECTED?

intoxicated delirium, *hungry for blood*, *harder to see in the dark*, *vanish in the crowd*, *infernal courtroom superiority*

J WHAT OTHER TANGENTIAL SUBVERSIVE POWER HAVE YOU DEVELOPED?

creep without a sound, *control the wearer of the boots*, *seduce powerful women*, *make a lock open*, *siphon one's vitality*, *momentarily shift into Faerie*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT COULD EXPOSE YOU?

elaborate trickery is easier to expose, *exaggerations don't check out*, *they can see my footsteps...*, *wise advice*, *revealed by the holy light of heaven*, *cold iron*

B WHAT IS REVEALED WHEN YOU ARE EXPOSED?

just a kid, *empty pockets*, *the shameful deeds of the past*, *caught in the act*, *victims always have hope for redemption*, *an ugly goblin*

C WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU HIDING FROM?

reality sucks, *the pizza parlor owner's youngest son*, *"I'm nothing without the cloak"*, *police magnet*, *Lilith herself*, *the Gatekeepers*

D WHAT DISADVANTAGEOUS PSYCHOLOGICAL TENDENCIES HAVE YOU DEVELOPED IN THE SHADOWS OR BEHIND YOUR MASK?

(don't) play with mortals, *greediness killed the cat*, *superiority complex*, *must tease and taunt my victims*, *grows fond of my protege*, *fake personality*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life.

For example:

- (Puss in Boots) "Just how rich can I make my client?"
- (The Devil's advocate) "Can I ever find redemption?"
- (Changeling) "Who are my real parents?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- Seeking clarity about what is real and what is illusory
- Searching for new ways to subversively advance your Mythos' agenda
- Moral doubts about using your powers to deceive others

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Puss in Boots) Purrrfect Salesman
- (The Devil's advocate) Illegal Advice
- (Changeling) Switchback Persona

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them saw something that incriminated you or revealed what you truly are. What was it and under what circumstances? If you have since made them your confidant, take a Help point on them. Otherwise, take a Hurt point on them.
- You share a secret with one of them, something that the other crew members don't know. Take a Help point on them, but if this crewmate ever blows the lid on your secret, take a Hurt point on them too.

- One of them makes you feel exposed. You find their powers, abilities, or personality invasive. Take a Hurt point on them.

SUBVERSION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

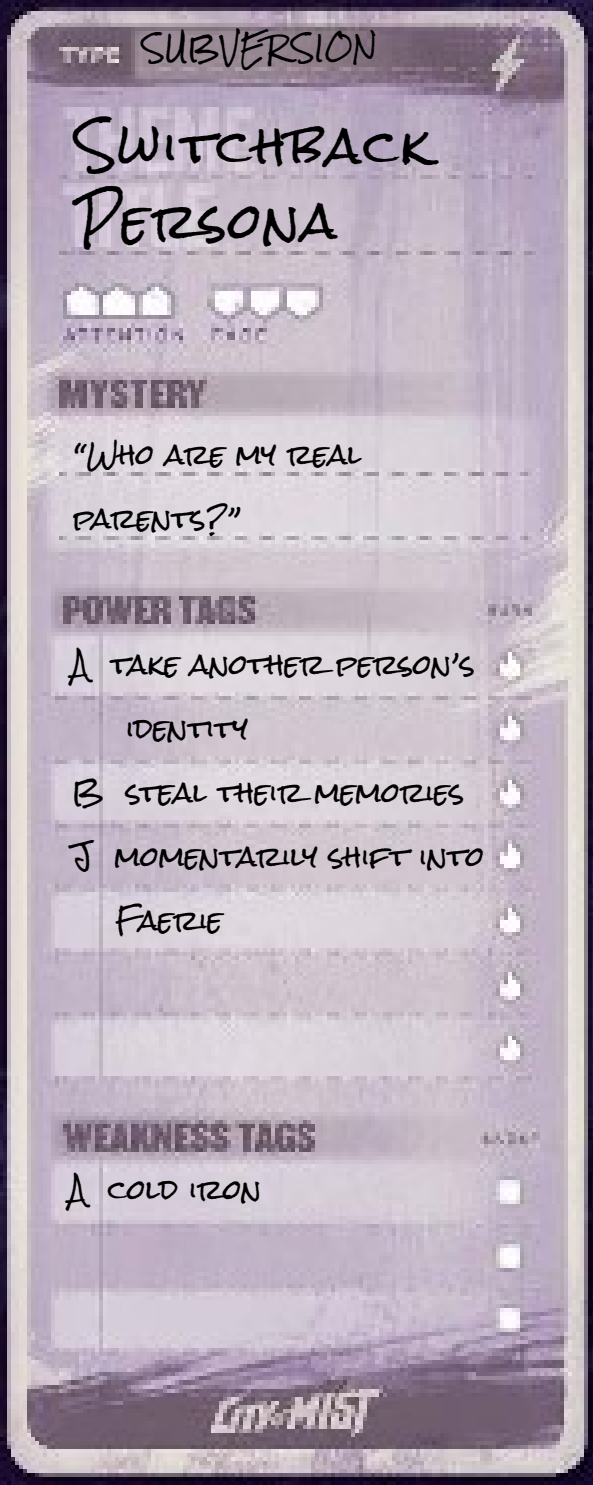
☐ **Cloak & Dagger**
When you **Sneak Around** with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Under The Wings Of Darkness**
When you **Sneak Around** with power tags from this theme, on a 10+, you can use your powers to hide or mask the actions of another character in the scene.

☐ **Stalker**
When you **Sneak Around** with power tags from this theme and get a hit, you also get 1 Clue. When you **Investigate** with power tags from this theme, on 7-9, the MC or the target player cannot choose to ask you a question back.

☐ **Oblivious**
Choose one existing NPC or PC. When you **Convince** them or **Sneak Around** them using tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!* If that character dies or leaves the story, you can choose a new target.

☐ **Go for the Jugular**
You have a knack for catching people off guard. If your powers can reasonably affect your target, you always have the clear shot or opening required to make a **Hit With All You've Got** move (you don't need to make another move to get it).





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

ADAPTATION

A RANGE OF MAGIC SPELLS · ADAPTING TO HARSH ENVIRONMENTS · SHAPESHIFTING OR POWER COPYING · A MYSTERIOUS, UNPREDICTABLE FORCE · ELEMENTAL MANIPULATION

Mortal life is in a constant state of flux and change: nothing is permanent, everything is ephemeral. Different challenges require entirely different means to overcome. Some Mythoi grant their Rifts the power to adapt to circumstance. Do they consciously do this to improve the Rift's chances of telling their story? Or is it simply the case because their story is a story of resourcefulness and limitless possibilities to begin with? It is impossible to know.

The aboriginal Mythos of Dreamtime could allow its Rift to tap into the dimension underlying creation and bend reality. Merlin the sorcerer could whip out a spell to tackle any situation. A shaman could shapeshift into animals and monsters. A doppleganger could mimic the powers of other Rifts it touches. And Pinocchio's father, Geppetto, could build toys and puppets that come to life.

Adaption themes gravitate towards broad tags by nature and so often take up the single broad tag allowed for your character (see Broad vs. Specific Tags, page 114). However, if the variety of effects granted by this theme is rather narrow, such as the doppelganger can only copy powers, the MC may rule that a tag still qualifies as specific.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, did your Mythos possess many different powers? Was she able to shape a substance, element, form, or concept to respond to various challenges? What was the unifying element in all of the manifestations of her powers?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? HOW DOES YOUR MYTHOS ADAPT TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES?

- It has a range/collection/set of _____.
- It can control and/or shape _____.
- It changes based on _____.

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT MYTHOS POWER ALLOWS YOU TO RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO EVERY SITUATION?

cast a magic spell, *lord of the tempests*, *shapeshifting*, *steal other people's powers*, *puppeteer & toymaker*, *necromancer*

B WHAT NARROW GROUP OF EFFECTS WITHIN YOUR MYTHOS' DOMAIN HAVE YOU MASTERED?

transportation spells, *create bad weather*, *beasts of the forest*, *steal protective powers*, *"My toys can speak!"*, *zombie army*

C WHAT SPECIFIC MANIFESTATION OF YOUR MYTHOS IS YOUR FAVORITE?

a sleeping curse, *smite down with lightning*, *the True Shape of the Lion*, *leave them powerless*, *exploding wind-up toy*, *rotting touch*

D WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES ENHANCE YOUR ABILITY TO ADAPT?

easier with a spellbook, *under the open sky*, *ritual of the wild*, *prolonged contact with victim*, *cluttered workshop*, *dead of the night*

E WHAT SITUATIONS DO YOU HAVE A QUICK SOLUTION FOR OR ARE ACCUSTOMED TO?

cushion a fall with feathers, *scale a barrier on a gust of wind*, *grow gills*, *make it look like the original*, *"I'll figure out this device in a jiffy..."*, *summon the ghost of an enemy's loved one*

F WHAT DO YOUR POWERS NATURALLY PROTECT YOU FROM?

counterspell, *impervious to all weather*, *sniff out other shapeshifters*, *"You cannot steal from the thief!"*, *disable machinery*, *banish the dead*

G WHAT ATTITUDE OR EMOTION LIES AT THE CORE OF YOUR ADAPTIVE POWERS?

knowledge over power, *wrath of the seas and heavens*, *all life is one, survival of the fittest*, *necessity is the mother of invention*, *nostalgia*

H WHAT SPECIFIC CLASS OF THINGS OR BEINGS CAN YOU PRODUCE OR SUMMON?

servant imps and fairies, *conjure rain elementals*, *claws*, *horns and fangs*, *decoys of myself*, *build child-sized puppets*, *animate dead bodies*

I WHAT STRATEGY OR COMBINATION OF EFFECTS DO YOU EMPLOY IN BATTLE?

deflect & dazzle, *electrocute wet targets*, *shapeshift limbs out of harm's way*, *hit someone with their own power*, *deploy contraptions from hiding*, *overrun the living*

J HOW CAN YOU ENHANCE OR WEAKEN OTHERS WITH YOUR POWERS?

enchant a weapon, *conjure heavy fog, mass shapeshift*, *grant someone the powers of another*, *annoying bells and whistles*, *suck out their life-force*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT ARE YOUR POWERS OF ADAPTIVITY DEPENDENT ON?

only works with a magic wand , needs moisture in the air , must maintain a connection with nature , must gain the victim's trust , missing parts , dead too long

B WHAT RESULTS ARE HARDER FOR YOUR MYTHOS TO ACHIEVE?

dark magic is forbidden , struggles to calm weather , afraid of shapeshifting into aggressive animals, can't hold more than one power at a time , puppets don't really look real , hard to control the swarm

C WHAT HINDERS YOUR MYTHOS OR LIMITS ITS POSSIBILITIES?

more sensitive to areas of thick Mist , blocked by shelter , instinctively drawn to native forms of current location , flammable toys , hallowed grounds

D WHAT BAD HABITS DID YOU PICK UP DUE TO YOUR ADAPTIVE POWERS?

obsessed with other sorcerers , easily infuriated, animalistic behaviour , lost sense of self-worth, constantly fidgeting with parts , no regard for the living

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Merlin) Where is the Holy Grail now?
- (Doppelganger) What is the ultimate power I could steal?
- (Geppetto) Who or what can breathe life into my toys?

You can try exploring the following options:

- Philosophical questions about the nature or source of your powers
- Seeking something that is greater than your powers
- Fears of losing touch with your original nature

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Merlin) Wizard & Guide
- (Doppelganger) Other People's Powers
- (Geppetto) A Love for Toymaking

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them once challenged you to push the boundaries and flexibility of your adaptive powers at a critical moment. What happened? Take a Help point on them.
- You think one of them is a one-trick-pony, approaching every situation with the same solu-

tions over and over again. In fact, this has hurt your crew before. Under what circumstances? Take a Hurt point on them.

- One of them is blown away by the vastness and diversity of your abilities. Ask them how it makes them feel. If it fascinates them, take a Help point on them. If it confuses them and they're weirded out, take a Hurt point on them.

ADAPTATION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

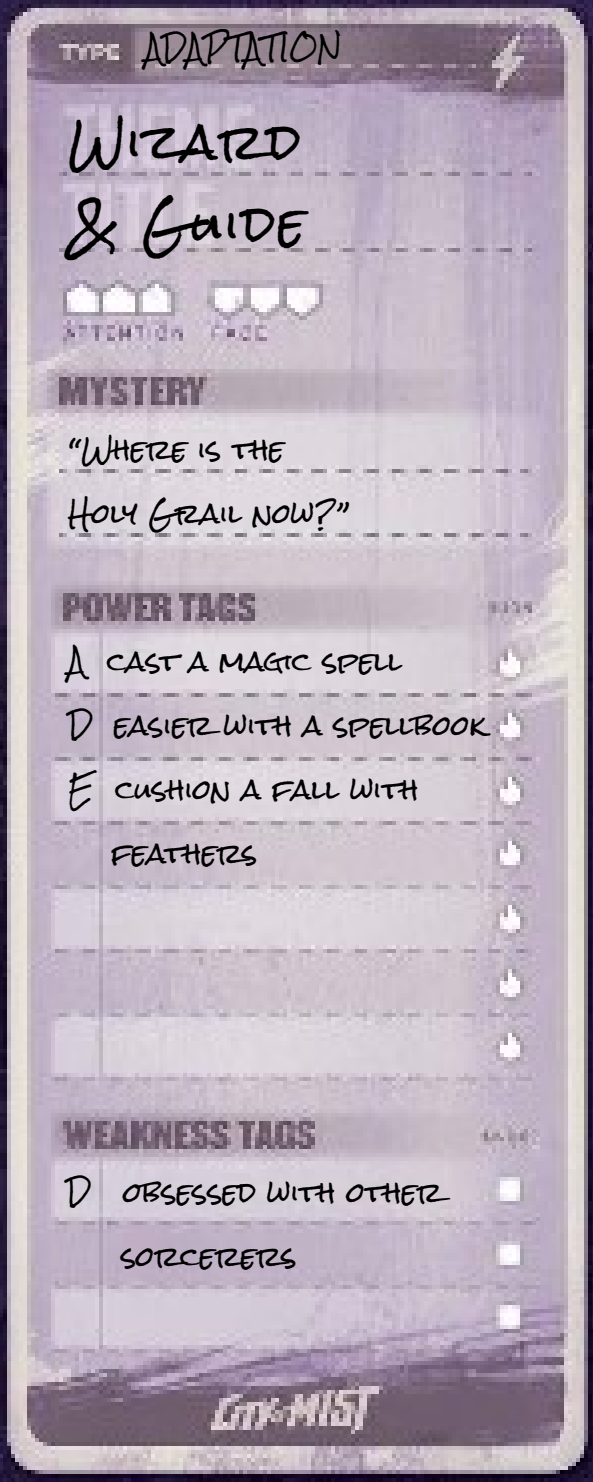
☐ **Game Changer**
When you **Change the Game** with power tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Tap Into The Source**
Once per session, you get a free batch of 2 Juice with a method that relates to this theme and to the circumstances of the current scene. You cannot add this batch to another batch.

☐ **I Have Just The Thing**
When you spend a Clue to ask the MC or one of the other players "*What would be most useful to me in this situation?*", they answer as usual. If you then have any remaining Clues in the same batch, you can convert them to Juice, one for one, and use it to come up with the thing you need most. This Juice has the same method as the Clues it came from.

☐ **Creative Stroke**
When you use tags from this theme in a creative way, choose one of the most affected characters and ask whoever is playing it (MC or another player) whether they saw it coming. They must answer honestly. If they didn't, take a temporary status *creative-stroke-1* (or similar).

☐ **Specialization**
You've learned to master a specific type of manifestation. Choose a power tag question from any of the other Mythos themebooks except Relic and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.





MYTHOS THEMEBOOK

RELIC

A MAGICAL WEAPON · A MAGICAL PIECE OF ARMOR OR CLOTHING · A GIFT FROM ANOTHER REALM · A BAG FULL OF WONDERS · MUNDANE EQUIPMENT IMBUED WITH LEGEND · A BLESSED OR WITCHED ITEM

Myths and legends are full of magical items and objects. The mojo, wanga, or gri-gri bag of African traditions could hold powerful prayers or spells. Neptune's trident gave its bearer command over the seas and over water. A hagoromo, the feathered garment worn by the Japanese celestial beings called Tennin, allowed them to fly. The Seal of Solomon was said to have the power to command demons. The Irish Fair Folk, the Tuatha Dé Danann, had four magical treasures they cherished: a cauldron, a spear, a sword, and a sacred stone.

People are not the only Rifts in the City. Sometimes, a Mythos manifests through an item, called a Relic. The item could be a special one, such as a necklace passed down from generation to generation, or a seemingly mundane object, like a baseball bat. Due to the power of the Mist, a Relic almost always seems like a modern-day object while its powers are inactive.

When you have a single Relic theme, you are not the Rift through which the Mythos enters the City – your item is. Relics have a certain degree of

awareness; even if they cannot speak or move on their own, they can sometimes activate their powers at opportune moments and steer their destiny towards someone special – a bearer. Most Relics choose a bearer and cannot then be activated by anyone else, so while the Relic is the Rift between the two of you, you still technically possess the power.

RELICS OF MYTHOI THAT ARE NOT ITEMS

Most often, Relics channel the Mythoi of legendary items, so an object is incarnated in an object. This is simply the associative nature of Mythoi. However, in some rare cases, a modern-day item can channel the Mythos of a legendary person or creature, too. For example, a pistol could channel the Mythos of the Dragon or a antique spyglass could be the Rift for the Mythos of pirate Long John Silver (*Treasure Island*). Presumably, human Rifts could channel the Mythos of legendary items too; however, they would not be considered Relics.

CONCEPT

Think about your Mythos. In the legend, is there an item of great power? Is it more interesting to you than the people who wield it? What powers did this item have?

Based on the legend, think about the answer to the question below:

? FOR WHAT PURPOSE WAS YOUR MYTHOS MADE?

- It's a receptacle used to hold _____.
- It's a device that can _____.
- It's a weapon forged to _____.
- It's a _____ made to protect _____ from _____.
- It was an insignificant object, until it was _____.
- It was a set of items which together _____.

Next, think of a few details from your legend that you can use to flesh out this concept. Use them to inspire your answers to the tag questions below.

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MAIN USEFUL FEATURE OR PART OF YOUR RELIC?

can turn into any weapon, *a fetish for voodoo spells*, *grants control over sea and water*, *flying feathered robe*, *enslaver of demons*, *Spear of Lugh*

B NAME ANOTHER WAY IN WHICH YOU USE THE SAME FEATURE.

slice through opposition, *a spell to ward off evil spirits*, *create a spring of water*, *aerial mastery*, *summon Asmodeus*, *precise hurling*

C WHAT ESSENTIAL USEFUL QUALITY LIES AT THE CORE OF YOUR RELIC?

destructive physical force, *protection from unnatural harm*, *wrathful*, *feather-light*, *wisdom of heaven*, *strive for the welfare of my clan*

D WHAT COSMETIC ATTRIBUTES DOES YOUR RELIC POSSESS?

inconspicuous in bracelet form, *creepy decorations*, *a weapon worthy of a God*, *colorful plumage*, *signet of kings*, *disappears when a mortal holds it*

E WHAT OTHER FEATURE, PART, OR ITEM DOES YOUR RELIC INCLUDE?

indestructible, *a spell for luck in gambling*, *rock-shattering prongs*, *shapeshift into a bird*, *summon Naamah*, *Cauldron of the Dagda*

F WHAT IS REVEALED TO YOU THROUGH THE USE OF YOUR RELIC?

rings in the presence of wrongdoing, *reveal enchantments*, *clairvoyance through water*, *recognize spiritual beings for what they are*, *see one's demons*, *sense who is the ruler of this place*

G WHAT OR WHO WAS YOUR RELIC DESIGNED TO AFFECT MOST?

ignores armor, *doubly potent against aggressors*, *mold the fate of mortals*, *enchanting attraction*, *"You shall obey, demon."*, *hungers for Fomorian blood*

H WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM YOUR RELIC?

ancient swordsmanship, *crafting new spells*, *speak with aquatic life*, *play the biwa (lute)*, *demonology*, *perseverance*

I WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR RELIC GOES INTO OVERDRIVE?

bigger explosions, *blessing of prosperity*, *a storm is brewing*, *turn ethereal*, *army of demons*, *the Cauldron revives the mortally wounded*

J WHAT ASPECT OR ELEMENT OF YOUR RELIC ARE YOU ONLY BEGINNING TO UNLOCK?

transform into armor, *a prayer of hope*, *ride the waves*, *the lotus of enlightenment*, *summon Baal*, *Sword of Nuada*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MOST TROUBLESOME SHORTCOMING OF YOUR RELIC?

leaves signature markings on victims, *only as strong as I am pure*, *requires a nearby body of water*, *easily slips off*, *I always hear demons*, *cumbersome*

B WHAT CAN INTERFERE WITH THE POWERS OF YOUR RELIC?

hermetic wizardry, *lost on the faithless*, *the Olympian gods*, *mortal love – the earthly tether*, *rampant demons are harder to control*, *asleep in times of peace*

C WHAT CAN DAMAGE OR DESTROY YOUR RELIC?

Lady of the Lake and the folk of Avalon, *bad juju*, *the heat of a forge*, *too easily torn*, *infernal incantations*, *dissention in my clan*

D WHAT HAS CHANGED IN YOU FOR THE WORSE BECAUSE OF YOUR RELIC?

bloodthirsty, *eccentric mumbling*, *condescending prick*, *distant and aloof*, *demonic rage*, *obese*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

MYSTERY

Choose a Mystery for this theme: a question that your Mythos wants you to explore, investigate, or discover the answer to. It could be related to your powers, to your legend, or to your mundane life. For example:

- (Mojo bag) "What did that witch doctor do to my unborn child?"
- (Hagoromo) "Where can I find the one who seeks enlightenment?"
- (Solomon's Seal) "What are the Shedim planning behind my back?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- Questions about the predetermined destiny of your Relic
- Fears of losing yourself to your Relic or becoming too reliant on it
- Seeking the maker of the Relic

Write your Mystery on your theme card.

Let the MC know what kind of clues your character might find interesting. The MC will provide opportunities for you to find answers to your Mystery. Ignoring these opportunities means you have lost interest in what your Mythos has in store for you.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Mojo bag) Bag of Many Blessings
- (Hagoromo) Kimono of Celestial Beauty
- (Solomon's Seal) Kiss My Ring, Demon

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- Once, in a moment of crisis, one of them tried to borrow your Relic. What happened next? If you didn't like that, take a Hurt point on them. If you thought they did right by your Relic, take a Help point on them.
- One of them has more knowledge about your Relic than you do. Ask them whether they're sharing it with you. If so, take a Help point on them. If not, take a Hurt point on them.
- To your Mythos, one of them seems like the modern-day version of the character who was supposed to own this Relic, the character who steals it, or the character whom this Relic was meant to destroy or save. Take a Help or Hurt point on them accordingly.

RELIC THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

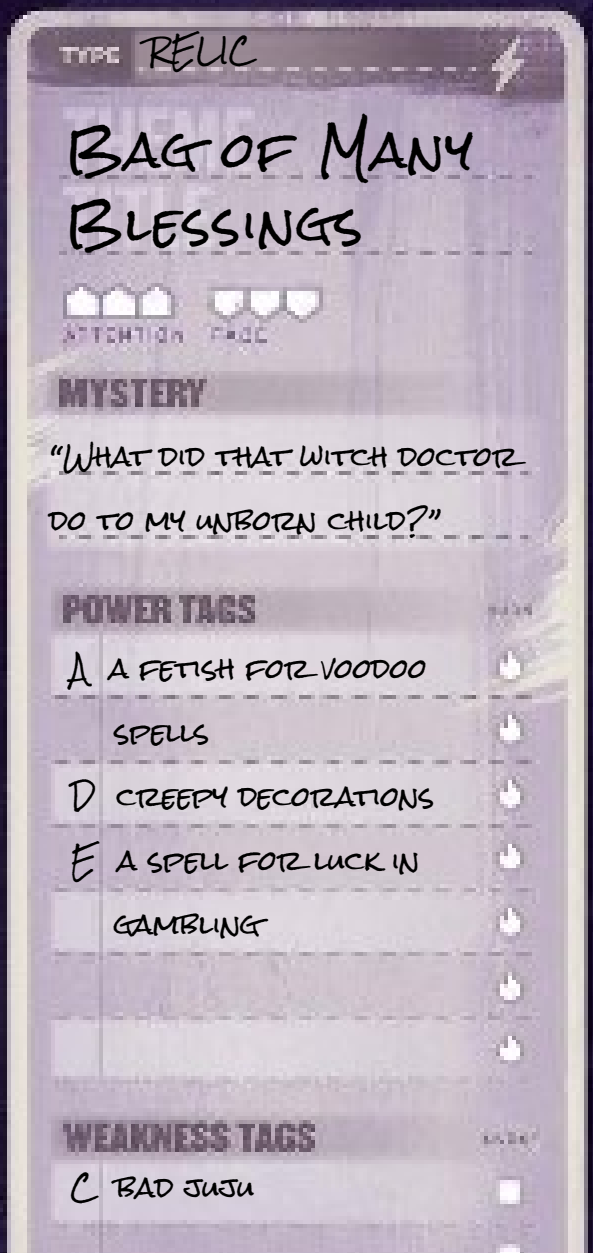
☐ **Eternal Bond**
Mark a power tag from this theme as burnt to immediately retrieve your Relic from anywhere in the City. Mark Fade to immediately remove all statuses from your Relic (including tier-6 statuses). This can reform your Relic in case it was destroyed or broken.

☐ **Made For This**
Choose a Core Move that best represents the actions you most often use your Relic for. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Ultimate Unlock**
You tap into the deepest place of power within your Relic – and unleash it. When you **Stop. Holding. Back.** you can choose to forego the roll and gain an automatic 10+ by marking an additional Fade on this theme. If your sacrifice is Significant or No Return, you mark Fade twice instead of once (in No Return, you also burn this theme's tags). If your sacrifice is Ultimate, you replace this theme.

☐ **Transference**
Some of the power of your Relic rubbed off on you. Choose a power tag question from any of the other Mythos themebooks and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **The Mythos Within**
Choose a Mythos themebook that best represents the powers of your Relic. Choose a theme improvement from that themebook.





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

DEFINING EVENT

A THUNDERING REALIZATION · LOSS OF A LOVED ONE, VALUED POSSESSION, OR SOCIAL STANDING · AN ACCIDENT · RISE TO GREATNESS · 15 MINUTES OF FAME · ENLIGHTENMENT

Life throws you curveballs you can't anticipate, dramatic events that shape you irrevocably. For better or worse, the person you used to be before this event either ceased to exist or was abandoned in favor of a new version of you, one that was forged in that fateful moment or period. Perhaps it was an accident, a crime you were involved in, a revelation, a chance meeting that influenced you, a great victory, a time of trials, etc.

The Defining Event theme focuses on the residual influence of a specific event or time in your character's life. Having a Defining Event theme means you still define yourself through that moment or time in your life. If the follow-up of that event is just as central to your story as the memory of what happened and how it shaped you, you should pick another appropriate theme (either in addition to or instead of the Defining Event theme). For example, if you swore to do something following a tragic event, perhaps a Mission theme is in order; if you gained Mythos powers, you should represent them using one of the Mythos theme types.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life, particularly her past. Where does she come from? What did she do? What time in her life influenced and shaped her the most?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU THAT CHANGED YOUR LIFE FOREVER?

- When I was [age], _____.
- One day, _____.
- There was a time in my life when _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: When did this happen? Who was involved? What happened in the aftermath of this life-altering event?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT KIND OF STRONG EMOTION DID YOUR DEFINING EVENT LEAVE YOU WITH?

filled with rage, a sense of unity with all life, driven to mete out justice, ambition

B WHAT PART OF YOUR OLD SELF, WHILE DEEPLY CHANGED, STILL SERVES YOU?

ex-celebrity, youthful curiosity, inherited fortune, love of the local community

C WHAT MUNDANE BUT USEFUL OBJECT DID YOU OBTAIN DURING YOUR DEFINING EVENT, THAT HAS BEEN WITH YOU EVER SINCE?

Helix Labs access card, a rusty sword, a picture of my enemy, fancy clothes

D WHAT AUTHORITY WAS VESTED IN YOU DURING YOUR DEFINING EVENT OR AFTER IT?

leader of a secret order of knights, the chosen one, head of a corporation, City mayor

E WHO DID YOU BOND OR CONNECT WITH IN THE AFTERMATH OF YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

media connections, a majestic eagle, a trusted butler, a secret sponsor, a gang of lowlifes and rejects

F WHAT SKILL OR MUNDANE ABILITY DID YOU PICK UP DURING OR DUE TO YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

meditation, swordsmanship, light sleep, lying shamelessly, wilderness survival

G WHAT KNOWLEDGE DID YOU GAIN ACCESS TO THANKS TO YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

manual of medical conditions, a sacred prayer, the underworld, City finances

H WHAT APPROACH TO LIFE DID YOU ADOPT FOLLOWING YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

"can't be too safe", humility, always prepared, power-hungry, survival of the fittest

I WHAT PHYSICAL CHANGE OR IMPROVEMENT STEMMED FROM YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

acute sense of smell, great reflexes, sprinter, fake smile

J HOW DO PEOPLE TREAT YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

secret admirer, commands reverence, fearsome, no-one dares to refuse me

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT EMOTIONAL SCAR OR BAGGAGE DID YOUR DEFINING EVENT LEAVE YOU WITH?

emotional, craves guidance, vengeful, hollow inside, angry at ex-partner

B FOLLOWING YOUR DEFINING EVENT, WHAT RESPONSIBILITY OR SOCIAL BURDENS DO YOU HAVE TO SHOULDER?

rejected as a freak, oath of solitude, pretends to be a playboy, angry voters, a never-ending to-do list.

C WHO OR WHAT IS HAUNTING YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

Helix Labs investigators, agents of the rival faction, nightmares and flashbacks, enamoured secretary.

D WHAT IS NOW BROKEN WITHIN YOU, PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY, DUE TO YOUR DEFINING EVENT?

light sensitivity, training injury, over-exhaustion, asthma attack, twisted psyche.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your defining event. For example:

- (Unwillingly killed loved one) "I will never forgive myself."
- (Mountain-top experience) "Peace within and without is the path to enlightenment."
- (Big heist) "One last job, they said. Never again."

You can try exploring the following options:

- A world view that you adopted following your defining event
- Something you promised to yourself or someone else following your defining event
- How you perceive yourself in light of your defining event

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means the impact of this event on your life is waning. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates the event or its impact on your life. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Unwillingly killed loved one) Never Say His Name
- (Mountain-top experience) Path of Tranquility
- (Big heist) The Museum Job

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them was present in your defining event. What was their part in it? Take a Help or Hurt point on them or accordingly.
- One of them is trying to help you (or make you) get over your defining event and move on. If you appreciate it, take a Help point on them. If you resent it, take a Hurt point on them.
- In the aftermath of your defining event, one of them was there to help you pick up your life without judging or asking questions. Take a Help point on them.

DEFINING EVENT THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

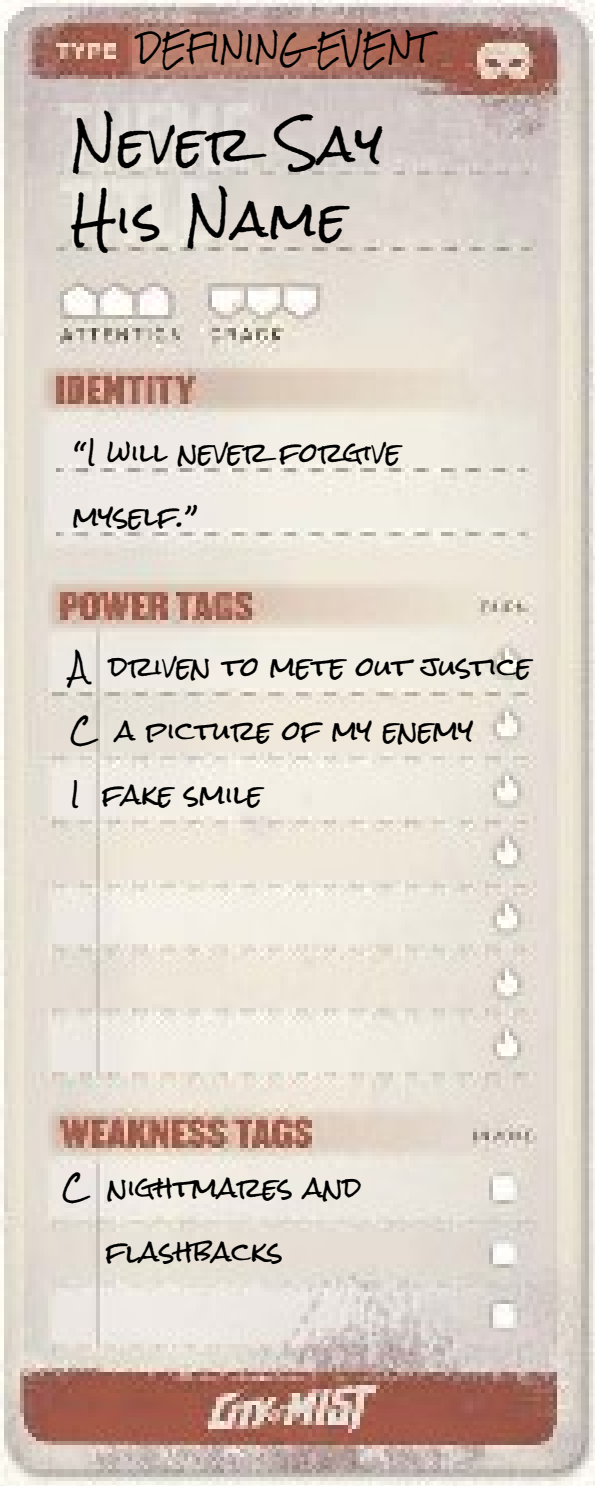
☐ **Touchy Subject**
Whenever someone else mentions your defining event in a way that irks or offends you, you can choose to go into an emotional state and take an appropriate tier-2 status of your choice for the rest of the scene or until you calm down, whichever comes sooner. When it's over, the MC will give you an ongoing tier-1 status to reflect the aftermath of your behavior.

☐ **Take It To The Grave**
When other PCs or NPCs get a Clue on you, they can't ask you about your defining event.

☐ **Echoes From The Past**
Choose and answer a power tag question from the Training, Routine, or Defining Relationship themebooks that reflects something of who you were before, something that now re-emerges. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **Over It**
Whenever the MC or another player invokes one of this theme's weakness tags, you can say "I'm over it" and count the tag as a power tag instead. Mark Crack.

☐ **Getting Good at This**
You've become comfortable with who you are now. Choose a Core Move that best reflects the way you use this theme's tags. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP

A LOVE INTEREST · SOMEONE DEPENDENT ON YOU · A TEACHER, MENTOR, OR GUARDIAN · A TEAM, GANG, OR OTHER AFFILIATION · A PARTNER OR A SIDEKICK · A NEMESIS

Being alive is being connected to others. Everyone has someone who has shaped their lives – for better or for worse: a parent, a friend, a lover, a mentor, etc. Even relationships with those who have done you wrong could be a part of who you are. For the most part, however, relationships are complicated: there is the good and the bad, the push and the pull, what you give and what you get.

A defining relationship isn't just any important relationship: it's at the center of your life (along with your other themes). It makes you who you are or takes up a lot of your time. Perhaps you have a crazy lover who's into guns and knives and always gets you into trouble. If you are the Rift of the Mythos of Lucifer, maybe you and your father have a complicated relationship ever since he kicked you out of the house. Your partner in crime could be the only person you trust. Or your grandchild brings you joy that makes life worth living.

Relationships are not restricted to individuals; you can have a relationship with a group. This can include family and social relationships as well as more formal affiliations. You could be the religious leader of an underprivileged community that is counting on you for strength. Maybe you are a member of a secret club or cult, whose other

members provide you with resources but demand results. And of course there is always the possibility that you are a part of a normal dysfunctional family, like so many in the City.

If the object of your defining relationship is a character who exists in the series regardless of your relationship, the MC has control over the character. You can use your tags normally when they are relevant, e.g. to call on them, to receive help from them, to influence them, etc. If the object of your defining relationship features mostly in your character's story, they become your secondary character (see Secondary Characters, page 248).

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. Which individual or group means the world to her, plays a major role in her life, or has the most influence on her? With whom does she feel she belongs?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHO PLAYS THE BIGGEST ROLE IN YOUR LIFE?

- My (grand)parent / sibling / spouse / (grand)child / lover / best friend / mentor or guru / neighbor / partner / employer / etc.
- My family / friends / social circle / community / company / gang / teammates / etc.
- The club / cult / association / movement / etc. I belong to.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: How close are you to them? Do they know about your Mythical powers? Are they Rifts themselves? What does your Mythos feel about them?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHY IS THIS RELATIONSHIP SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

a cushy bank account, true love, she keeps me on edge, I always have a home to go to, a partner in crime, a sense of belonging, a network of spies.

B NAME A USEFUL QUALITY OR SKILL THEY HAVE AND THAT THEY CAN USE TO HELP YOU.

business acumen, clever boy, dirty infighting, love can heal anything, con artist, many hands make light work, secretive operation.

C WHAT WERE YOU FORCED TO LEARN BECAUSE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP?

certified accountant, better excuses, never be caught off guard, hide my true feelings, demolitions, police procedures and how to avoid them, ancient languages.

D BEING AROUND THEM HAS MADE YOU...

wealthier than ever before, popular, suave and attractive, angry at the world, good team player, determined, a good liar.

E WHEN YOU CALL FOR HELP, WHO WILL AID YOU? (THE ANSWER CAN BE YOUR RELATIONSHIP)

family 'friends' in high places, my best friend, HER, an angel in a black limo, Ari Schmidt, Maria the flower girl, the White Rose.

F WHAT GIFT, HEIRLOOM, TOOL, ETC. DID THEY GIVE YOU?

access to family assets, a picture of us, a serrated combat knife, an old compass, fake ID, a prayer book, a cyanide pill .

G TO DEAL WITH THEM, YOU NEED TO BE...

my own person, daring, tougher than before, free of confinement, familiar with every scam in the book, compassionate, willing to go all the way.

H NAME AN ACTIVITY THAT YOU SHARE.

arguing, (gossipping about) high-school rumors, pub crawling, chessboard war, breaking & entering, giving a sermon, planning machinations.

I WHAT HELPS YOU PROTECT THEM?

a battery of lawyers, face always hidden, I'd do anything for her, self-control, handheld radio, crimeworld connections, personality-switching techniques.

J WHERE DO YOU SPEND TIME TOGETHER?

the mansion, football field bleachers, my motorcycle, Museum of the Arts, Ambrosia nightclub, the cathedral, the private gentlemen's club.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A HOW CAN THEY BE HURT OR IMPEDED?

financial trouble, cutting insults, always gets into trouble, sickly old man, forgets to watch his back, easily tempted, brought to light.

B WHAT NEGATIVE EFFECT DO THEY HAVE ON YOU?

"the old wo/man will find out", freezes when sees Kaito, something to prove, haunted by shame, taking too many risks, vengeful towards those who hurt the community, always being watched.

C WHO OR WHAT ELSE IS VYING FOR THEIR ATTENTION OR TIME?

my successful brother-in-law, the most beautiful girl in school, her ex, Gabriel, drinking problems, everyday preoccupations, federal agents.

D UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THEY BE UNABLE TO HELP YOU?

a disgrace to the family, "You're a freak!", lost interest, fallen angel, running from the police, fear of being excommunicated, suspected of treason.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your defining Relationship. For example:

- (Crazy lover) "Nothing will ever stand in the way of our love!"
- (Partner in crime) "This will never work without Izzy. "
- (Congregation) "I won't let my flock be mistreated or misled."

You can try exploring the following options:

- A statement about what you would sacrifice for the object of your defining relationship
- A belief about how much you need the object of your defining relationship
- A wish you have for that person or group

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means you are losing interest in your relationship or that the the other party is. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your relationship and its place in your life. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Crazy lover) My Naughty Girlfriend
- (Partner in crime) Izzy Malone, Easy Money
- (Congregation) Deliver Us From Evil

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them has openly or subtly challenged your relationship, trying to influence either you, the other party, or both to end it. Why? What do they get out of it? Take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them once helped you save your relationship or the object of your relationship. What were the circumstances? How did they help? Take a Help point on them.
- One of them is your ex (former lover, partner, mentor, employer, etc.) or otherwise preceded your current relationship (biological parent, member of a group you were previously affiliated with). Ask them whether they give their blessing to your new relationship. If they do, take a Help point on them. If they don't, take a Hurt point on them.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

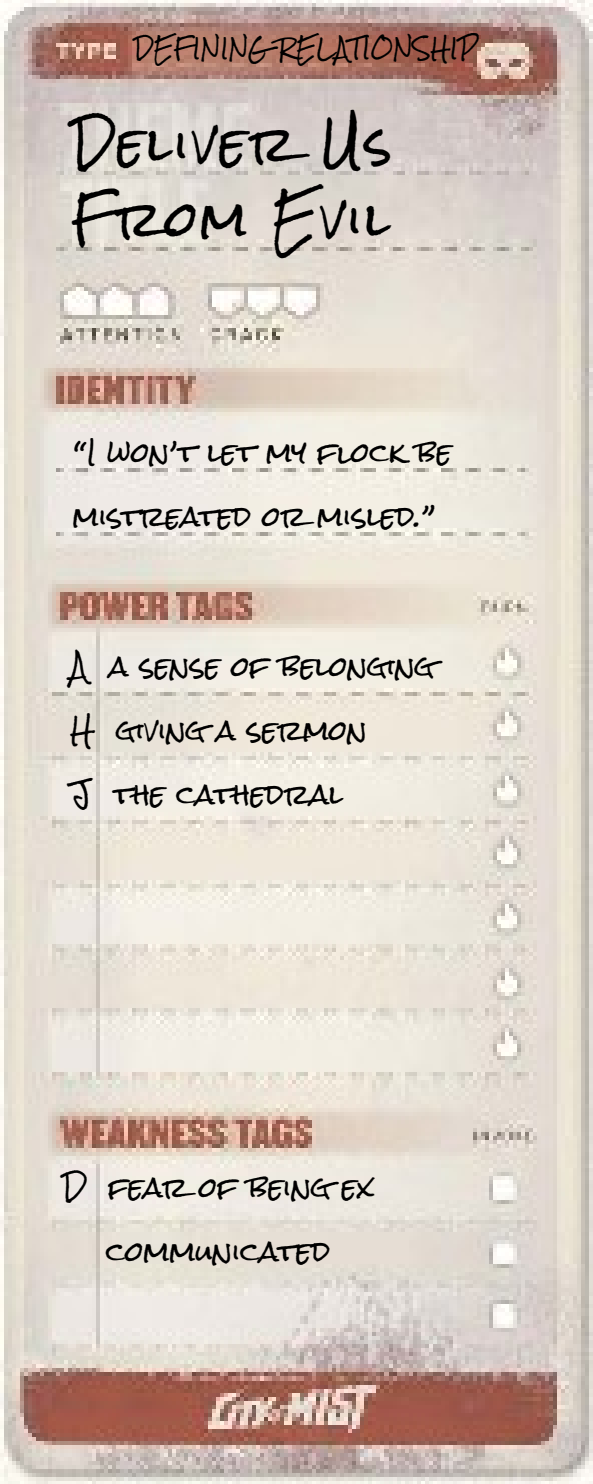
☐ **Forever**
When you have downtime and you choose to give this theme attention, you can choose to remove one Crack from this theme instead of receiving Attention.

☐ **Protect At All Costs**
When you get a hit on **Face Danger**, you can always choose to extend the outcome to the object of your defining relationship (in addition to yourself), if it even remotely makes sense.

☐ **Shared Experiences**
Choose a power tag question from the Defining Event or Personality themebooks that reflects a transformation you went through because of your relationship and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **Back-to-Back**
Once per session, when you make a move with the object of your defining relationship at your side, you can trade a miss result for a 7-9.

☐ **Who's the Boss**
Choose two Core Moves that best reflect your attitude towards the object of your defining relationship. When you make those move against them, they're *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

MISSION

PHILANTHROPY OR GOOD-DOING · REVENGE · A SWORN OATH OR AN UNBREAKABLE PROMISE · A JOB THAT MUST GET DONE · AN ACT OF CONSCIENCE · A SOCIAL OR POLITICAL CAUSE · A PERSONAL GOAL · AN ONGOING SEARCH · AN OBSESSION

It's one thing to believe something should be done; it's quite another to try and make it happen. Passion, necessity, hatred, and even destiny could all be the motives for which you have decided to undertake a great task. It may be a social or moral duty that you feel must actively be pursued, such as fighting crime or poverty. It could be a personal matter, such as the search for something stolen from you or a vendetta against someone who hurt you. It could even be a challenge you decided to take on. You could be pursuing this goal for your own benefit, for someone else's sake, for your neighborhood, for the City, or even for all of humanity.

Despite being a Logos theme, your Mission is not limited to the ordinary aspect of your life. You are a Rift, and within you the legendary becomes ordinary and vice versa. Maybe the Evil Queen poisoned your mother and you seek a cure; perhaps you vowed to bring down the Rift of Hades; or, as part of your Mythos as Anansi the Spider, you must capture the proverbial python, leopard, and hornets. The tags you gain from this theme can still only be of a mundane and ordinary nature as they are not Mythos powers; they are aspects gained through the pursuit of your mission.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. What goal is she always thinking about? What has she dedicated her life to?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

- I must / I swore to _____.
- Following _____, I decided I will never stop _____.
- This City needs _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: When and under what circumstances did you decide to undertake your mission? Who else is involved? Who gave you the mission? Who is the mission for?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT DO YOU NEED MOST IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT YOUR MISSION?

brawl, seasoned negotiator, tracking, map of the subway system, sawed-off shotgun.

B WHAT WERE YOU FORCED TO LEARN WHILE ON YOUR MISSION?

dodge, throw a punch, bypass electric locks, quick reload, Arthur's tactics.

C WHO IS HELPING YOU ON YOUR MISSION?

contacts in every neighborhood, an unknown informer, a beautiful cartographer, gang of petty crooks.

D WHAT KNOWLEDGE DO YOU HAVE ABOUT THE TARGET OR GOAL OF YOUR MISSION?

Anatoly's underground operation, urban tales and legends, social welfare, common passwords.

E WHAT SORT OF TACTICS OR METHODS DO YOU EMPLOY TO REACH YOUR GOAL?

snooping around, disguise, interrogation, lies lies lies, all out attack, "an eye for an eye", smoke 'em out.

F PURSUING YOUR MISSION HAS MADE YOU...

athletic, a widely supported public figure, alert, lots of money, aware of every tiny movement around me, passionate about art.

G WHAT IS THE ROOT OF YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE TASK AT HAND?

faith in the church, good citizen, sheer determination, I hate my boss, true love.

H WHAT USEFUL POSITION OR STATUS DID YOU HAVE TO EARN FOR THE MISSION TO SUCCEED?

street cred, owner of local pawnshop, rooftop vantage point, working as the Queen's cleaning lady, warmonger.

I WHAT DO YOU HAVE THAT MIGHT HELP YOU WITH YOUR MISSION?

safe house, a key to the lost chest, the recipe to an amazing sandwich, a red sports car, the mayor's phone number.

J WHAT PART OF YOUR PLAN TO REALIZE YOUR GOAL HAVE YOU HONED THE MOST?

ready for the kill, puzzle cracker, getaway car, a wooden stake, police connections.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OR BURDENS OF PURSUING THE MISSION?

known vigilante, nervous, impossible schedule, domestic problems, a cureless disease, consumed by hatred, fugitive.

B WHAT ARE THE WEAK POINTS OR WILDCARDS IN YOUR PLAN?

unreliable allies, they know I'm coming, little brother, Arthur's cunning, the Queen's mirror.

C WHICH APPROACH OR PSYCHOLOGICAL DISPOSITION WILL GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR ENDEAVORS?

too eager, bouts of despair, cocky, "money is not an object", gullible.

D WHY HAVE YOU NOT SUCCEEDED SO FAR?

overpowering competition, the status-quo, Morgana, "I don't know where to start", can't do this alone.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your mission. For example:

- (Philanthropist) "The citizens of this city deserve better than this!"
- (Vendetta) "She'll pay for what she did to my family."
- (Aspirations) "Get rich or die trying."

You can try exploring the following options:

- A strong conviction that drives you forward on your mission
- The reason for which you undertook the mission
- Hatred or disdain to anyone or anything who might stand in your way

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means you are losing interest in your mission or losing the drive to continue. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your goal or what it says about you. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Philanthropist) Heart of Gold
- (Vendetta) Lilith Must Die
- (Aspirations) Hungry For More

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them is of great importance to your cause. If they play an instrumental role in your plans to achieve your goal, take a Help point on them. If they are a potential threat to your cause, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them has aided you in your efforts and earned your earnest gratitude and respect. Take a Help point on them.
- One of them thinks your mission is doomed to fail or must never be allowed to succeed (they don't have to tell you which). Ask them if they show it or hide it. If they show it, take a Hurt point on them. If they hide it, take a Help point on them.

MISSION THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

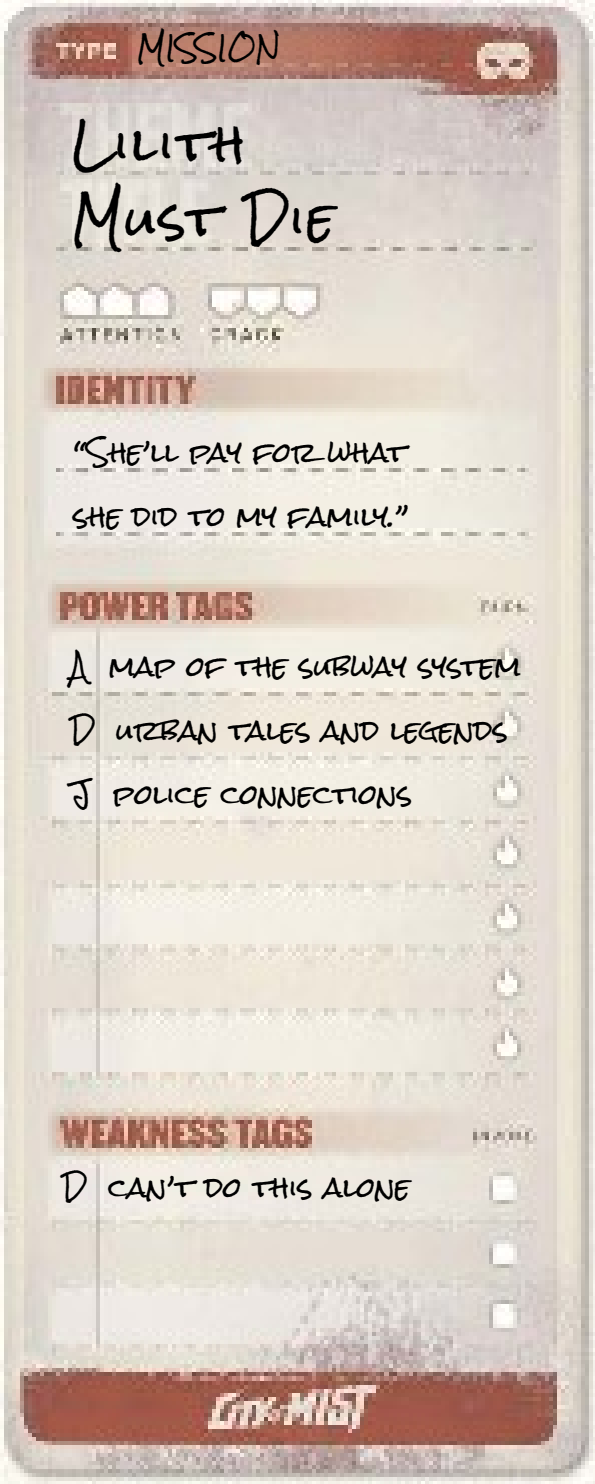
☐ **Gung Ho**
Tell everyone at the table what is the next objective or milestone on your mission. You take a *gung-ho-1* status which applies to all actions you take to achieve that objective. If this status is removed, you regain it on your next **Montage (Downtime)** move. When you complete the objective, remove the status and mark Crack. You can then announce a new objective or milestone. You can only have one Gung Ho objective and status at a time.

☐ **Follow me!**
When you try to **Convince** someone to join your cause, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Can't Be Too Ready**
Choose a power tag question from the Training or Possessions themebooks that reflects something you acquired in order to complete your mission and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **When Hell Freezes Over**
When you sacrifice something you truly want in order to abide by your Mission's Identity, you not only mark Attention on the theme (as usual) but also remove one crack from it, if any.

☐ **Getting Good At This**
Choose a Core Move that best represents your most common course of action on your mission. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

PERSONALITY

CHARACTER TRAITS AND QUIRKS · TEMPERAMENT · PERSONAL STYLE · HABITS · SOCIAL SKILLS · LIFESTYLE · ATTITUDE · AN ONGOING ACT · MENTAL STABILITY OR LACK THEREOF

There is more to life than the things taking place around you. Who you are, how you experience things, and what goes on in your mind and heart can have a far greater impact on your life than any other single detail in it. Your personality can save you even when you have nothing else to show for, or it could be your undoing.

Perhaps you are a persevering, salt-of-the-earth reporter, who stays positive and carries on exposing the truth despite pressing finances and threats from upstairs. Maybe you're a deranged professor whose inventive mind cracked under a barrage of incredible scientific insights. You could be a smooth talking charmer who slyly talks his way up the social ladder or a teenager too shy to allow herself to be seen.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. How does she behave? What kind of personality traits does she display? Is she playing a role for the world to see? What does she think or feel about herself?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT ARE YOU LIKE?

- I am often _____.
- I want others to _____.
- Other people find me _____.
- I think / feel that, as far as people go, I am _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: How does your personality affect others around you? What made you develop this personality (life events, parenting, genetics, choice)?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT LIES AT THE CORE OF YOUR PERSONALITY?

Truly wants to do good, tough as nails, self-reliant, my own type of eccentric, limitless creativity, opportunist, I wish I could just disappear.

B WHAT IS THE FIRST THING PEOPLE NOTICE ABOUT YOU?

handsome, glamorous, rugged, hipster look, bottle-bottom glasses, people see what they want to see, easily overlooked.

C WHAT INTERPERSONAL SKILLS DO YOU HAVE THANKS TO YOUR PERSONALITY?

charming, bullshit detector, good judge of character, sarcastic remarks, creep people out, talk anyone into anything, never spills the beans.

D WHEN YOU WANT, YOU CAN ALSO COME ACROSS AS...

threatening, seductive, authoritative, intelligent, pitiful, appear as a professional, dangerous.

E WHAT SPECIAL SKILL OR STATUS DID YOU PURSUE BECAUSE OF YOUR PERSONALITY?

celebrity, sowing rumors, DIY repairs, perfect pitch, devise a deranged plan, press pass, no criminal record.

F WHAT ASPECT OF YOUR PERSONALITY KEEPS YOU SAFE OR HELPS YOU RESIST INFLUENCE?

incorruptible, emotionally impervious, common sense, free thinker, cautious, talk my way out of anything, "You wouldn't hurt a child, would you?".

G WHAT QUALITY OR ITEM BEST EXPRESSES YOUR PERSONAL STYLE OR ENHANCES IT?

cornfed, jewelry baby!, underarm holster, fashionable carry-all bag, lab coat, designer suits, hidden kitchen cleaver.

H WHAT USEFUL HABIT OR ROUTINE HAVE YOU CULTIVATED THANKS TO YOUR PERSONALITY?

pick-up lines, sniff out a social disaster, light sleeper, all the dance moves, stink bombs formula, sales pitch, people-watching.

I WHAT TYPICALLY INTERESTS YOU?

city current affairs, shopping, reported conspiracies, city nightlife, recent scientific breakthroughs, local big players, psychology.

J HOW DO YOU STRIVE TO IMPROVE YOURSELF?

push myself, be kind to others, lead from the front, I'll try anything once, try to appear sane, get rich quick schemes.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU LET YOURSELF GO TOO FAR?

clingy attention seeker, bitter, distrustful, tries too hard, overexcited and unintelligible, self-promoting, people think I'm a freak.

B WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE OR CONDITIONS MAKE YOUR PERSONALITY LESS EFFECTIVE?

hostile crowd, hyenas in evening gowns, soft spot for children, wasted on the common people, psychiatric drugs, bad angle, small spaces.

C WHAT ASPECTS OF YOUR APPEARANCE, STYLE, OR PHYSIQUE CAN GET IN THE WAY?

memorable face, sore joints, harsh frown, tangled headphones cable, unkempt mass of hair, poor man's shoes, delicate.

D WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE PUSHED TO THE CORNER?

fit of rage, mental breakdown, petrified, drama queen, analysis paralysis, speechless, trauma re-enactment.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your personality. For example:

- (Deranged professor) "Sorry the professor is not in right now. Can I take a message?"
- (Manipulator) "If you want to get ahead, always say what they want to hear."
- (Quiet and discreet) "I'm not here!

You can try exploring the following options:

- A typical quote that encapsulates your personality
- How you would like others to see you or treat you
- What you think about yourself

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means your personality is changing and that you do not rely on the same attitude as before. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your personality and style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Deranged professor) A Few Sandwiches Short Of A Picnic
- (Manipulator) Smooth Operator
- (Quiet and discreet) Wallflower

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them dislikes something about your behavior and is repeatedly making comments about it or trying to get you to change. Ask them what do they dislike and what would it take for them to be happy with you. Whatever they say, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them accepts you the way you are, maybe even likes your personality. Take a Help point on them.
- The personality of one of them seems to be the exact opposite of yours (even if they don't have

a theme for it). If it makes it easier for your personality to shine or for you to be yourself, take a Help point on them. If it comes into conflict with your personality, take a Hurt point on them.

PERSONALITY THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

☐ **This Is My Moment**
Once per session, you can impose +1 tier when you **Convince** or get +1 Juice when you **Change the Game** using tags from this theme.

☐ **It's Showtime**
Choose a single power tag from this theme. When you burn it for a hit, you get an automatic result of 9 (instead of 7) and a Power of 3, for a total unmodified score of 12. Statuses apply to both your automatic result and your Power, as usual.

☐ **Reinvent Myself**
When you replace this theme, you can choose to take a new Personality theme instead of a Mythos theme. As usual, you lose all your improvements, including this one, and gain Build-Up points instead. Your new personality must be entirely different than the theme you discarded.

☐ **Why I Do This**
Choose and answer a power tag question from the Defining Relationship, Possessions, or Routine themebooks that reflects the company you keep, the things you own, or the things you do regularly because of your personality. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **Getting Good At This**
Choose a Core Move that best represents your personality. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

POSSESSIONS

GUNS, LOTS OF GUNS · AN OUTFITTED VEHICLE · A TOOL SET · CASH, SAVINGS, OR ASSETS · A HOARD · USEFUL PERSONAL EFFECTS · STANDARD ISSUE OR CUSTOM GEAR · TRINKETS

The world is full of useful stuff: things that make your life easier, that do your job for you, or that can make other people do as you say. The right tools can speed things up, and sometimes you can't get the job done without them at all. Weapons can be used for self-defense, intimidation, tackling opposition, or just mindless violence. Vehicles help you get around. Worldly possessions keep you happy and flush.

Possessions may or may not have a purpose. When you keep or carry certain equipment, expecting you'll need it, it is most likely connected to your activities. Conversely, you may be hoarding things just for the sake of owning them or for no reason at all.

Note that this theme represents only mundane possessions; if there's anything legendary, supernatural, technologically advanced, or even mysterious about your possessions, such as Dr. Frankenstein's lab equipment, you should use the Relic theme.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. What does she normally carry around on her person? What interesting items does she keep in her purse, in a locked desk drawer, or a compartment hidden under the rug? What does she own?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT DO I KEEP OR CARRY IN MY POSSESSION?

- It's all about one item: the _____.
- Gear or equipment that helps me with _____.
- A collection of _____.
- My entire estate.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: When and how did you acquire these possessions? What did it cost you? Where can you get more, if you had to?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN YOUR POSSESSION?

a magnifying glass, a pair of old revolvers, safe-cracking tools, a world-renowned painting, my multi-billion dollar company, a warehouse full of junk, a necklace that belonged to my mother.

B HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR POSSESSIONS IN GENERAL?

an arsenal of medieval weapons, a pawn shop full of wonders, Burke Industries Inc., a farm at the edge of the city.

C WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT ITEM IS IN YOUR POSSESSION?

a police badge, a shotgun, black catsuit, a golden ring, a luxurious yacht, hobo rags, a picture of the man who killed my mother.

D WHAT COMPONENT OR ATTACHMENT ADDED TO ONE OF YOUR ITEMS CAN CHANGE OR IMPROVE ITS FUNCTION?

magnifying glass → *fingerprint kit, a pair of old revolvers* → *hollow point rounds, a shotgun* → *cable-gun extension, cherry red 66' Chevy* → *liquid nitrogen tank, a luxurious yacht* → *helipad and helicopter, a sniper rifle* → *telescopic sight.*

E WHAT KIND OF STUNTS OR MOVES DO YOU TYPICALLY DO WITH YOUR POSSESSIONS?

gunslinging stunts, quick draw, pick a lock, sales pitch, throw money at the problem, hostile takeover, find a needle in a haystack, threatening monologue.

F WHAT HELPS YOU CONCEAL YOUR POSSESSIONS OR THE FACT YOU ARE USING THEM?

concealed holster, unregistered warehouse, no license plate, sound suppressor, fake paperwork.

G WHAT KEEPS YOUR POSSESSIONS SAFE?

thick steel chain, alarm system, private security, inventory list, pickpocket alertness, Growlie.

H HOW DO YOU HANDLE, FIX, OR TAKE CARE OF YOUR POSSESSIONS?

firearms workshop, jeweler, animal husbandry, DIY guru, repair kit.

I WHAT USEFUL QUALITY DO YOUR POSSESSIONS HAVE?

adjusted sights, robust, fastest bike in town, good traction, refreshing, one of a kind.

J WHAT ITEM COMPLETES A SET WITH YOUR OTHER POWER TAGS?

magnifying glass, *police badge* → *standard issue pistol, safe-cracking tools*, *black catsuit* → *glass cutter, yacht*, *helicopter* → *sports car.*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT TECHNICAL OR PRACTICAL FLAW DO YOUR ITEMS OR POSSESSIONS HAVE?

chipped away, slippery grip, guzzler, expensive to use, loud, older model, weapon jam, ugly as hell, short-range.

B WHAT BAD HABITS OR TRAITS RELATED TO YOUR POSSESSIONS DO YOU DISPLAY?

possessive, big spender, too reliant on gear, reclusive nutjob, constantly fidgeting with equipment.

C WHAT CONDITIONS COULD RENDER YOUR POSSESSIONS LESS EFFECTIVE?

rusty, dirt in the mechanism, useless in crowded places, can't read in the dark, need a quiet space

D WHO OR WHAT CAN PREVENT YOU FROM PUTTING YOUR POSSESSIONS TO USE?

sentimental value, never strike an unarmed foe, concerned board of directors, police in hot pursuit, running out of ammo.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your possessions. For example:

- (Surveillance gear) "This government is going down."
- (Pawn shop) "Everyone deserves a second chance."
- (Getaway car) "They'll never catch me!"

You can try exploring the following options:

- What these specific possessions mean to you
- A general belief about possessions, wealth, gear, etc.
- What you intend to do with your possessions

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means you are losing interest in your possessions or losing the drive to use them. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your possessions or what they mean for you. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Surveillance gear) Stevo's Conspiracy-Busting Van
- (Pawn shop) Second Chance Pawnbrokers
- (Getaway car) Red Hot

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them admires what you have (and maybe secretly desires it, too). Take a Help point on them.
- One of them thinks THEY should be in possession of your things. Ask them why. Whatever they answer, take a Hurt point on them.
- When you acquired your possessions, one of them was involved. If they helped you or even gave you your possessions, take a Help point on them. If they got in your way or tried to take your possessions, take a Hurt point on them.

POSSESSIONS THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

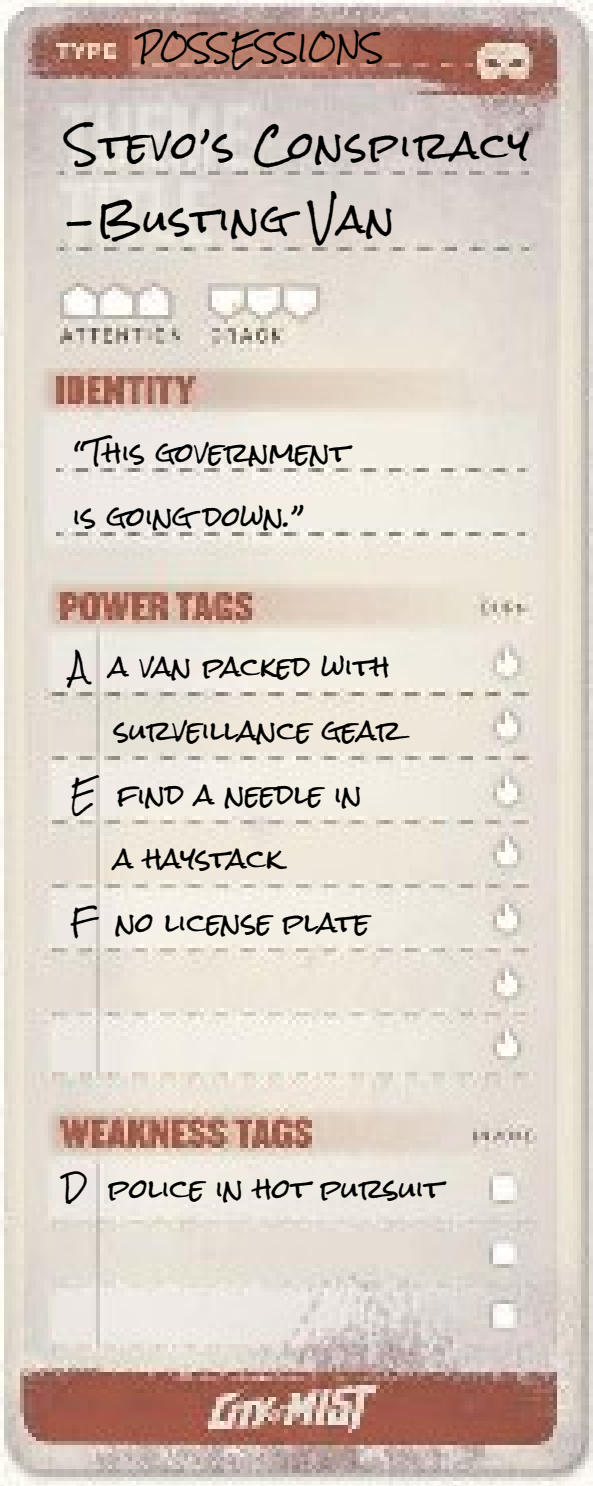
☐ **Found it!**
Once per session, create a temporary tag that describes an item.

☐ **It's The Gift That Keeps On Giving**
Whenever you have an ongoing tag that you created which describes an item, you can make it into a permanent power tag (of this theme). If you already have a permanent power tag created by this move, you must discard it to use this move again. You can discard the permanent power tag whenever you wish.

☐ **Tools Of The Trade**
Choose a power tag question from the Training or Routine themebooks that reflects skills or benefits associated with your possessions, and answer it. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **Quartermaster**
Once per scene, you can let another player use a power tag from this theme, provided that tag describes an item or thing that can be given, and that you can reasonably give it to them (or could have previously given it to them). You do not need to make the **Change The Game** move to do so.

☐ **Quality Matters**
One of your items or possessions is a real gem, perfect for what it was made for. Choose one tag from this theme. It must describe an item or possession. Any Core Move you make using this tag is *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

ROUTINE

A JOB OR OCCUPATION · A POLITICAL POSITION · A ROLE IN AN ORGANIZATION · RESPONSIBILITY OVER SOMEONE'S CARE · A TIME-CONSUMING HOBBY · DAILY SURVIVAL · BUMMING AROUND · SCHOOL · CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

Beyond all the other things that push you here and there in life, there is always one thing that you come back to: your routine. It's what you actually do with your time, what most of your waking hours are dedicated to. Many of the City's adult residents spend most of their time carrying out their jobs. Perhaps you are a lawyer, a nurse, or a window cleaner. Others spend their time caring for family, friends, or property; attending kindergarten, school or college; indulging in a life of pleasures and debauchery; or simply wandering about the City streets, people-watching, junk-hunting, or for no good reason.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. What is her daily routine? How does she spend her time? When she wakes up in the morning (or whenever), what kind of day is waiting for her? What kind of night?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT ROUTINE ACTIVITY TAKES UP MOST OF YOUR TIME?

- I work as _____.
- I take care of _____.
- I spend time _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: How long have you been doing this? Why do you do it? What is your daily routine? What do you like or dislike about it?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

city official, archaeologist, police officer, office building caretaker, hobo, burger flipper, single dad, corporate board member.

B WHAT PRIVILEGES COME WITH THE TERRITORY OF WHAT YOU DO?

city waterways access, popular antiques merchant, the badge, union membership, nobody bothers me, employee rights, a quiet night, company resources.

C WHAT SORT OF TOOLS DO YOU USE?

emergency services radio, forgery kit, standard issue pistol, a mop, shopping cart full of junk, McYummy uniform, diaper bag, a tailor-made suit.

D WHO USUALLY HELPS YOU?

my boss, business connections, previous field training officer, pest control, the pigeons, the new guy, Sam – my eldest daughter, this week's personal assistant.

E WHAT DID YOU LEARN ON YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES?

knows every street, general history, the City's organized crime, logistics, junk can tell stories, health & safety regulations, daytime television shows, outsmart the competition

F WHAT SPECIFIC ACTIVITY DO YOU ENGAGE IN AS PART OF YOUR MAIN OCCUPATION?

plumbing, smuggling, asking questions, befriending hotshots, mad street preaching, cooking, schedule coordination, evaluating risk.

G WHAT TRICK HAVE YOU PICKED UP DOING WHAT YOU DO?

understands how water moves, disable security systems, get out of handcuffs, remove blood stains, hide in the dumpster, juggling, who needs sleep anyway, embezzling.

H WHAT QUALITY DO YOU NOW POSSESS BECAUSE OF YOUR ROUTINE?

hold my breath, haggler, drilled in field tactics, looks harmless, eidetic memory, can hold my own under stress, calm in the storm, elegance.

I WHERE DO YOU CARRY OUT YOUR ROUTINE, OR WHERE DO YOU GO TO ESCAPE IT?

secret underwater hideout, the antiques shop, Mickey's bar, lord of the cafeteria (after hours), I own the streets, my tiny apartment, smoke on the porch, luxurious office.

J WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE SAME PLACE EVERY DAY?

hard-working man, a passion for the past, commitment to the job, the mailman, endless curiosity, dreams of being an actress, love for my family, the thrill of winning.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A AT THE END OF YOUR DAY, WHAT ARE YOU LEFT WITH?

wet and smelly, black market heat, a pain behind the eyes, all alone, the voices in my head, sorely underpaid, cranky kids who won't go to bed, pangs of remorse.

B WHAT ARE THE MUNDANE LIMITS OR DOWNSIDES OF YOUR ROUTINE?

"You have no authority here!", small-time operation, standard issue gear, "It's only the janitor", so hungry, risk of being fired, can't always be there, dog-eat-dog.

C WHO OR WHAT CAN INTERFERE WITH YOUR ROUTINE?

waterworks crisis, City customs, "Calling all units...", irritable building manager, another downpour, unmanageable workload, kids fight, the Chairwoman.

D WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE THROWN OUT OF YOUR ROUTINE?

like a fish out of water, overcompensating, must follow procedure, old geezer, socially inept, too afraid to go big, no idea what I want, hates to compromise.

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive or belief related to your routine. For example:

- (Police officer) "I can't risk it. Just a few more years to retirement."
- (Crazy homeless hobo) "Doomsday is upon us!"
- (Corporate board member) "The good of the company comes first."

You can try exploring the following options:

- How you feel about your routine
- Why you hold on to your routine
- What you need to believe to carry out your routine

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means you are losing interest in your routine or feeling the need for a change. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your everyday routine. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Police officer) Beat Nights
- (Crazy homeless hobo) Manic Street Preacher
- (Corporate board member) Corporate Shark

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them is a regular part of your routine. If your routine is to promote them, care for them, or help them, or if they help you with your routine, take a Help point on them. If your routine is to work against them or they might interfere with your routine, take a Hurt point on them.
- You think one of them has a penchant for mayhem or drama and could destabilize your routine if you let them. Take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them views your routine as rather prosaic, mundane, or repetitive. Ask them whether they look down on it or they admire your for it. If they look down on it, take a Hurt point on them. If they admire you for it, take a Help point on them.

ROUTINE THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

☐ **Incidental Shuteye**
When you have some downtime, if you do not choose to recover all your burnt tags, you still recover one burnt tag.

☐ **All In A Day's Work**
Once per scene, if you are in the middle of your routine and you make a Core Move as part of your routine, you can choose to make it *Dynamite!*

☐ **Good Memory**
Every session, you can choose to get up to three Clues on a location or person within the domain of your routine. The first Clue is free. When you take the second Clue, the MC gets to ask you a question, which you must answer truthfully. On the third Clue, you expose yourself to danger (as in the **Investigate** move).

☐ **Why I Do This**
Choose and answer a power tag question from the Training, Mission, or Defining Relationship themebooks that reflects your background, your dedication, or the people involved in your daily routine. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **Getting Good At This**
Choose a Core Move that best represents the most common action you take during your daily routine. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*





LOGOS THEMEBOOK

TRAINING

EDUCATION · COMBAT OR MARTIAL ARTS TRAINING · JACK OF ALL TRADES · AN INTERNSHIP OR APPRENTICESHIP · LIFE EXPERIENCE · FIELD RECORD · RESEARCH

Modern life offers countless and varied opportunities to learn, practice, and eventually master a skillset or a knowledge domain. Whether through disciplined and rigorous physical exercise, a painful process of trial and error, or a careful analysis of data, you have learned the ins-and-outs of your field of expertise. Perhaps you are a dangerous martial artist, an ex-navy seal, a spy, an opera singer, or an acrobatic circus trainee. Alternatively, the training you acquired can be a lot more mundane, yet still useful. Perhaps you trained as a security guard, studied every detail of the City's historic architecture, or learned how to haggle at the market.

While training can often correlate with one's occupation, it isn't necessarily your job, or even something you actively engage in during your everyday life. Training could be something from your past, a personal interest or hobby, or just something you know how to do. If you want this theme to focus on your everyday occupation rather than your expertise, choose the Routine themebook instead.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's modern-day life. Is she an expert, a scholar, or a master? Has she spent a lot of time honing a skill or studying a field?

Based on this, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT IS YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE?

- I am a master of _____.
- In the past, I trained in _____.
- I have learned the art of _____.
- I know all there is to know about _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: When and under what circumstances did the training take place? Who was responsible for the training?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT DO YOU DO, OR KNOW, BEST?

boxing, martial arts, computers, circus acrobatics, applied chemistry, law, metalworking, logical deduction, instigator of civil unrest.

B WITHIN YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE, AT WHICH SPECIFIC SKILL OR SUBJECT DO YOU EXCEL?

stealth, mean right hook, use opponent's strength, making bombs, firearm modification, art appraisal.

C WHAT OTHER TANGENT FIELD HAVE YOU VENTURED INTO INDIRECTLY?

climbing, gambling, research methods, animal handling, crime scene investigation, technical troubleshooting.

D WHAT MOVE, METHOD, MANEUVER, HABIT, OR TRICK DID YOU PICK UP DURING YOUR TRAINING?

eye on the door, dodge, hotwire an engine, threaten with violence, chant the golden crane sutra.

E WHAT QUALITY OR TRAIT DID YOUR TRAINING FOSTER?

marksmanship, can take a pounding, hard-boiled, poker face, an eye for details, careful and measured, hardliner.

F NAME A TEACHER, TRAINER, OR FELLOW TRAINEE THAT YOU CAN RELY ON FOR HELP IN THIS FIELD.

Grand Master Xian, Old Man River, prof. Chandra, a university chum, Buster the demolitions dog.

G WHAT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT RELATED TO YOUR TRAINING DO YOU NORMALLY HAVE ACCESS TO?

improvised weapons, lock-picking tools, rappelling harness, evidence bag, botany textbook.

H AGAINST WHO OR WHAT DOES YOUR TRAINING GIVE THE BEST RESULTS?

crowd-pleaser, military strategy, the Knight Templars, spot structural weakness.

I UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DOES YOUR TECHNIQUE WORK BEST?

under the cover of darkness, laboratory access, "When I see it, I'll know", experienced Alpine survivalist.

J WHAT UNUSUAL NEW APPLICATION OF YOUR TRAINING ARE YOU EXPLORING?

get into the suspect's head, experimental car engines, pin-down opponent with footwork, money laundering.

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MOST PROBLEMATIC FLAW IN YOUR TECHNIQUE?

scattered notes, short-sighted, designed for single combat, outdated methods, inexperienced.

B HOW DID YOUR TRAINING ADVERSELY AFFECT YOUR PSYCHE OR BODY?

tyrannical tendencies, over-confident, sleepless nights, busted knee.

C WHO IS AFTER YOU DUE TO YOUR PROMINENCE IN THE FIELD?

underworld reputation, academic rival, "they threaten to shut down my research", pushy fans.

D NAME A FLAW UNIQUE TO A SPECIFIC MOVE OR METHOD YOU DESCRIBED IN YOUR POWER TAGS.

mean right hook → *exposed after right hook, threaten with violence* → *threats require a disguise, making bombs* → *need to prepare.*

EXTRA TAGS

If you have not done so in other themebooks, you may choose one additional power tag question and one additional weakness tag question to answer. Write both tags on your theme card as above.

IDENTITY

Choose an Identity for this theme: an absolute statement that captures an attitude, motive, or belief related to your training. For example:

- (Circus acrobat) "Nothing is more important than my freedom."
- (Spy) "No-one can ever see the real me."
- (City architecture expert) "I must tell you just one more detail about this building…"

You can try exploring the following options:

- A doctrine, conviction, or attitude that has become ingrained in you due to your training
- The goal or purpose for which you started your training
- Opinions you hold on your peers or competitors

Write your Identity on your theme card.

Acting in conflict with this statement means you are losing faith in your training or losing the drive to apply what you learned. Let everyone at the table know what could constitute acting against this Identity.

TITLE

Name your theme in a way that encapsulates your proficiency or style. Write its name on your theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Circus acrobat) Born to Fly
- (Spy) That Quiet Guy
- (City architecture expert) Architecture Buff

CREW RELATIONSHIPS

When creating the relationships within your crew, you can cast the other crew members in one of the following scenarios, after receiving their approval:

- One of them was there to support you while you trained, perhaps even mentored you. Take a Help point on them.
- One of them looks down on your training and finds it morally questionable, inefficient, or distasteful. If it makes you want to impress them, take a Help point on them. If it makes you want to punch them, take a Hurt point on them.
- One of them helps you keep your act sharp. If it's because they're competing with you or threatening you, take a Hurt point on them; otherwise, take a Help point on them.

TRAINING THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

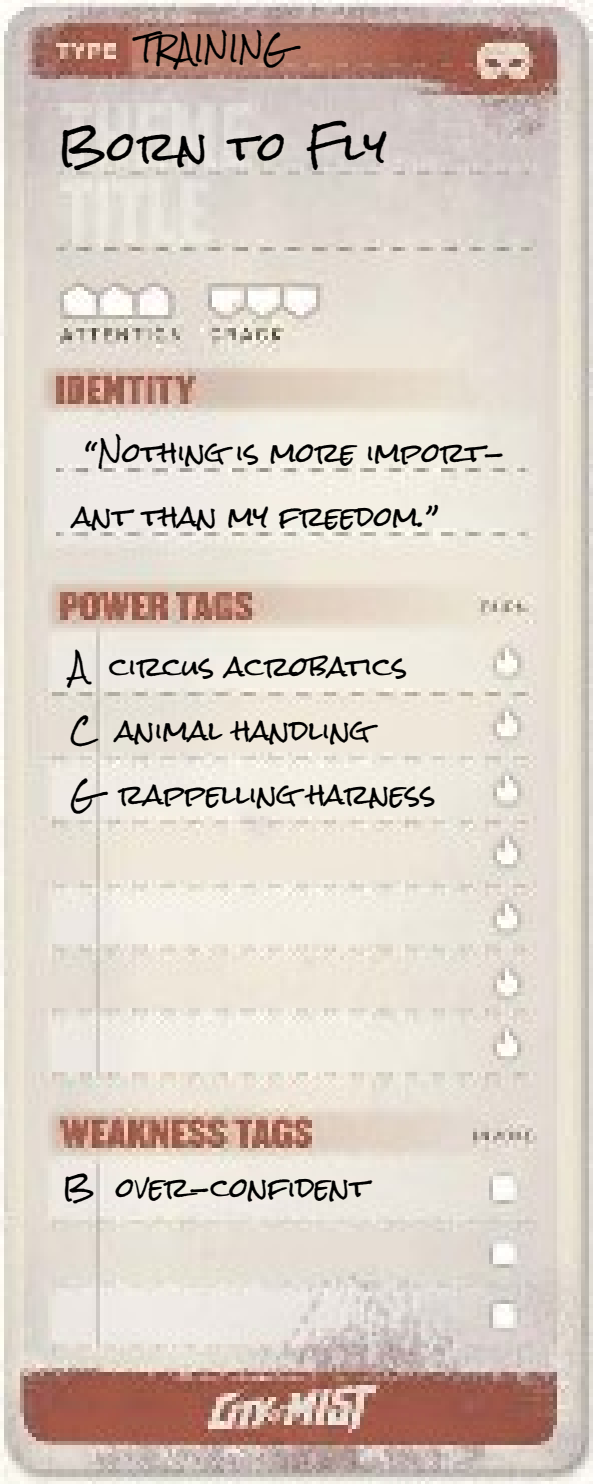
☐ **Expert Advice**
Once per scene, you can let another player use a power tag from this theme, provided that tag describes a skill that you can reasonably teach them (or could have taught them in advance). You do not need to make the **Change The Game** move to do so.

☐ **Broad Training**
Once per session, you can create a temporary story tag that reflects a useful method or detail covered by your training, within reason.

☐ **Sense of Purpose**
Choose and answer a power tag question from the Routine, Defining Event, or Mission themebooks that describes how you are applying your training today or an outcome of the way you acquired this training. Write down the answer as a new power tag on this theme.

☐ **It's Showtime**
Choose a single power tag from this theme. When you burn it for a hit, you get an automatic result of 9 (instead of 7) and a Power of 3, for a total unmodified score of 12. Statuses apply to both your automatic result and your Power, as usual.

☐ **Getting Good At This**
Choose a Core Move that best represents the actions you most often use your training for. Whenever you use it with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*




OWALSKI'S
QUOR STORE
ALCOHOL
Pharmacy

LANCE SULLIVAN, REPORTER FOR THE CITY HERALD (DON QUIXOTE)

In Step 2, Lamar established Sullivan's four themes (see page 107):

- **Routine (Logos)** - investigative reporter
- **Defining Relationship (Logos)** - Sánchez
- **Possessions (Logos)** - retro car and gear
- **Bastion (Mythos)** - knightly protector

Moving on to Step 3, Lamar fills out the four theme cards, using the four corresponding themebooks. He's eager to choose his Mythos powers, so he starts with **Bastion**.

BASTION THEME

Going over the concept section, Lamar decides that since Don Quixote lives in a world of fantasy, Sullivan will have the ability to dream up knightly armor and weaponry. However, because they are, in a way, figments of his imagination, Lamar decides that these powers will appear as spectral apparitions rather than tangible objects.

Moving over to the power tag questions, Lamar answers the first question (which is obligatory) and writes down the answer as the first power tag on this theme's card.

A WHAT QUALITY OR ABILITY GRANTED BY YOUR MYTHOS MOST OFTEN PROTECTS YOU?

spectral armor

He then picks out two more power tag questions, answers them, and writes down the answers as power tags:

B WHAT MEANS DO YOU HAVE OF EXTENDING PROTECTION TO OTHERS?

a shield to match

G WHAT OTHER EFFECT OR QUALITY, NOT NECESSARILY DEFENSIVE, CAME WITH YOUR DEFENSE?

the lance of honor

Later, Alice the MC might ask Lamar what exactly he means by *the lance of honor*: is it something to be used in a conversation or a fight? Lamar plans to explain that this tag represents a spectral lance that Sullivan can conjure to actually fight others with, when his cause is honorable.

Lamar moves on to the weakness tag questions. He picks out one and answers it, writing the answer on his Bastion theme card:

D WHAT PERSONALITY TRAIT DERIVED FROM YOUR DEFENSE GETS YOU INTO TROUBLE?

delusional

Next he thinks of this theme's Mystery. In the story, Don Quixote imagines that a neighboring farm girl is his damsel in distress, and names her Dulcinea. Lamar decides that Sullivan doesn't know who his Dulcinea is, but his Mythos is urging him to find out. How else could he protect her? Therefore, he puts down **"Who is my Dulcinea?"** as Sullivan's Mystery for this theme.

To wrap up the theme, he titles it **Imaginary Knight**, and moves on to the next theme.

ROUTINE THEME

Lamar picks up the Routine themebook and starts going over it. Considering the questions in the concept section, Lamar decides that Sullivan has been working as a reporter since he lost everything when the pond appeared, a major event his crew is built around. He is most often covering stories about people who vanished during the event and he makes a meager living out of it.

In the power tag questions, Lamar answers the first question and two more of his choice, as before. He writes each answer on the theme card as a power tag:

A WHAT DO YOU DO WITH YOUR TIME?

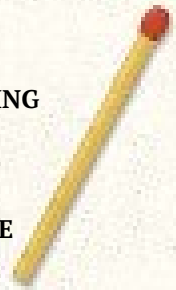
investigative reporter

G WHAT TRICK HAVE YOU PICKED UP DOING WHAT YOU DO?

lockpicking

J WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THE SAME PLACE EVERY DAY?

sorrow for the victims



He then chooses a weakness tag question and answers it, noting down the theme's weakness tag on the card:

C WHO OR WHAT CAN INTERFERE WITH YOUR ROUTINE?

reluctant witnesses

For an Identity, Lamar wants a statement that will encapsulate Sullivan's commitment to the cases he is investigating. He writes down **"The people of this neighborhood deserve to know."** If Sullivan ever acts to the contrary during the game, he will start marking Crack and might end up replacing this theme. Finally, he titles the theme **Searching For The Lost**.

DEFINING RELATIONSHIP THEME

Moving on to his next theme, Lamar goes over the Defining Relationship themebook. He already knows that Sullivan has a Defining Relationship with his podgy partner and photographer, Alejandro Sánchez. Going over the concept section, he also decides that Sánchez, who is a Sleeper, has no idea about Sullivan's abilities. As such, he often helps Sullivan cope with mundane reality. He chooses the following power tags:

A WHY IS THIS RELATIONSHIP SO IMPORTANT TO YOU?

saves my butt every time

C WHAT WERE YOU FORCED TO LEARN BECAUSE OF THIS RELATIONSHIP?

reality check

H NAME AN ACTIVITY THAT YOU SHARE.

long unbreakable speeches

The last tag is a bit of a stretch, because Sullivan and Sánchez don't technically share long unbreakable speeches, they inflict them upon one another. But Lamar is amused by the idea and thinks it would be a fun tag to use during the game.

For a weakness tag, Lamar chooses something he knows Sullivan does quite frequently:

D UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD THEY BE UNABLE TO HELP YOU?

ignore his warning

Sánchez is a down-to-earth, pragmatic man. He would very much like Sullivan to stop putting himself at risk so he takes every opportunity to try and dissuade his partner from putting himself in unnecessary danger (hence the long unbreakable speeches). With this tag, every time Sullivan takes an action that ignores Sánchez's warnings and this tag activates, he will have one less point of Power but also gain a point of Attention. Lamar thinks this could be quite comical on the verge of tragic, which fits Sullivan's Mythos and overall story perfectly.

Lamar considers the relationship Sullivan and Sánchez have. It's based on hard-earned trust; maybe they even worked together before the lake showed up. He thinks about a statement that can capture this. For an Identity, he puts down **"If it wasn't for him, I'd be dead."** If Sullivan ever questions this, for example, if he suspected Sánchez for betraying him or trying to act against him, he stands to mark Crack, which could eventually bring him to replace this theme. Lamar wraps up by titling this theme **My Sancho Panza**.

POSSESSIONS THEME

Addressing Sullivan's final theme, Lamar picks up the Possessions themebook and reads through it. His concept for this theme is already quite solid – he wants Sullivan to be a typical old-school reporter, wearing a worn-out leather jacket and driving an old beat-up Mustang, whose trunk is full of surprises. He's got plenty of ideas for tags, so when he reads the power tag questions he ends up answering several of them and answering some of them more than once:

A WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN YOUR POSSESSION?

a beat-up old Mustang

C WHAT OTHER IMPORTANT ITEM IS IN YOUR POSSESSION?

a worn-out leather jacket, *a rusty crowbar*

D WHAT COMPONENT OR ATTACHMENT ADDED TO ONE OF YOUR ITEMS CAN CHANGE OR IMPROVE ITS FUNCTION?

nitrous oxide injection system

J WHAT ITEM COMPLETES A SET WITH YOUR OTHER POWER TAGS?

a sawed-off shotgun

Lamar writes down *a beat-up old Mustang* on his card because it's the answer to the first question, which is obligatory. He also wants this to be his broad tag because he wants to be able to pull out all sorts of useful things from the trunk of his car, which the MC approves. After going over the rest of his answers, he chooses *a worn-out leather jacket* and *a sawed-off shotgun* and writes them down on the theme card. Later, when he clocks some Attention and earns an improvement, he can pick up the remaining tags.

To gain Attention, this theme needs a weakness tag. Lamar wants it to indicate the general condition of his gear so he chooses:

A WHAT TECHNICAL OR PRACTICAL FLAW DO YOUR ITEMS OR POSSESSIONS HAVE?

wear and tear

Finally, for his Possessions Identity, Lamar chooses a statement that tells something about Sullivan's relationship with his tools, as well as adding to his personality: **"I believe in a good ole, tried and true piece of equipment."** He names this theme **Retro Renegade**.

EXTRA TAGS

Lamar can choose to take an extra power and weakness tags for one of his themes. Going over his cards, he sees a lot of potential for growth in all of Sullivan's themes. However, feeling that the romantic aspect of his Mythos could do with additional airtime, he decides to give the extra tags to his Bastion theme. He chooses an additional power tag question and an additional weakness tag question, answers them, and writes down the answers in their respective spaces on the theme card.

H WHO OR WHAT WERE YOUR POWERS MEANT TO PROTECT?

in defense of love

C TO WHAT ATTACKS IS YOUR DEFENSE SUSCEPTIBLE?

reality hurts

With these tags, Sullivan is stronger when he's acting in defense of love, a circumstance which may crop up in different ways during play. When Alice the MC asks for clarification regarding *reality hurts*, Lamar explains that since Sullivan's knighthood is imaginary, it is more effective against Mythos powers (which also come from imagined stories, in a way) and less effective against real-world attacks such as punches, baseball bats, and gunshots (as long as they are not backed by a Mythos). Since this is a pretty clear-cut interpretation, the MC approves.

ALMOST DONE

Sullivan's theme cards are ready for the game.

After Lamar and his friends wrap up their characters, they go back to a group discussion in order to create their crew and the relationships between their characters. Any additional details about their characters will be completed in the last phase of the Exposition Session, "A Day In The Life".




TYPE Bastion
Imaginary Knight
Mystery
"Who is my Dulcinea?"
Power Tags
A Spectral armor
B Shield to match
G The lance of honor
H In defense of love
Weakness Tags
D Delusional
C Reality hurts
City of Mist
TYPE Routine
Searching for the Lost
Identity
"The people of this neighborhood deserve to know."
Power Tags
A Investigative reporter
G Lockpicking
J Sorrow for the victims
Weakness Tags
C Reluctant witnesses
City of Mist


TYPE DEFINING RELATIONSHIP
MY SANCHO PANZA
ATTENTION
CRACK
IDENTITY
"IF IT WASN'T FOR HIM, I'D BE DEAD."
POWER TAGS
BURN
A SAVES MY BUTT EVERY TIME
C REALITY CHECK
H LONG UNBREAKABLE SPEECHES
WEAKNESS TAGS
D IGNORE HIS WARNINGS
CITY OF MIST
TYPE POSSESSIONS
RETRO RENEGADE
ATTENTION
CRACK
IDENTITY
"I BELIEVE IN GOOD OLE, TRIED AND TRUE PIECE OF EQUIPMENT."
POWER TAGS
BURN
A A BEAT-UP OLD MUSTANG
C A WORN-OUT LEATHER JACKET
J A SAWED-OFF SHOTGUN
WEAKNESS TAGS
A WEAR AND TEAR
CITY OF MIST



YOUR CREW

Once the players finish character creation and each player has his character's cards filled out, it's time to focus on the crew. Every player introduces his character to the rest of the group. The group now decides on what resources they have as a team, what binds them together, and what has the potential to break them apart. This is reflected in the **crew theme** and in **crew relationships**.



THE CREW THEME

The crew theme represents the shared resources and beliefs of the crew, as well as its weaknesses. It is built like the character themes: three power tags, one weakness tag, and a Mystery or an Identity.

The details of the theme are chosen together by all the players and the MC. Take an empty crew theme card and fill it out based on the crew themebook below, just as you would with a character's theme card.

CHOOSING CREW POWER TAGS

Crew power tags function similarly to the PCs' power tags: when a player activates a move, he can invoke one or more crew power tags (if the tag is appropriate to the action taken), gaining another point of Power for each tag, as usual. However, unlike character power tags, crew power tags are single-use; once used in a move, they are burnt and become unavailable until they are recovered. Read more about using crew power tags under Tags in Crew and Extra Themes (page 227).

The same guidelines given for choosing character power tags apply when choosing crew power tags. A crew cannot have more than one broad tag (even if later the crew gains additional crew themes) and all the power tags should describe things useful to all crew members, such as a resource that is shared by the entire crew. Unlike character power tags (which are limited by the theme type), a crew theme's power tag can describe both mundane and legendary or magical details. There is no limitation on the content of the description except that it must be related to the theme as a whole.

CAN A CREW HAVE A MYTHOS?

While it can be somewhat unusual and would not fit every series concept, a crew can become a Rift for a Mythos. This stipulates that a Mythos other than the Mythoi of the lead characters is telling its story through the crew as a whole. For example, the Mythos of Jason's Argonauts could be seeking to tell its story through a street gang riding a souped up van.

Adding a Mythos to your crew is a purely narrative decision and bears no impact on the rules of the game. Crew themes do not have a Mythos or Logos type. However, an overarching Mythos could be a way to explain supernatural occurances around the group as well as Mythos powers that they seem to display only when the crew members are together. It can be included in the series concept from the start or introduced as a discovery at a later point.

CHOOSING CREW WEAKNESS TAGS

Crew weakness tags function similarly to the player characters' weakness tags. Whenever any crew member takes an action to which the crew weakness tag can be appropriately applied, the crew weakness tag may be invoked, reducing the Power for that action by one. Every time the crew weakness point is activated, the crew theme gains Attention. Read more about using crew weakness tags under Tags in Crew and Extra Themes (page 227).

The same guidelines given for choosing character weakness tags apply when choosing crew weakness tags: they should describe things that hinder and complicate the crew members' actions, never things that help them or drive them to action. As an additional guideline, crew power tags should describe a weakness that is plaguing all the crew members or the crew as a whole. However, unlike character weakness tags (which are limited by the theme type), a crew theme's weakness tags can describe both mundane and legendary or magical details. There are no limitations on the content of the description except that it must be related to the theme as a whole.

CHOOSING A CREW MYSTERY OR IDENTITY

The crew's Mystery or Identity is the glue that binds the crew together, the reason for which they are operating as a crew. In a way, it is the boiled-down version of the series concept created at the beginning of the Exposition Session: either a question all crew members are trying to answer together or a conviction all crew members share. The group can choose whether to phrase this core aspect as a Mystery or an Identity.

It is essential that not only the players but also the characters they portray agree with this agenda of the crew, even if it is an unspoken agreement. For example, if a group playing a crew of vigilantes chooses the Identity "Someone has to do the dirty work to keep this City clean", all crew members should conform to this statement at least to some extent. If a team of conspiracy busters wants to know "Who is behind the kidnappings?", and chooses this question as their Mystery, it means everyone agrees that this question is the most important thing, for now.

Remember, the characters start the game already knowing each other and have worked with each other for a while, at least long enough to have a joint purpose. This is not to say all members completly agree on what drives the crew but simply that for the time being they agree to set aside any qualms they might have. Once the game starts, anything can happen.

A crew Mystery functions similarly to the player characters' Mysteries: it is a question that embodies what the crew is searching for. Whenever any crew member has a chance of obtaining new information regarding the crew's Mystery and foregoes it, she erodes the crew theme, which could eventually lead to losing the theme completely. Read more about crew theme evolution during the game in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.

A crew Identity functions similarly to the PCs' Identities: it is a statement that captures the essential attitude, belief, or goal shared by all crew members. Whenever any crew member acts contrary to this statement, she erodes the crew theme, which could eventually lead to losing the theme completely, as in the case of a Mystery.

The same guidelines given for choosing character Mysteries and Identities apply here. A crew Mystery must be a deep and burning question that drives the crew to investigate and take action in order to find answers. A crew Identity must be a real and binding statement that drives the crew to take action and reflects their motive. The crew's Mystery or Identity should also be related to the nature of the crew as it was defined in the series concept and to the power and weakness tags in the crew theme.

THE CREW THEMEBOOK

CONCEPT

Review the concept of your crew as a reflection of the series concept you all agreed upon at the beginning of the Exposition Session. Flesh it out together by thinking about the following questions:

- **? WHAT IS OUR SHARED GOAL?**
- **? WHO OR WHAT BROUGHT US TOGETHER?**
- **? WHY DO WE WORK TOGETHER? WHAT DOES EACH MEMBER CONTRIBUTE TO THE CAUSE?**
- **? WHERE DO WE MEET? WHERE DO WE COLLECT OUR EVIDENCE OR PREPARE FOR ACTION?**
- **? WHAT SORT OF RESOURCES DO WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL?**

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Choose three questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your crew during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your crew theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A HOW DO YOU HELP, ASSIST, OR SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER?

catch overlooked details, *tactical coordination*, *a prayer of protection*, *watch each other's back*, *the bond of Zeus's children*

B WHERE DO YOU MEET, WORK, REST, OR PREPARE FOR ACTION?

Havana Club, *headquarters on the docks*, *Sylvia's book shop*, *the classroom*, *the Olympus dimension*

C WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED TO DO WELL TOGETHE

good-cop-bad-cop technique, *storm the target*, *a summoning ritual*, *breaking and entry*, *toy with the mortals*

D WHO IS GUIDING, BACKING, OR ASSISTING YOUR OPERATION?

Lily – our moral compass, *the Client*, *spirit animal*, *the professor*, *almighty Zeus*

E HOW DO YOU GET AROUND?

rooftops, *armored assault vehicle*, *knowledge of the subway tunnels*, *the van*, *Hermes' winged sandals*

F WHAT ENVIRONMENTS OR SITUATIONS ARE YOU MOST COMFORTABLE IN?

morally gray situations, *under the cloak of darkness*, *on hallowed ground*, *lots of witnesses*, *admired and worshipped*

G WHAT SPECIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE?

police informant, *the hackers at Oversight*, *unexplained intuitions*, *you don't fool us*, *telepathy.*

H WHAT SORT OF REPUTATION OR NAME HAVE YOU MADE FOR YOURSELVES?

neighborhood support, *underworld reputation*, *known in the Otherworld*, *the corrupt fear us*, *government connections*

I WHAT APPROACH OR TACTIC DO YOU SHARE IN TACKLING CHALLENGES?

ruthless punishment, *divide and conquer*, *harmony and peace*, *keep a cool head*, *divine superiority*

J WHAT KIND OF SPECIAL GEAR, RESOURCE, OR POWER IS AT YOUR DISPOSAL?

dark clothing, *arsenal of firearms*, *mystical supplies*, *boobytraps*, *Pandora's box.*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your crew's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS FLAWED OR LACKING IN THE WAY YOU OPERATE TOGETHER?

no clear leadership, *overconfident*, *in over our heads*, *we keep losing each other*, *egotistical backstabbers*

B HOW DO YOU GET EACH OTHER INTO TROUBLE?

who is watching the suspect?, *friendly fire*, *big mouth*, *stumble into each other*, *vying for the spotlight*

C WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU ALL AFRAID OF?

exposed family members, *the Client*, *Cult of the Seventh Circle*, *not taken seriously*, *uncle Poseidon*

D WHAT PLACES OR SITUATIONS DO YOU FIND TOUGH TO HANDLE?

legal problems, *never involve personal matters*, *real-life problems*, *too afraid to look*, *we're only human*

MYSTERY OR IDENTITY

Choose a Mystery or an Identity for this theme. For example:

- (Paramilitary mercenaries) "Get it done. Get Paid. Don't ask questions."
- (High school detective team) "What strange forces are meddling with our school and why?"
- (Greek gods) "It's either us or the Titans."

You can try exploring the following options:

- Something you all agree must be done or must never be allowed. (Identity)
- The central question in a case you all want to solve. (Mystery)
- A code of conduct you all abide by. (Identity)
- A strange riddle which is the key to your destiny. (Mystery)

Write your Mystery or Identity on your crew theme card.

TITLE

Name your crew theme in a way that encapsulates your crew's nature and style. Write it on your crew theme card. For example:

- (Paramilitary mercenaries) Guns for Hire
- (High school detective team) The City High Gang
- (Greek gods) The Olympians

CREW THEME IMPROVEMENTS

During the game, whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

☐ **Tight Like That**
Once per session, when one of you uses Juice points to help or interfere with another crew member's move, you gain one more point of Juice to do so.

☐ **Quality Matters**
One of the items or possessions of your crew is a real gem, perfect for what it was made for. Choose one tag from the crew theme. It must describe an item or a possession. Any Core Move you make using this tag is *Dynamite!*

☐ **Sacrifice**
When two or more of you **Face Danger** against the same status and you get a hit, you may choose to extend the hit to one other crew member, at the cost of exposing yourself. On a 10+, they take no status and you take the status with -1 tier. On a 7-9, they take the status with -1 tier and you take the full status. If the move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you can choose to fully protect both of you (instead of choosing one of the other 12+ options).

☐ **Pull It Together**
Once per session, you can recover a burnt crew power tag.

☐ **Black Sheep**
Choose together one crew member who is the black sheep of the crew. When the black sheep of the crew acts against your Mystery or Identity, it's expected, so it does not weaken your crew. For everyone else, overlooking the black sheep's actions does not count as acting against your Mystery or Identity either. You can choose a new black sheep at the beginning or end of each session.

QUICK START CREW THEMES

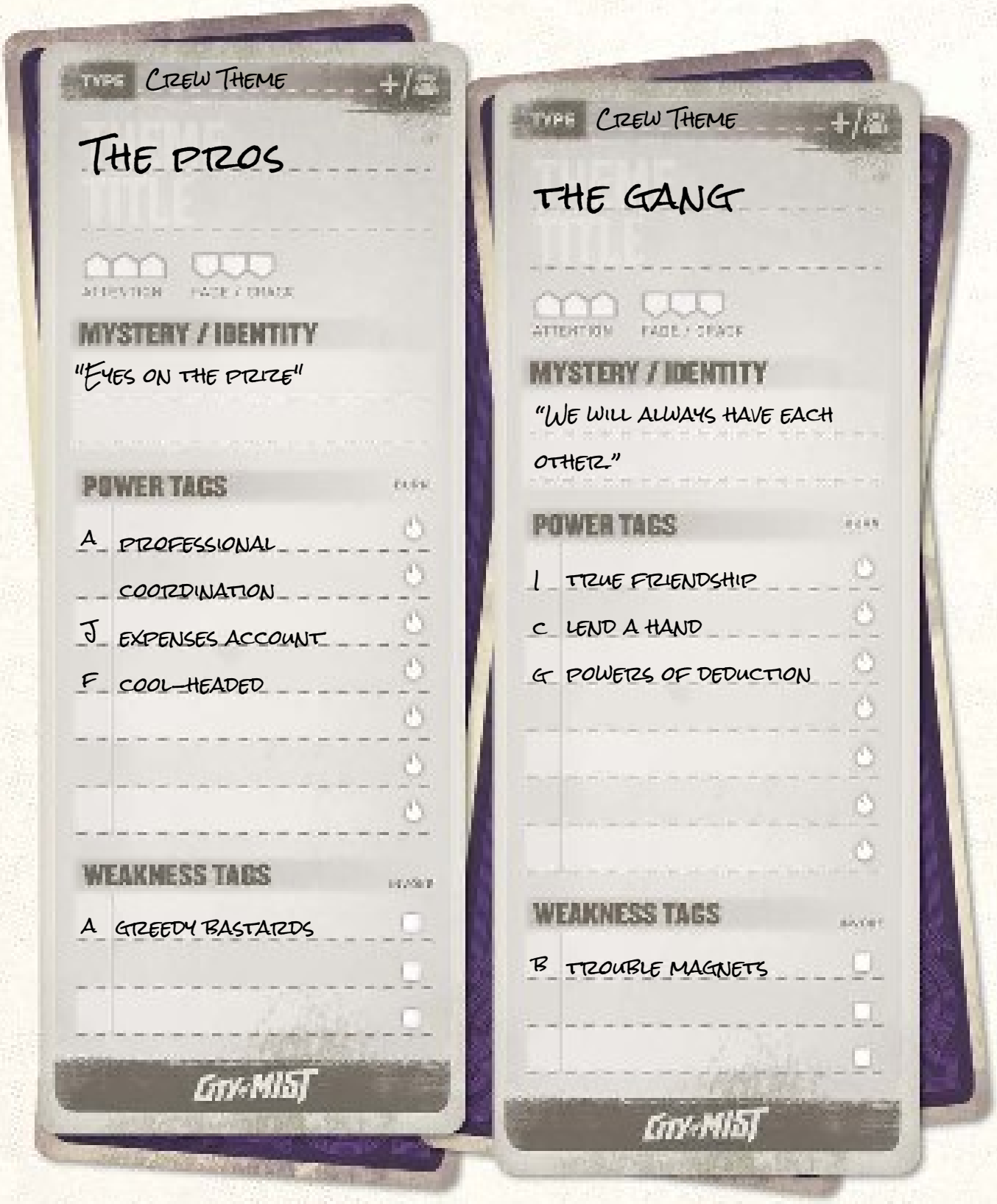
The following crew themes correspond to the crew types suggested in the Series Concept section. You can use them as they are or tweak them to the needs of your game:


TYPE CREW THEME
THE CASUAL DETECTIVES
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"INVESTIGATING IS A HOBBY. OUR PERSONAL LIVES COME FIRST."
POWER TAGS
A COVER FOR EACH OTHER
I INCONSPICUOUS
B GARAGE FULL OF THINGS
WEAKNESS TAGS
D PERSONAL LIFE CALLS
CITY OF MIST
TYPE CREW THEME
COMPANY MEN
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"FOLLOW PROTOCOL."
POWER TAGS
E COMPANY CAR
G COMPANY DATABASE
I BEND THE RULES
WEAKNESS TAGS
C LIABILITY
CITY OF MIST


TYPE Crew Theme
Conspiracy Busters
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"Who else is involved in this?"
POWER TAGS
F Won't get fooled again
D Insider tip
J Surveillance equipment
WEAKNESS TAGS
A Evidence disappears
City of Mist
TYPE Crew Theme
Dabblers in the Mist
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"What ancient secrets are hidden in this City?"
POWER TAGS
A Empathic connection
D Guidance from a strange mystic
J Divine intervention
WEAKNESS TAGS
B In over our heads
City of Mist


TYPE
Crew Theme
The Event
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"What really happened there?"
POWER TAGS
G Flashbacks
F This is where it happened
J Supernatural residual effects
WEAKNESS TAGS
D Emotional overload
City of Mist
TYPE
Crew Theme
Modern Gods
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"Embrace your divinity."
POWER TAGS
A We stand united
B Our sacred place
C Fury of the gods
WEAKNESS TAGS
A Pantheon drama
City of Mist


TYPE Crew Theme
Masked Vigilante Investigations
Mystery / Identity
"To keep this City clean, we need to get our hands dirty."
Power Tags
B Office space
A Got each other's back
C Blow off some steam
Weakness Tags
B Stepping on each other's toes
City of Mist
TYPE Crew Theme
The Order
Mystery / Identity
"The Enemy must never be allowed to prevail!"
Power Tags
G Know thy enemy
J Ancient weapons
I Steely resolve
Weakness Tags
C What lies beneath
City of Mist


TYPE Crew Theme
THE PROS
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"Eyes on the prize"
POWER TAGS
A Professional
Coordination
J Expenses Account
F Cool-Headed
WEAKNESS TAGS
A Greedy Bastards
City of Mist
TYPE Crew Theme
THE GANG
MYSTERY / IDENTITY
"We will always have each other."
POWER TAGS
I True Friendship
C Lend a Hand
G Powers of Deduction
WEAKNESS TAGS
B Trouble Magnets
City of Mist

CREW THEME EXAMPLE: POND INCIDENT SURVIVORS

Now that Lamar, Jerry, and Megan completed their character creation, they join with Alice the MC to create the crew theme. Based on their series concept of Lakeside Drive, the group talks about what the crew is actually trying to achieve. Since their characters Sullivan, Det. Enkidu, and Goodfellow are all survivors of the pond incident who know each other, it seems apt that they will be trying to figure out what was the catastrophe that hit their neighborhood and why it was so violently hushed by the Mist. Also, what the hell is going on? How was an entire neighborhood covered by water and nobody talks about it?

They start by picking out some power tags and a weakness tag. Jerry suggests the crew meets at a local diner that is like a second home to them; they work from the storage area and can grab a bite and a drink when they need to recover:

B WHERE DO YOU MEET, WORK, REST, OR PREPARE FOR ACTION?

Louis' diner

Alice the MC would like to introduce a character from Arthurian legend that is guiding the crew but whose motives are questionable. She suggests the following:

D WHO IS GUIDING, BACKING, OR ASSISTING YOUR OPERATION?

Lady of the Lake

Lamar thinks that even though most people don't remember what happened, the crew members are still local faces who have friends and connections in the community. He suggests an appropriate tag:

G WHAT SPECIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION DO YOU HAVE?

friends in Lakeside Drive

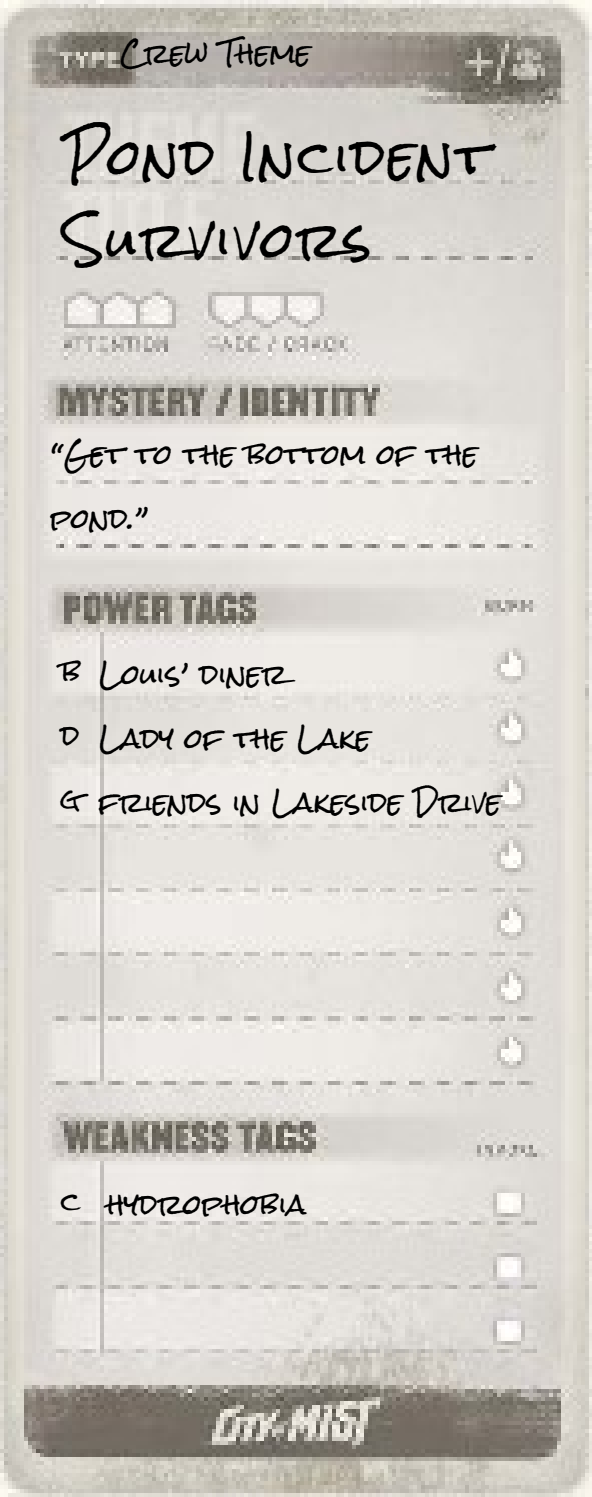
Being survivors of a supernatural flash flood, Megan thinks it makes sense to choose a weakness tag based on that:

C WHO OR WHAT ARE YOU ALL AFRAID OF?

hydrophobia

Finally, the four discuss what Mystery or Identity would best encapsulate the crew. They choose **"Get to the bottom of the pond."** for its dual meaning: the crew wants to understand what happened with the pond but it seems the answers are submerged deep in the bottom of the pond and that sooner or later the crew will have to venture down there and confront a shocking truth.

They name their crew theme **Pond Incident Survivors**



CREW RELATIONSHIPS

Underneath the goal or ideal that makes your crew members collaborate there is a complex network of relationships. Even though they work together, the crew members can have complicated personal relationships and a dark past. Some of the crew members have known each other for a while and have been through a lot together; others, while knowing each other only briefly, have already formed opinions on one another. And since everyone is a Rift, there are also the relationships between your Mythoi to consider.

Once you have your crew theme ready, you can build your crew relationships. Crew relationships help quickly flesh out the shared history of the crew members. First, each player writes down the names of all the other crew members on his character card under CREW. Sullivan's card looks like this:



Next, go around the table, taking turns. On your turn, pick up one of your themebooks at random and refer to the Crew Relationship section. Each section contains three ideas for events or attitudes that shaped your relationship with one of your crew members. Choose one at random or at your whim and read it out loud. You then choose if you want to use this item or discard it. If you choose to use the item, choose which crew member it applies to. If the player playing that crew member approves, you can work out the details then and there, or later. The MC and the other players can suggest ideas of how to interpret this item.

Lamar chooses an item at random and reads it: "You once protected something very dear to one of them, possibly even from them. If they were grateful, take a Help point on them. If they were not, take a Hurt point on them." I think this would be something to do with your character, Megan. You said Goodfellow had a grandchild? Maybe he once entered his furious state and I prevented this kid from seeing it?

Megan: Ooh, that sounds good. I would definitely be trying to hide that from him, so I think Goodfellow would be grateful.

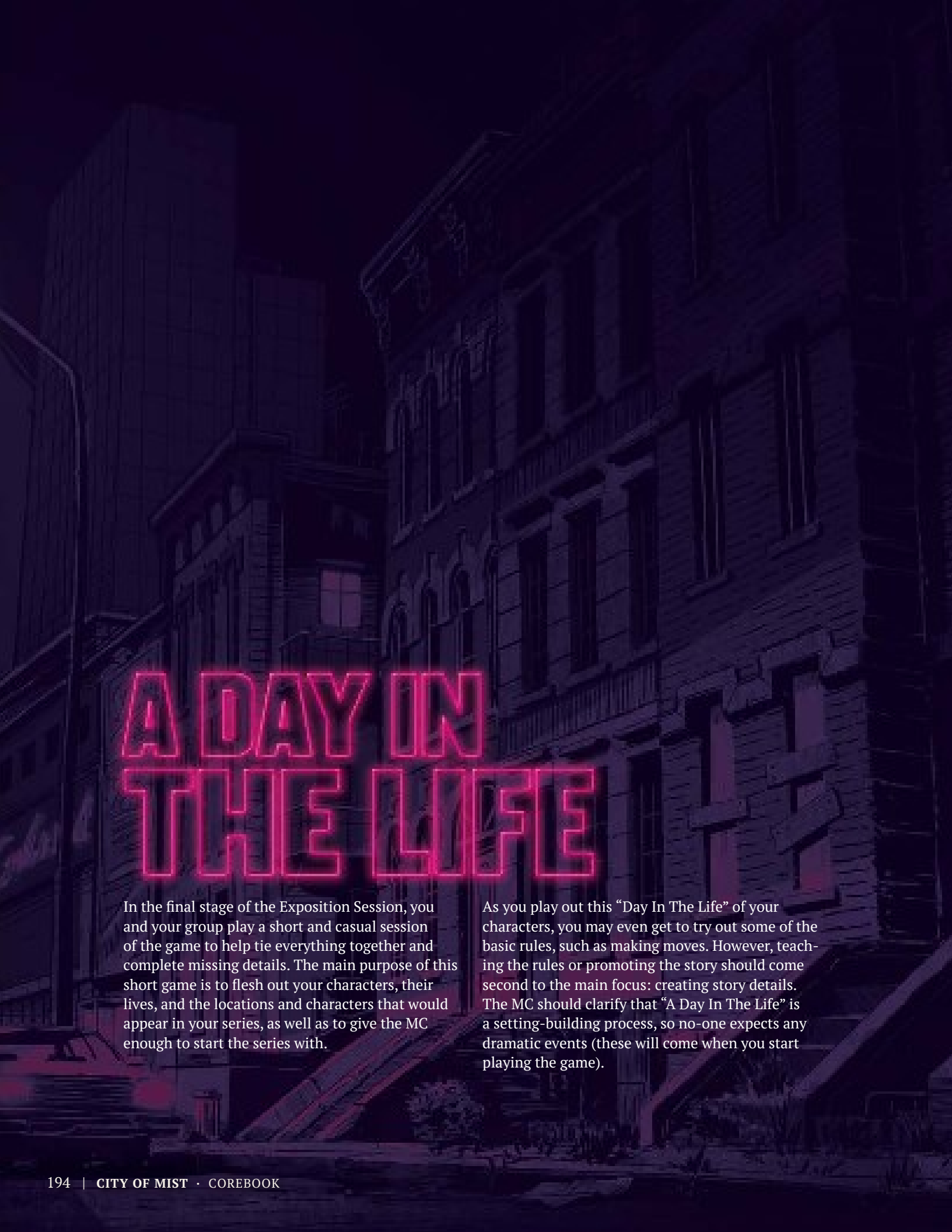
Each item also tells you to take a Help or a Hurt point on that character. Write it next to that character's name on your character card's CREW section.

Lamar: Cool, I'm adding one Help point next to Goodfellow.



If you already have points of the same type for that character, they add up. However, Help & Hurt points do not cancel each other out; you accumulate them separately.

When you're done, move on to the next player. Keep going around the table until you feel your history is rich enough. You will not necessarily end up with an equal amount of Help & Hurt points across the board: some crew members have baggage for better or worse, while others are more indifferent to each other.



A DAY IN THE LIFE

In the final stage of the Exposition Session, you and your group play a short and casual session of the game to help tie everything together and complete missing details. The main purpose of this short game is to flesh out your characters, their lives, and the locations and characters that would appear in your series, as well as to give the MC enough to start the series with.

As you play out this "Day In The Life" of your characters, you may even get to try out some of the basic rules, such as making moves. However, teaching the rules or promoting the story should come second to the main focus: creating story details. The MC should clarify that "A Day In The Life" is a setting-building process, so no-one expects any dramatic events (these will come when you start playing the game).

When you start this phase, your character, theme, and crew theme cards should already be filled out, so you have your concept, themes, tags, Mysteries, and Identities in front of you. These elements provide the core of your character and game, something to build on when you play out this first mini-session.

STARTING OUT

The MC starts by picking out a time of the day and asking the players where their characters would be at that time and what would they be doing.

? **WHERE ARE YOUR CHARACTERS AND WHAT ARE THEY DOING ON THIS NORMAL DAY IN THEIR LIVES?**

Imagining their character's lives, the players respond by describing their character's activities on a typical day.

The setting for the scenes you describe may vary greatly depending on your series concept. If you are playing **The Pros**, maybe your "Day In The Life" revolves around a job you've taken on as a crew. If you're playing **Masked Vigilante Investigations** you may be working a case or cracking down on crime late at night, and so on.

For example:

MC: It's a nice and peaceful morning in the neighborhood of Lakeside Drive. Where are your characters now? What are they doing?

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Goodfellow is in the kitchen of his town house, still reading the newspaper with a cold cup of coffee in his hand. He's retired so he doesn't have anywhere urgent to go to. He does most of his business at night.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): The detective is driving a squad car with the sirens screaming overhead. She's on her way to a crime scene. Let's say someone found a body.

MC: Oooh, that escalated quickly! And Sullivan?

Lamar (playing Sullivan): Sullivan is only now waking up, blinded by sunlight coming through the blinds. Around him there is a messy bedroom. He moans and rolls over lazily when he catches sight of the alarm clock. His alarm didn't go off! And today is the deadline for his latest article. He leaps out of bed.

ASKING QUESTIONS AND ANSWERING THEM

During "A Day In The Life", whenever you think of an interesting detail in the story that you don't yet know, but would like to know, you ask it out loud. Everyone asks about what is interesting to them personally. As you and your group ask questions, you discover what is interesting to all of you together.

Ask and answer as many interesting questions as you can. While in a normal game session this can slow down the game, "A Day In The Life" is all about asking questions. You can ask the other players, the MC, and yourself (out loud). You can ask about anything, including:

- A character's appearance
- A character's life situation including lifestyle, housing, family, income, etc.
- A character's daily routine
- Important non-player characters in the lives of the characters, as individuals and as a crew
- Key locations that will appear in the series
- Minor or major events that influence the series
- A character's Mythos powers, how they manifest, what they look like for Rifts or Sleepers
- The state of affairs in the City and specifically in the domain the characters operate in (a specific district, the business sphere, the underworld, political life, etc.)

When someone raises a question, suggest answers. During "A Day In The Life", you can suggest answers to any question, even if it's not about your character. You can suggest anything from tiny cool details that give the game the right feel to pivotal details that have a dramatic effect over the series. Later, the MC will take over the non-player characters and events in the City; for now, you are all creating the game together.

Players have the final word about details related to their characters. Details related to the crew or series as a whole become a formal part of your canon if everyone agrees on them. You can always build on someone else's suggestion or make an alternative suggestion. Keep in mind, however, that this is a shared world-building process: some of your ideas will be accepted by the group and others will not, it's just the way it works. The MC should make sure everyone gets to have a say about the direction of the game, if they want to. The goal is to have an open discussion that gradually produces enough details so that your *City of Mist* series feels real and interesting. For example:

Alice the MC, asking Lamar: So what does Sullivan's *lance of honor* actually look like? What do Rifts see and what do Sleepers see?

Lamar: I'm thinking it's like a scintillating and flickering beam of multi-colored light that he is holding like a lance but it extends very far, maybe 30 feet. Maybe sometimes it's accompanied by a ghostly silhouette of a rider. I guess it's an imaginary lance so even Rifts see it fading in and out of existence. Sleepers see nothing more than a flash of light, like blinding headlights or a camera glare.

Or:

Lamar, asking Megan: Is Goodfellow married?

Megan: Good question. I want to say his wife is not around, but there's a story there.

Alice the MC: Has she passed away?

Megan: I don't think so. I think it would be more interesting if she's kind of a wild card in his backstory.

Jerry: How about she disappeared during the Lakeside Drive catastrophe?

Megan: Yeah, sounds good! It will give him a solid motive to investigate with the crew, especially if he thinks she's still out there.

Alice the MC: Does he have any family? Assuming they are Sleepers, they wouldn't know anything about the catastrophe. But are they Sleepers...?

Megan: I'd say he has children and grandchildren. They are all Sleepers, although maybe some will awaken during the series. I think it would be interesting if they all think his wife passed away, but Goodfellow is the only one who knows it may not be true. Maybe they think he's losing it.

Lamar: That's awesome.

Or:

Jerry, asking Alice the MC: So what do we actually know about the catastrophe?

Alice the MC: You tell me, what do you know?

Megan: How about the catastrophe and the flooding all happened in one fateful night. We just heard a deafening sound and felt a massive explosion close to the center of the neighborhood. Then the water just started rushing in from every direction.

Lamar: That sounds good. Maybe we don't even know they were separate events. Only later, when we realized it's all being hushed, did we start suspecting a conspiracy and got into investigating.

And so on.

WHAT TO COVER AND WHAT TO AVOID

In your questions, you should cover the following areas:

(a) your individual characters,
(b) your crew and what you do together,
(c) general facts and the current state of affairs in the City, and
(d) any potential cases you are working on and any threats involved that you know about at the beginning of the series.

Avoid tying loose ends. If someone wants to know what is the legend behind the new celebrity superstar or what is really happening down at the docklands, they can wait to find out during the series as you investigate these questions.

PLAYING SCENES

Sometimes during "A Day In The Life" you will have the opportunity to play a scene in your story. The MC, or someone who read the rules in Chapter 3: Working The Case, can explain the basics of the conversation. You each play your characters and the MC plays any non-player characters. Everyone is improvising, so treat this casually and enjoy the ride. As you play through the scene, continue to raise questions and add details.

Alice the MC: So let's fast forward a little. It's afternoon and you're all in Louis' diner, your regular gathering place.

Lamar: Sullivan is there, drinking a fortified coffee to calm his nerves after the hectic day he had.

Megan: Goodfellow is also there, sitting across the table from Sullivan, still reading the newspaper.

Jerry: Det. Enkidu storms through the door, signals Sullivan to scoot over and crashes into the red leather seat. She asks Louis for her regular and, when her dinner arrives and she vulgarly scarfs it down, she mumbles "Murder last night near the pond. Fishy business."

Megan: Goodfellow drops the newspaper. "Is that a pun?"

Jerry, asking the MC: Can I add details or do I need to make a move?

MC: We're still in the Exposition Session so sure.

Jerry, answering Megan: Enkidu shrugs, "no, I mean fishy. The whole crime scene smelled like fish."

Alice the MC: Louis the owner comes around with a some fries and pancakes. "What are you three up to this time?"

Lamar: Wait, is Louis a Rift?

As you continue to play, your "Day In The Life" can evolve in many different directions covering additional aspects of your series. If you wish, you can also begin introducing the basic rules and try making a few of the Core Moves, as explained in Chapter 3:

MC: As you drive around the pond that night in Sullivan's old Mustang, you see a dark figure of a man hiding in the treeline of the Lakeside Drive park. When he sees the headlights of your car, he starts running away from you.

Lamar: I want to overtake him and cut off his escape path with the car.

MC: Great, I guess this is a good point to explain how moves work. Since you are trying to outmaneuver the dark figure, you are **Going Toe to Toe** with him. What power tags do you have that directly support this action?

CONCLUSION

Keep on playing and ask questions until you feel you have a enough details and enough investigative leads to go on. When you are done, put together a few questions that the crew will be investigating when the series begins; the MC will note them down. For example:

- What is at the bottom of the pond?
- What happened on the night of the catastrophe?
- Who is responsible?
- Who is behind the murders by the pond?

When you're done, you wrap up your "Day In The Life" and with it the Exposition Session as a whole. You now have your characters and crew ready and the MC has collected enough information to write the first case or adapt existing cases for your series.

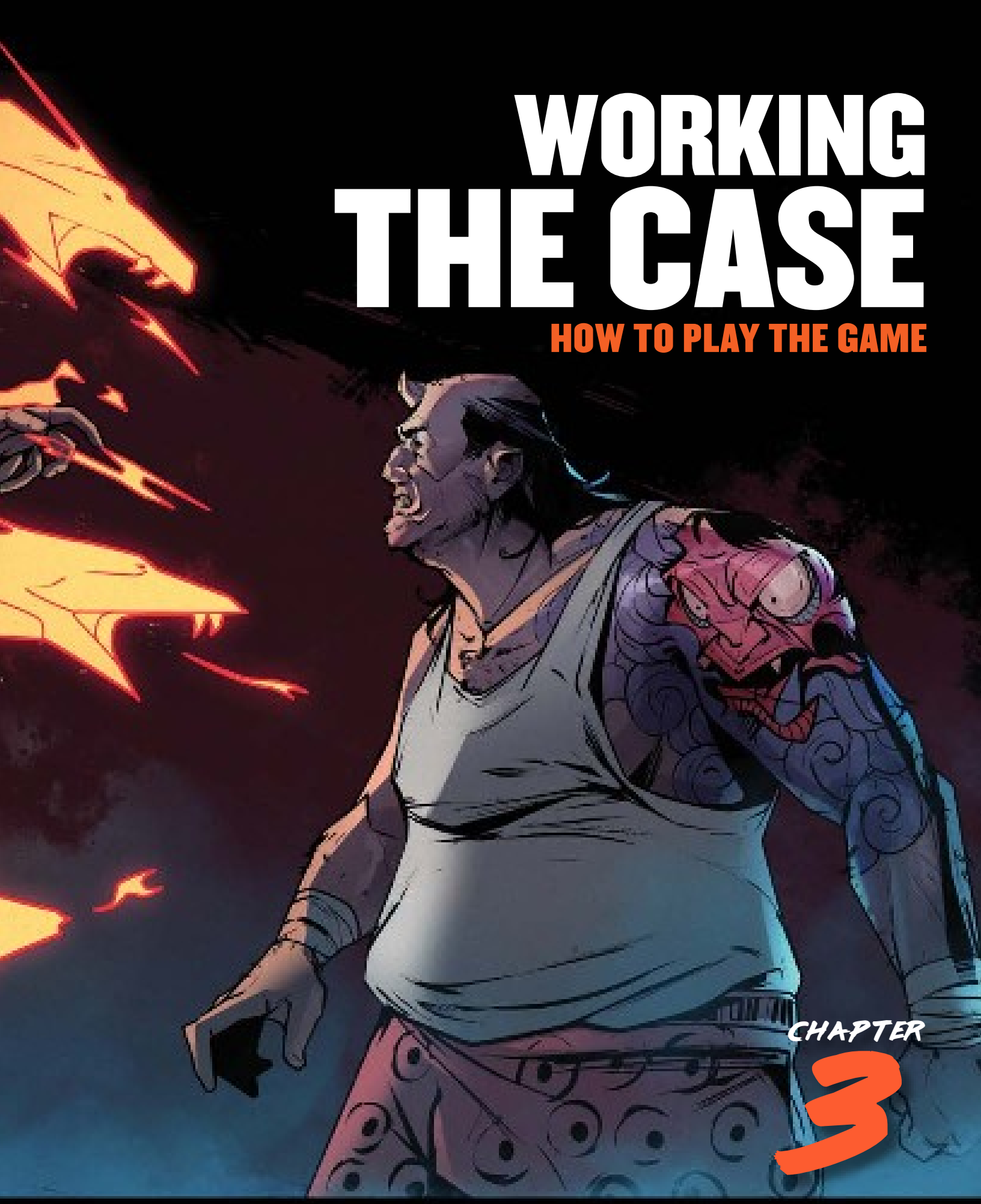
THE ROLE OF THE MC: AFTER THE EXPOSITION SESSION

Now that the materials for the series are ready, it's time to get to work. Working with the information you have on the lead characters and the details and ideas you collected during the Exposition Session, you will create the first case in your series and perhaps a story arc or two to go with it. Alternatively, you can read through existing cases and adapt them to your series. Chapter 5: Behind The Scenes explains the process of creating and running cases and story arcs in detail.


THIS IS WHERE SHE LIVES?
I HOPE YOUR TEACHER IS OKAY BUT YOU DID DECIDE TO CALL HER. HOW CAN YOU A PAPA CRAYON AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER BY THE TIME I FOUND IT.
IS THAT THE PEACH?..
IT'S OKAY.
MR. APPLEBAUM?


LITTLE MISS TRAINER DOESN'T LIVE HERE NO MORE.
DON'T COME HERE AGAIN.
UNGH... THAT WAS A BIT STRONG FOR A SLOG...
OUT OF YOUR MIND?!
HERE WE GOING, MR DIRECTOR, OR WHAT?
GRAB A BREAK, WILL YA...
ONE...

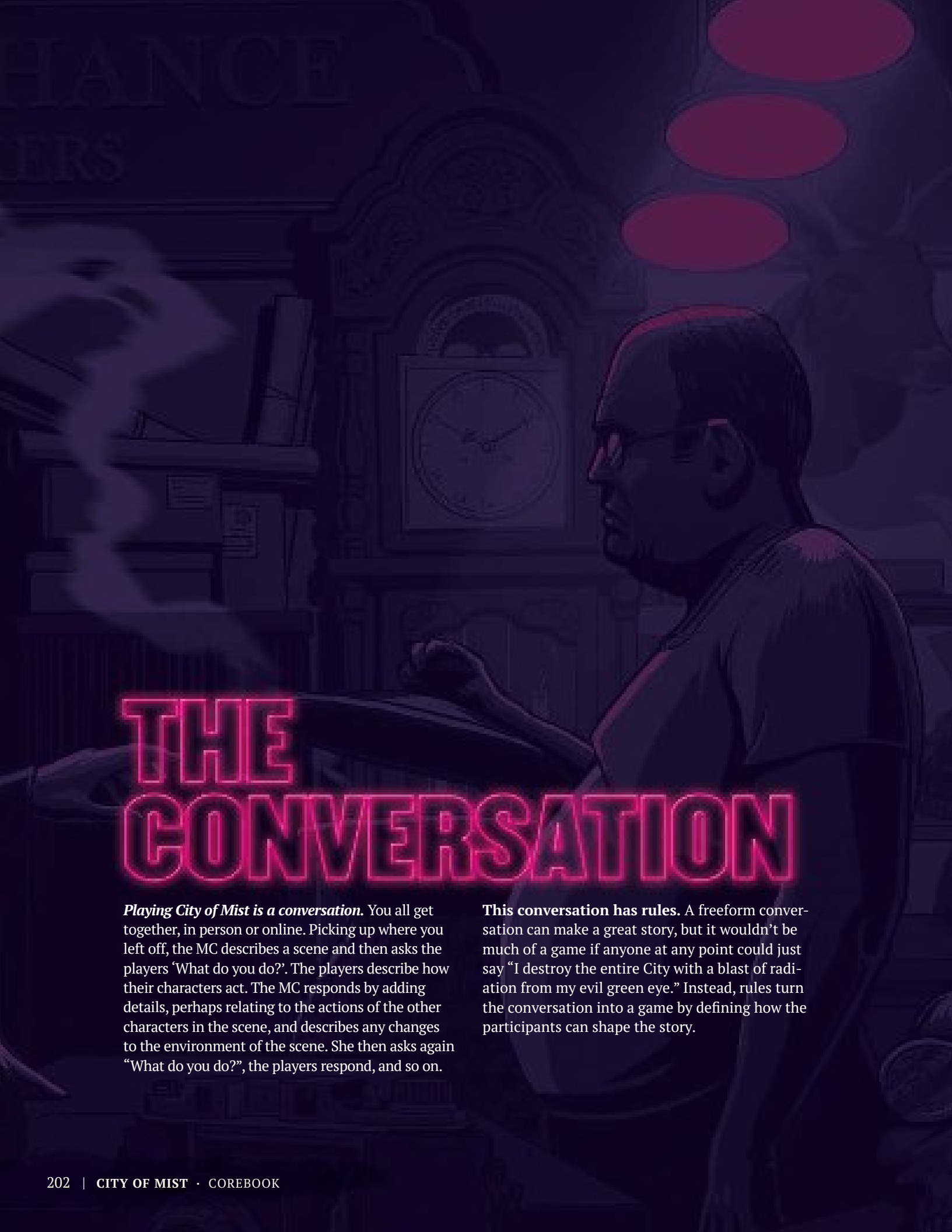




WORKING THE CASE

HOW TO PLAY THE GAME

CHAPTER 3



THE CONVERSATION

Playing City of Mist is a conversation. You all get together, in person or online. Picking up where you left off, the MC describes a scene and then asks the players 'What do you do?'. The players describe how their characters act. The MC responds by adding details, perhaps relating to the actions of the other characters in the scene, and describes any changes to the environment of the scene. She then asks again "What do you do?", the players respond, and so on.

This conversation has rules. A freeform conversation can make a great story, but it wouldn't be much of a game if anyone at any point could just say "I destroy the entire City with a blast of radiation from my evil green eye." Instead, rules turn the conversation into a game by defining how the participants can shape the story.



STORY AND RULES

During the game, the conversation around the table revolves around two things: **story** and **rules**. When someone says "I step out of the shadows of the alley, pointing my revolver at the consigliere so that he's looking down the barrel, and say 'Checkmate'", they are describing what happens in the story. When someone says "I'm going to **Hit With All I've Got**. I have a Power of 3. Let's roll the dice…", they are talking about the rules.

The story and the rules always go hand in hand, affecting one another. Sometimes the story is translated into the language of rules:

MC: You arrive at the docks. It's late at night and it's raining cats and dogs, to the point that it's hard to make out the dark hull of the Ulysses in the water. (Story)

Player: Great, rain is good for my character. I have the tag *works better in damp conditions* so I get +1 Power when using my Mythos powers in the rain. (Rules)

Other times, the rules are translated into the story:

Player: I give the doorman a status of *full-of-doubts-3.* (Rules)

MC: Okay, then following your earnest petition, the doorman wobbles nervously, scratching the back of his head. "Well, I guess if you are Mr. Crane's niece I should let you in. But the regulations say I should give him a call. It's very confusing…" (Story)

Whenever something changes in the rules, translate it into the story, as above. However, not everything in the story must be translated into rules. The player moves determine when something happening in the story triggers the rules, but the MC has the final call on when the rules are activated. Most commonly, the rules are triggered when a player tries to have his character take a significant action that can have various outcomes, invoking a move:

MC: The wind howls as you approach the abandoned fairground, and for a moment you can almost hear the melody of electric rides. The place looks grim: broken signs with shattered light bulbs, exposed machinery crops out of torn and rotten props, all is covered in dust.

As a player, whenever you want your character to take a significant action in the game, the rules kick in to determine its outcome. This is the most common form of rules, called **player moves**. Other rules determine what your character can or cannot do at certain points, or give a new direction to the story. Your character's destiny, therefore, is not just in your hands, but also in the hands of the MC, the other players, and the rules, which often include an element of chance (by rolling dice). During the game, you use your game options (such as moves) and resources (such as tags) to play your character and advance the story.

As an MC, the rules define what you can and cannot introduce into the game at any point. Player moves leave certain decisions in your hands; furthermore, when players miss a move, you can activate your own **MC moves**. The MC options that relate to the player moves are explained in this chapter, while the MC moves are explained in Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes. As the MC, you also act as the game's referee, applying the rules and calling the shots to keep the game running smoothly, so you should be familiar with the player rules.

Player: I step silently over the knocked down gate, glancing around. If the lead I got was solid, I should find some evidence that this place is being used as a hideout: footprints in the dust, drag marks in the mud, active power generators. (Story) I am looking for answers, so I guess I am making the **Investigate** move. (Rules)

Occasionally, you'll find yourself spending a while describing the actions of your characters in the story without triggering the rules. For example, when the crew faces a moral dilemma and a discussion ensues, you can play out the discussion as your characters without necessarily translating the story into rules. If someone then tries to change another character's mind, the rules might be triggered. While the rules are intended to make the game more interesting and dramatic, sometimes they are just not needed.

BREAKING DOWN THE CONVERSATION

As mentioned previously, your story is built like a comic book or TV series; it is a series that can be broken down into issues or episodes, which in turn can be broken down into scenes. The rules of the game sometimes refer to these definitions and those described below. For example, temporary effects last until the end of the next ***action*** and some themebook improvements can only be activated once per ***scene*** or once per ***session***.

An action is the smallest event that can take place in the game. It is something that the character does or says with a defined purpose, using defined means, and under defined circumstances, such as searching a crime scene, slashing the tires of the rival crew's getaway car, or magically healing the wounds of an ally. An action can take any length of time; pulling the trigger of a pistol and questioning all the witnesses of a crime are both actions, even though one takes a fraction of a second and the other can take hours. Significant actions in the story are usually translated into **player moves** to determine their outcome.

A scene is a defined period of time in a specific location ("around midnight, back alley"), during which the lead characters take actions. Most actions take place within a scene. To play a scene, at least one lead character must be present (otherwise it's a cutscene; see below).

When a scene begins, the lead characters either just arrived at the location or they are already there. Sometimes a scene begins with only some of the characters with others joining later on.

The MC begins the scene by describing the location and anything happening there; this is called "establishing the scene". The MC might decide to delegate the description to one of the players, instead (e.g., if the scene takes place in that player character's apartment or if the MC wants to share the role of the narrator with the players). This description should include details about the environment as well as other characters or threats present in the scene:

MC: Inside the boarded-up warehouse, you see labourers packing a suspicious new brand of fizzy drink, guarded by paramilitaries with submachine guns.

Once the scene is established, the MC asks "What do you do?", giving the stage to the actions of the lead characters, played by the players.

A scene has no pre-defined duration or a length measured in actions. It might include a series of events lasting no more than a few minutes or it might take hours or even days (as long as it's all being done in the same place as one continuous stretch of time). Similarly, it can include a single action or dozens of actions.

A scene is exhausted when the lead characters leave, when it seems there aren't going to be any more significant actions, or when the MC wants to end the scene and cut to a new scene as a narration technique. When a scene is exhausted, the MC and the players decide what scene will come next based on what the lead characters are planning to do next. If there are several options for upcoming scenes (for example, if the lead characters split up), the MC as the narrator decides which scene to play out next, or when to cut between scenes.

A cutscene is a scene without the lead characters. Often set in a location removed from the lead characters and describing events that the lead

characters have no knowledge of, a cutscene is a device mostly used by the MC to create suspense and reveal information that would drive the story forward, for the players if not for the characters. Cutscenes are usually kept quite short as they force the players to be passive observers.

Downtime is a significant stretch of time that takes place between scenes, when the lead characters are either inactive or engage in individual actions that are described in broad terms. When a scene ends, if the crew members turn to different activities, often taking a break from active investigation as a group, the MC can declare a stretch of downtime. Each player briefly describes what their character does during that stretch of time. Actions taken during downtime are governed by the move **Montage (Downtime)**. When downtime ends, a new scene begins, which may take place hours, days, or even weeks later.

A session (also called an episode or issue) is a single meeting of your group spent playing the game, usually a few hours long. While a session is defined by the real world rather than the story, it can be roughly equivalent to an episode of a TV show or an issue of a comic. Most sessions contain multiple scenes and at least one stretch of downtime, but sometimes an entire session can be spent playing a single, long scene. At the end of every session, you make the move **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)**.

A season is a sequence of sessions that is chronologically and thematically linked, usually by an overarching investigation or challenge that the crew is facing. The terms season premiere and season finale are used to refer to the first and last sessions of the season, respectively.

A series is the entire story of a specific *City of Mist* game, created over several sessions and possibly spanning multiple seasons.

THE SPOTLIGHT

During play, the MC acts as the host of the game and is responsible for judicially dividing airtime between the players and their characters. A scene most often starts with the MC describing the relevant location, characters, and events, as explained above. Subsequently, when it's time for the players to describe their characters' actions, the MC manages the conversation by giving the stage to each player in turn, asking him or her "What do you do?". This is referred to as giving and receiving the **spotlight**. Managing the spotlight is comparable to a director switching between cameras to ensure all the lead characters receive enough airtime in the story.

A player who receives the spotlight can describe his character's actions in the scene. When describing his character's actions, the player must take into consideration everything that has already happened in the scene, including what the MC and the other players said up to this point. The MC and the other players can intrude in specific ways given in the rules (for example, helping or interfering with the active player's action), but otherwise they give the active player the stage.

There is no particular order for receiving spotlight in a scene. Most commonly, the MC begins a scene by giving the spotlight to the character who arrived first at the scene or to a character who received the least airtime in previous scenes. The MC and the group as a whole should make sure that each player receives the spotlight regularly and that overall the distribution of spotlight is equal among the players. One option is to set up a set order of turns (i.e., a round) and repeat it after everyone has taken a turn; another option is going by the order of what takes place in the story, but ensuring everyone gets the spotlight once before going back to someone who already played this round.



THINK CINEMATIC

As a player, you get to play your character any way you want to, so make the most out of it! Here a few things you can try:

Take dramatic actions: Make your actions count. Don't be afraid to make moves that will rattle the entire series or put your character and the things dear to her on the line. Great stories are made of great risks and epic successes and failures. Let your character be what she is all the way: foolhardy, vengeful, romantic, ostentatious, conniving – anything that makes your character come alive and feel cool.

MC: You arrive just in time to see Jessica take a dive from the top of the building.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): No, not another one! Screw this, Enkidu runs to the ledge and jumps right after her. I'll try to break the fall somehow, but I'm not losing this victim!

Make your character look great on screen: When you describe your actions, describe them as if you are seeing them on the big screen, on TV, in a comic-book, or a computer game. Let everyone know what it looks and feels like:

Lamar (playing Sullivan): Sullivan walks out of the flames, the charred shell of his car burning behind him. Around him, ethereal wisps sparkle and scintillate as his armor, shield, and lance phase in from beyond the Mist. He looks up to the giant and you can almost see the blades of the windmill turning behind the hulk. The battle begins.

Think about the story as a whole. What will happen to your character? Your crew? The other characters? The City? Use your character to steer the story where you want it to go, but stay open to any outcome: the MC, the other players, and the dice will surprise you, and therein lies all the fun. Make space and give the stage to other players and the MC so they can do their share of storytelling and, when appropriate, weave your character's story into theirs.

The duration of a player's spotlight isn't set and, depending on the story and at the MC's discretion, a player can take several actions before the spotlight passes on to the next player. However, for the sake of the flow of the game, the MC is advised to limit players to no more than one or two moves (not including linked moves, see below) before giving the spotlight to the next player.

The MC takes the spotlight as needed. After every player action and sometimes even during the action, the MC takes the spotlight to describe how everything in the scene responds to what the character just did. When a player misses a move, the MC makes an MC move and describes a more dramatic development. When the MC is done, she returns the spotlight to the player who had it or passes it over to the next player by asking again "What do you do?"

MOMENTARILY SHIFTING THE SPOTLIGHT

In some cases, the actions of other characters must be resolved before the character who received the spotlight can act. The MC then temporarily shifts the spotlight away from the active character to the character or characters whose actions must be resolved. This occurs when:

- **Other player characters are trying to help or interfere with the action of the character who has the spotlight**. The spotlight temporarily shifts to them for the sake of resolving their helping or interfering actions (usually using the **Change the Game** move). Once their influence on the spotlight player's action is determined, the spotlight returns to him and he completes the action.
- **Other players are affected by the outcome of the action taken by the character who has the spotlight.** If the player character who has the spotlight tries to affect one of the other player characters or causes them to be affected (e.g., by missing a roll and inviting an MC move), the spotlight temporarily shifts to the affected player characters in order to resolve their attempts to defend themselves, if any. When the effect is resolved, the spotlight returns to the active character or passes on to the next player character, at the MC's discretion.

TRYING TO ACT FIRST

When a dramatic situation within the story drives a character to try to act before the other characters (player or non-player) or before something happens, the attempt to act first is considered an action in and of itself. The player portraying the character must make a move to determine whether his character manages to act before other events and actions take place.

When two or more characters (player or non-player) are struggling to act first, they are essentially fighting for control of the situation, so use the **Go Toe to Toe** move (described below). If the character is simply trying to act before something else happens, e.g., slip between closing elevator doors in time, she is probably **Taking the Risk**.

If the move scores a hit and the player chooses to act first, the player receives the spotlight. If the move is missed or if the player chooses to forego acting first in order to avoid other negative effects, the spotlight goes to another character. All other implications described in the move's description are applied. Moreover, if the player misses the move, the MC makes an MC move as usual.

If two or more players are vying for the chance to act first, the MC chooses one at her whim to make the move. Other players may attempt to interfere with this move, using their own moves and resources, as usual (see Helping and Interfering, page 251).



ASKING FOR MORE INFORMATION

As a player, you can always ask for more information about the scene to help you imagine it. Based on what the MC has prepared about the scene or based on details improvised on the spot, the MC will relate any information that is easily perceptible or known to your character. For example:

Player: Is it raining?

MC: Yes.

Player: How long is that alley?

MC: About a hundred yards.

Player: What does my character know about this gang?

MC: Well, since you are involved with the underworld, it's safe to say you've heard about them. They mostly serve as enforcers for loan sharks.

If you ask for information that isn't easily available to your character, the MC will ask you to take an action to find out the answer (most likely using the **Investigate** move).

Player: Does the mayor look nervous around these people?

MC: If he is, he's hiding it well. You'll have to study him for a while to be sure. Would you like to **Investigate**?

It's up to the MC to decide what information is available to your character. Asking questions about the scene does not require having the spotlight. However, players should avoid bogging down the conversation with too many questions and instead focus on what is important in the scene.



MOVES: TAKING ACTION

This section relates to players taking actions when playing one of the lead characters. The MC, who portrays all the the other, non-player characters in the story, uses different rules for taking actions with her characters. The rules for the MC characters are given in Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes and Chapter 6: This is MY City! However, the MC should also be familiar with the rules for the players actions as player actions often involve decision-making by the MC.

When you receive the spotlight, you can describe what actions your character takes in the story. Depending on the nature of the scene, your character can observe the scene, move around it, speak, and take casual actions without triggering the rules. Actions that do not involve the rules are considered to happen as you describe them: your character says what you say she says, she walks where you say she walks, etc.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): Enkidu walks up to the filthy kid in the junkyard and says, "It's late, little guy. You shouldn't be hanging around these places after dark. Let me drive you home." All this time, she is having flashbacks of her past, when she herself was found in a junkyard.

Much of the time, however, your character's actions will have some dramatic importance and will therefore trigger the rules. When the rules come into play, you still describe your character's action, but you use the rules to determine its outcome and consequences. The rules decide how well or how miserably you perform the action, what unexpected side-effects transpire from your action, and how other elements in the scene respond to what you did. The rules that govern the outcome of your actions are called **moves**.

MC: The kid only smiles. Before you know it, you hear the swoosh of something moving very fast above you. It's the scrap magnet, and it's freefalling down on you! You can get out in time but the kid is just perching there. What do you do?

Jerry: Can't let this happen. I'm going to leap at him and push him out of harm's way!

MC: Cool, you take the leap, but let's see how that works out for you. You make the **Take the Risk** move.

Standard moves have three parts: condition, roll, and outcome. For example:

TAKE A RISK

When you **perform a daring, risky, or outright stupid feat**, roll+Power. On a 10+, you do it, somehow. On a 7-9, things get messy. The MC will offer you a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

Condition:
When you **perform a daring, risky, or outright stupid feat**,

Roll:
roll+Power.

Outcome:
On a 10+, you do it, somehow. On a 7-9, things get messy. The MC will offer you a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

The condition of a move describes a circumstance or type of action. **Whenever you describe your character taking an action that matches the condition, the move is triggered.** You must then roll the dice, add a modifier (usually Power, see below) to the result, and compare the total to the description of the move to determine the outcome of your action. This is called **making a move**.

MAKING A MOVE

1. Describe your character's action and name the move you are making.

2. Determine your Power*.

3. Roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and add the result to your Power.

4. Follow the outcome description based on your score.

*Some moves in the game, such as **Look Beyond the Mist**, **Stop. Holding. Back.**, and MC custom moves, use other modifiers instead of Power.

THE CORE MOVES TRIGGERS

The most commonly-used moves in the game are the **Core Moves**. When you, as your character, are using your abilities...

... to seek answers to burning questions or gain information, you **Investigate.**

... to talk, threaten, or seduce someone into doing something, you **Convince.**

... to avoid a hit, endure harm, or resist an influence, you **Face Danger.**

... to take a clear shot at someone with all of your power, you **Hit With All You've Got.**

... to overcome someone or something in a struggle for control, you **Go Toe to Toe.**

... to give you or your allies an advantage, you **Change the Game.**

... to do something discreetly or deceptively, you **Sneak Around.**

... to perform a feat of daring, you **Take the Risk.**

The Core Moves are explained in full starting on page 251.

1. MATCHING ACTION AND MOVE

When you describe an action that triggers a move, you must also name the move you are making. If you don't know which move to use, the MC will tell you. The action and the condition of the move must match. For example:

Player: I'm going to hide behind the hedge and wait for the owner to leave the house. I'm **Sneaking Around.**

Or:

Player: I'm going to flirt with the cafeteria lady and try to understand when she last saw headmaster Boyd. I'm **Investigating.**

Or:

Player: If we don't get out of this water tank before it fills up, we're doomed! I am going to try to melt a hole in the bottom, but since I've never used my Mythos fire powers underwater, I guess I **Stop. Holding. Back.**

Your character cannot take an action that matches the condition of a move without also making the move. If you want your character to take the action in the story, you must back your description with a move. Whenever you describe an action without invoking a move, the MC will suggest one. For example:

Player: That thing killed Marcy! I'm gonna blow his lights out. I pick up the crowbar and take advantage of the fact he's not looking at me to take a swing at its scaly face.

MC: Okay – so are you **Hitting With All You've Got**?

Player: Hell yeah! Let me roll for that...

The reverse is also true: you cannot make a move without describing an action that matches the condition of that move. Whenever you invoke a move without describing the action, the MC will ask you to describe what happens in the story by asking you:

? WHAT DO WE SEE?

For example:

Player: Arggh, so I'm hanging off the bridge, holding onto the rope with one hand and the bag with the other? Can't let that bag of jewelry drop into the river. I'm going to **Take The Risk.**

MC: Okay, but **what do we see**?

Player: Oh, right. My character kicks himself off the bridge posts and tries

TAKING A SEQUENCE OF ACTIONS

When you plan to take a sequence of different actions, always break down the sequence into distinct actions and make the move for the first action only. Depending on how the first action ended, the MC rules whether you may continue your planned sequence by making the move for the next action, etc. For example:

Player: I drift the car around the street corner, burning the tires; then I pull out my SMG and spray the rival gang with my flaming bullets; then I bring the car to a halt in front of all the mayhem and say – 'Valtierra has a message for you: join him, or join the dead!'

MC: Okay. That's a handful! Start with the drift, you're **Taking the Risk.** If you pull it off, you can go on to opening fire.

Rolling a miss on a move often means something interrupted your sequence but other effects may apply instead. For example, the MC might use an MC move to impose a status on your character but allow you to continue your sequence.

A sequence may or may not be completed before passing the spotlight to another character. If you did not complete your sequence of actions and the spotlight moved on, you may continue the sequence next time you receive the spotlight, assuming the actions of the other characters and their outcomes did not interrupt your own.

to build momentum to swing himself onto one of the beams.

MC: Ballsy. Make the move.

2. DETERMINING POWER

Power represents your character's ability to perform a specific action. Power takes into consideration your character's skills and resources, her weaknesses, the conditions under which she is operating, and her current status. It's a measure of how much your character is in her element when taking the action. Power starts at zero for every new action taken; the Power of previous rolls does not affect the Power of new rolls.

If the MC or the other players wish to invoke the rules to somehow affect your move, they must do so at this point. Such intrusions are most commonly used to create new story tags and statuses that will increase or decrease your Power.

Power is determined as follows:

A. COUNT POWER TAGS

Name the power tags (and/or story tags) which directly help you perform the action you are taking (e.g. *observant* while searching a crime scene). You can invoke any of the power tags your character has, including tags from different themes, as long as they reasonably enhance your action. Read more about power tags on page 217.

The number of power tags you invoke is your initial Power. If you have no appropriate power tags but your character is reasonably able to perform the action (e.g. talk to a reporter, climb over a chainlink fence), your initial Power is zero.

At your option, briefly describe how each power tag invoked helps your character perform the action better.

B. SUBTRACT WEAKNESS TAGS

You, the MC, or any player whose character is the unwilling target of your move can choose to invoke any of your weakness tags (and/or story tags) that reasonably impede the action your character is taking (e.g., *out of shape* while pursuing a fleeing suspect on foot). Read more about weakness tags on page 219.

For each weakness tag invoked, reduce your Power by one and mark Attention on that tag's theme. Your Power can be reduced below zero to a negative number.

At your option, briefly describe how each weakness tag invoked hinders your character while performing the action.

C. ADD OR SUBTRACT OTHER FACTORS

Statuses are descriptive tags with tiers that are used to define temporary conditions (see page 230). Your statuses can affect your move. In some cases, the MC may rule that the statuses of *the target of your move* can also affect your move.

If your character (or the target of your move) have any statuses that *help* your action, add the tier of the *highest* status among them to your Power.

If your character (or the target of your move) have any statuses that *impede* your action, subtract the tier of the *highest* status among them from your Power. Your Power can be reduced below zero to a negative number.

EXAMPLE 1: DETERMINING POWER

Lamar is playing his new character, Sullivan, who is investigating the derelict apartment of a runaway witness in the the blue-collar residential neighborhood. According to Alice the MC, it seems like a fight took place in the apartment.

Lamar (playing Sullivan): Sullivan surveys the apartment trying to find clues as to what happened here. I'm **Investigating**. I have one relevant power tag, *investigative reporter*, so I start with a Power of 1.

MC: Great, roll with a Power of 1.

Alice could also say:

MC: Hmmm, you're all alone in an apartment that's totally turned upside-down. I think it's a good time to invoke your weakness tag *delusional*. That brings your Power back down to zero. Roll with a Power of zero. Oh, and mark one Attention on your theme Imaginary Knight.

If Sullivan had any relevant statuses, Lamar would factor them into the action:

Lamar: Sullivan also has a status *in-hot-pursuit-2* which I think applies here, because I already have a few leads about this witness. This is the only (and therefore highest) positive status I have, so I add its tier to my Power of zero, getting a Power of 2. I don't have any negative statuses that apply, fortunately.

Optionally, one of the other players could also affect the move's Power by helping or interfering, giving Sullivan a status:

Megan: My fairy trickster Goodfellow is the one responsible for all this mess. He admires Sullivan so he really doesn't want the reporter to find out about his involvement. I'm going to use a Hurt point to give Sullivan a *fooled-by-a-Goodfellow-1* status and knock down his Power by one.

Lamar: That's harsh! But cute at the same time. I'm left with a Power of 1.

EXAMPLE 2: DETERMINING POWER

Det. Enkidu is trying to subdue and restrain the Rift of Thor, the Norse storm god. She is **Going Toe to Toe** with him and invokes three power tags: *beastily athletic*, *thorny tentacles*, and *wild rage*. This gives her a Power of 3. She has no helpful statuses, but she is *dizzy-1* from a punch that Thor landed earlier. The Rift of Thor also has a relevant status *berserk-2*, positive for him but detrimental to Enkidu's action. The MC decides this status applies to the action. Out of the two statuses, only *berserk-2* applies because it's the highest negative status. The detective's Power of 3 is reduced by 2, for a final Power of 1.

OPTIONAL RULE: GRIT MODE

Grit Mode is a special mode of play you can choose to apply in your game in order to make actions more difficult for the players and make the character's lives harder. Grit Mode makes it harder to achieve a Power of 3 or more when making a move. As a result, players tend to score less and the outcomes of actions lean more toward mixed or negative results.

You should use Grit Mode when:

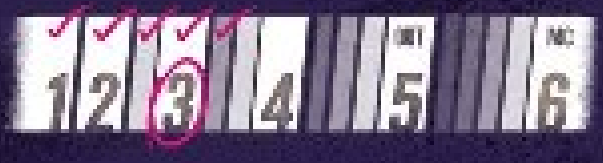
a) you would like to give your game a darker outlook and make your City a place where things usually turn out for the worse; or

b) your characters have become too strong and you would like to increase the level of difficulty in the game; or

c) you find the standard checks and valves for limiting characters' Power (such as weakness tags, negative statuses, and power tag caps) difficult to apply and you want to set a stricter limit on the character's Power.

When Grit Mode is activated, you roll+Grit instead of roll+Power for all the Core Moves. To determine your Grit, determine your Power as usual and compare it to the table below, or use the status bar: starting on the left side of the status bar, count one box for each point of Power you have. The last number you reach is your Grit.

For example, a character with a Power of 5 counts five boxes from the left: the box labelled 1, the box labelled two, an empty box, the box labelled 3, and another empty box. Since 3 is the last number reached, that character's Grit for the action is 3.



POWER	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 or more
GRIT	0	1	2	2	3	3	3	4

Negative Power is translated to Grit in the same way, resulting in negative Grit.

In addition to replacing roll+Power with roll+Grit, Grit is also used instead of Power whenever a move mentions Power. For example, if a move indicates you give your target a status with a tier equals to your Power, you use Grit instead.

3. ROLLING THE DICE

Now that you know your Power, roll two six-sided dice (also known as 2d6), add up the results, and add it to your Power. This is known as roll+Power. The final result is your score for this move. Once the dice are cast, the Power for this action cannot be changed by invoking additional tags or using any other feature of the game.

For example, if your Power is 3 and you roll 2 and 5, your score for the roll is 3 + 2 + 5 = 10. if your Power is -1 and you roll 4 and 1, your score for the roll is -1 + 4 + 1 = 4.

In moves that use modifiers other than Power, replace Power with the relevant modifier as listed (e.g. roll+Mythos, roll+Logos, etc.)

4. ESTABLISHING THE OUTCOME

OUTCOME CATEGORIES

All moves interpret the score of your roll according to the same general categories:

A final score of 6 or less is a MISS. When you miss a move, the MC gets an opportunity to invoke one of her own MC moves, usually complicating things for you and your crew. A miss doesn't necessarily mean you failed the action you attempted, but it does mean a new complication presented itself either due to your action or in conjunction with it. On a miss, the MC describes the outcome of your action.

A final score of 7 or more is a HIT. A score of 7-9 is considered a weak hit. It represents a mixture of success and complication, where you manage to achieve some of the intended outcome but in doing so you also suffer negative implications. **A score of 10 or more is considered a strong hit**. It represents a good success which allows you to accomplish what you attempted with few or no complications.

Some options in the game allow you to unlock an additional category of success which activates when you score **12 or more**, representing an extraordinary success with special benefits. Unless the 12 or more category is unlocked, a score of 12 or more is treated as 10 or more.

The moves refer to these categories with the following designations:

On a miss, ... (when you score 6 or less)
On a hit, ... (when you score 7 or more)
On a 7-9, ... (when you score 7, 8, or 9)
On a 10+, ... (when you score 10 or more)
On a 12+, ... (when you score 12 or more)

OUTCOME DESCRIPTIONS

Each move has different outcome descriptions for 7-9 and 10+. Some moves also define what occurs when you miss the move (by scoring 6 or less), in addition to or instead of the standard MC move. The outcomes of the Core Moves are described later in this chapter.

Once you establish your score for the roll, follow the respective outcome description. Outcome descriptions can describe both story- and rules-related results. For example, a move can specify that your character is exposed to danger in the story or it can specify that you take a status.

OUTCOMES THAT ASK YOU TO CHOOSE

Some move outcomes specify choices for the player who made the move, for the MC, or for another player. For example, on 7-9, the **Sneak Around** move tells the MC to choose one option out of a list to affect the character who took the action:

On a 7-9, the MC chooses one:

- Someone unimportant noticed you, but that just made them important, right?
- You are perceived only by a secondary sense (someone picks up your scent while you're stalking them; you're seen whispering a message but the message is not heard).
- You must leave something important behind – or be discovered.

Similarly, on a hit, the **Hit With All You've Got** move states that you give a status to your target. You must choose the tag of the status you give with your action.

On a hit, you give the target an appropriate status of your choice with tier=Power.

Whenever you make a choice in a move, whether your own or another player's, describe how this choice is reflected in the story. In other words, you translate the rules into the story.

For example:

Matt (playing Kitsune): I'm going to parkour onto the roof of the metal-works factory and then try to take the crooks inside by surprise. I'm **Sneaking Around.** My Power is 2, I rolled 3 and 3, so that's 8 all together. Eek, 7-9! That can't be good…

MC: Okay, in **Sneaking Around**, on 7-9, it says I choose one of the options. So I choose "Someone unimportant noticed you, but that just made them important, right?". Let me think… You definitely get the drop on whoever is INSIDE. But suddenly white light washes over your jacket and hoodie as the security guard at the gate points his flashlight at you. He then starts running towards his booth. Looks like he's going to call the cops.

Or:

Jerry (playing Detective Enkidu): These violent Infection Club teenagers are getting on my nerves. It's time to push them back with my vines. It's a close-quarter scuffle so I guess I am **Going Toe to Toe**? My Power is 3, I roll 4 and 6, wow! Total score of 13, which is 10+.

MC: When **Going Toe to Toe**, on a 10+, you choose two options from the move.

Jerry (looking over the options): I choose to achieve my goal, so first I whip out vines and plant-like tentacles that push them away from me. I also choose to give them a status, let's call it *constricted-3!* So now they are suspended in mid-air, held up and strangled by my vines…

MORE ON USING MOVES

REPEATING A MOVE

You cannot repeat an action using the same tags, until the conditions have changed. This is true regardless of whether you scored a hit or a miss. In other words, you can't keep making identical actions such as attacking the same target in the same way twice or investigating the same subject using the same methods again and again. You can attempt an action again when the conditions have changed, as decided by the MC. This could be a matter of moments, e.g., in a rapidly changing battlefield, or days, e.g., when you got all you can get from a witness using a specific approach and you need him to cool down before trying again. You can attempt an action again if you change your approach and use different tags.

Face Danger is an exception to this rule. So long as you are able to protect yourself, you can **Face Danger** again and again using the same tags

LINKED MOVES

Moves often follow one another in succession either because they trigger one another or because the rules or the MC ask you to make one move before you can perform the other. Most often, failed moves are followed by a **Face Danger** move to avoid harm; **Change the Game** moves are followed by the move they augment. Such moves are called **linked moves**.

A tag can only be used *once* within a set of linked moves. In other words, it can only be used in one of the linked moves. This applies even if the tag is available and relevant to more than one move in the set. For example:

Lamar (playing Sullivan): "I use *shield to match* to bash that goblin-mercenary in the head and knock him off the ship. That's **Hit With All You've Got** with a Power of 1. I roll… ouch. 2 and 2, for a total score of 5. I missed the move."

MC: "Ouch indeed. As you lunge towards the mercenary and pin him to the railing, he pulls out a combat knife and stabs you with it, for an *ugly-cut-2*. It's time for Sullivan to **Face Danger**, but you can't use the *shield to match* tag because you already used it in the previous move, and they're directly linked. Let's say that since the shield is locked between you two, you can't use it to defend yourself."

Lamar: "That makes sense. Thank god I still have my *spectral armor*…"

Moves that have the same purpose are also considered linked moves, even if they don't follow one another. For example, if you use your tag *devout believer* to resist being brainwashed by a cult, and **Change the Game** to give yourself a status of *reinforced-faith-2*, you cannot use the tag again when you **Face Danger** against being brainwashed, since both moves have the same purpose of protecting you.

POSTPONED MOVES

The MC can choose to postpone the resolution of a move for dramatic effect. When the outcome of your character's action would only become meaningful later on in the story, the MC can ask you to hold off making the move. Your character's action is assumed to have happened but its results remain unknown and the game continues normally. When the outcome of the move becomes important, the MC will ask you to make the move for the action taken in the past in order to dramatically reveal its outcome in the present.

For example, a player is playing a criminal mastermind who is trying to intimidate the crew's getaway driver to make sure he is there on time to extract the crew. The MC can decide to postpone this move until the crew is actually fleeing the scene of the crime. Within the story, the intimidating dialog takes place hours before the fateful pick up; the rules, however, are resolved only when it's time to find out what was the outcome of the dialog, in this case, when the crew runs out of the City Central Bank heist to discover whether the getaway driver showed up or not.

DICELESS MOVES

Diceless moves are moves that do not require a roll. Instead, the move is triggered whenever your character takes an action in the story that fulfils the condition (or, in some moves, whenever the players take game actions that fulfil the condition). You must then follow the outcome description given in the move. For example:

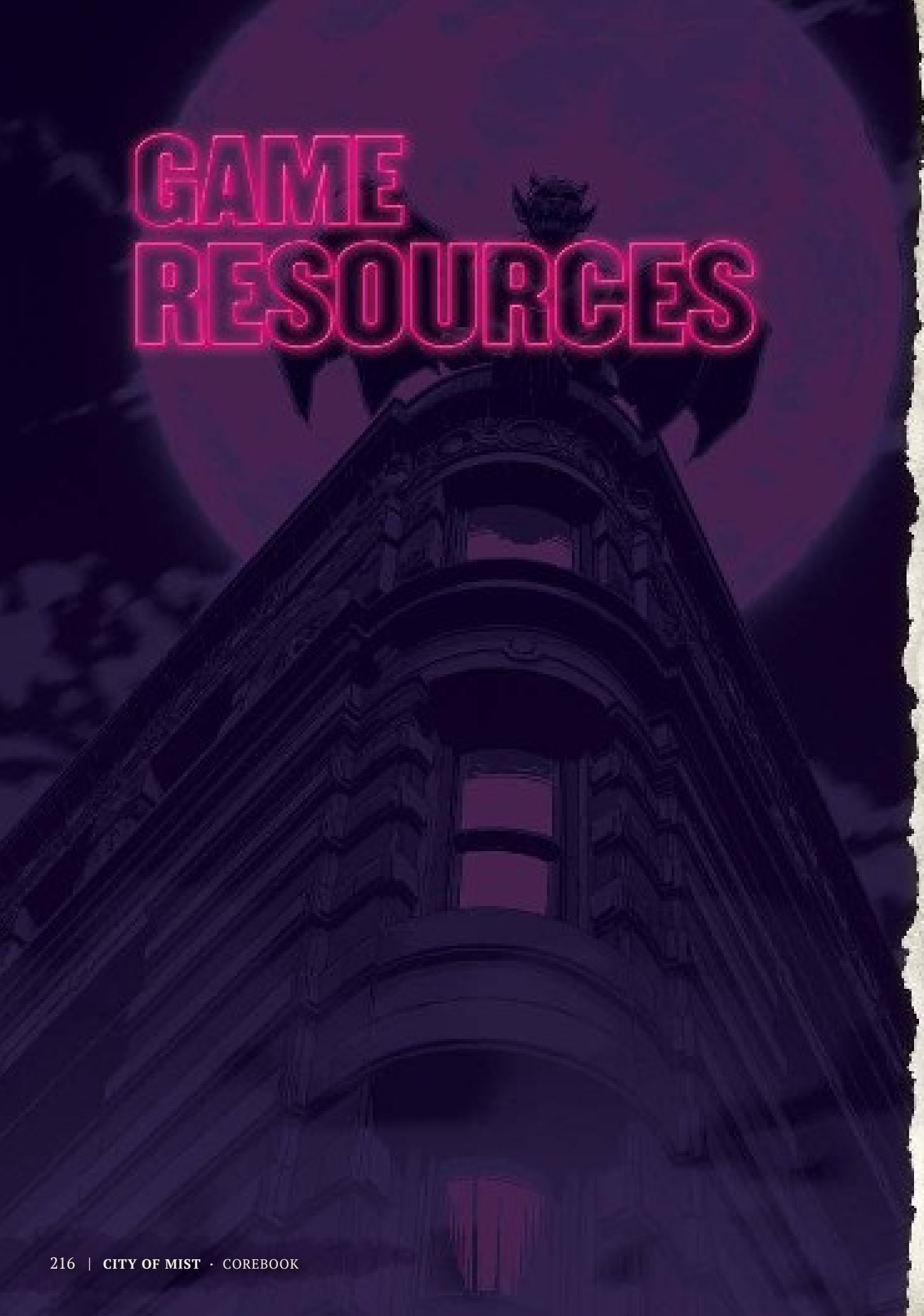
Condition:
When you sacrifice something you truly want to abide by your Identity,

Outcome:
mark Attention on that Identity's theme.

In the above move, the outcome of the move instructs you to mark Attention on a given theme. Whenever the move condition is fulfilled, you do so.

Diceless moves are used throughout the game to create rules that are triggered in certain circumstances regardless of the character's Power or roll, such as moves related to character development explained in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth and custom moves created by the MC, explained in Chapter 6: This is My City!




GAME
RESOURCES

TAGS

Tags are details you can bring into the story in a meaningful way. As explained in Chapter 2: Who Are You?, anything from the characters' qualities, through equipment and allies, to thematic catchphrases can be a tag. Tags can also describe elements of the story. Tags play a dual role in the game: they both describe a character or a situation and power or depower your character's moves.

The descriptive role of tags is intuitive: if a character has the tag *tall* then she is tall; if she has the tag *crossbow*, she possesses and probably carries a crossbow. Within your story, your character receives all the benefits and suffers the shortcomings described by the tag. For example, if your character is *rich* she could have all the trappings of wealth, such as property, a fancy car, fine clothes, etc.

The second role of the tags, pertaining to their game effects, requires interpretation: based on the situation at hand, you decide whether a tag is **relevant to a given action** and can therefore be invoked to affect the Power of the move for an action. For example, being *a football coach* can help your character when trying to inspire her crew while being *weak-minded* could weaken her attempt to resist powers of hypnotism.

Taking a step further, you can shape your actions based on the tags you have by trying to describe them in a way that makes your tags relevant. For example, if you are racing on your motorbike, trying to escape a mafia overlord's henchmen, you might choose to slide under an approaching semi-trailer because you have the tags *fastest bike in town*, *perfect reflexes*, and *daredevil*. On the other hand, if you have the tags *knows every street* and *moonlight shadow*, you might prefer trying to lose the henchmen by ducking into back alleys.

All tags can be used with any move as long as they reasonably impact the action it describes. For example, if you have the tag *a deck of tarot cards*, you can use it to read into someone's past with **Investigate**, but you can also presumably use it to disguise yourself as a fortune teller using **Sneak Around**. You couldn't, under normal circumstances, use it to attack someone with **Hit With All You've Got**.

Whenever there's doubt whether a tag is relevant to an action, the MC as the referee has the final word and should make a quick decision. Play time should not be wasted on tag discussions.

The MC should try to strike a balance between empowering the players and setting clear limits on tag invocation. She should reward players for creative and cinematic descriptions by allowing flexible use of tags. At the same time, disallowing the use of loosely-connected tags or requiring an additional move to use them helps define the boundaries of play: what types of tag associations and interpretations are and aren't acceptable to you. Players, on the other hand, should help the flow of the game by only invoking tags that are clearly relevant or by having a description that clarifies how they use the tag. The group as a whole should aspire to keep the game flowing and tag invocation as short as possible, focusing on advancing the story.

POWER TAGS

Power tags represent things that are helpful to your character. Therefore, power tags can only be used to increase the Power of a move, never to reduce it (see the exception below). Only you can invoke your character's power tags and you can only invoke your character's power tags for moves made by you. Each power tag can only be invoked once per move; however, the same power tag can be invoked again and again in different moves, as long as it is relevant to all of them and unless otherwise stated.

Power tags can only be invoked and counted toward the Power of a move when they directly help you perform the action you are taking. In other words, you only receive a point of Power for using a power tag when it clearly improves your character's chances of succeeding in the action or improves

the effectiveness of her action. For example:

- Being *a professional boxer* helps you throw a punch when you **Go Toe To Toe** with an opponent.
- Having *iron skin* improves your ability to withstand blows with **Face Danger**.
- Flashing *wads of cash* at a greedy informant can help **Convince** him to play along.
- Walking with *inaudible steps* improves your ability to **Sneak Around** a security guard.
- Talking to *Eddie, my only confidant* at the bar can help you overcome the strange and dark thoughts that have been haunting you with **Change the Game**.

Tags that do not directly help the specific action you're performing in this specific situation cannot be invoked and therefore do not add to your Power. For example, in most imaginable cases:

- Being a *sweet talker* doesn't help you throw a punch when you **Go Toe To Toe** with an opponent.
- Having the ability to *see through walls* doesn't improve your ability to withstand blows with **Face Danger**.
- Sharing your knowledge of *botany* with a greedy informant cannot help **Convince** him to play along.
- Being surrounded by *relentless fans* does not improve your ability to **Sneak Around** a security guard.
- Talking to your *hunting rifle* at the bar cannot help you overcome the strange and dark thoughts that have been haunting you with **Change the Game**.

When you invoke a tag, but it is unclear *how* it helps your character perform the action she is taking, the MC can ask you to clarify the use of the tag by asking:

? HOW DOES THIS TAG HELP YOUR ACTION?

For example:

MC: Taking you by surprise, the deranged tattooed skulker leaps off a street light and lands right behind you, Sullivan, holding a ritualistic bone knife to your throat. He reeks of sweat and dried blood. You take a status *nowhere-to-run-3*.

Lamar (playing Sullivan): Yikes. I'm going to **Face Danger** to avoid that using *long unbreakable speeches*.

MC: How does this tag help you to **Face Danger**?

Lamar: I'm glad you asked. I'm going to give him a long lecture about how it's not right to creep up on an old middle-aged dog like me.

MC: That may have worked on a novice gang member. This guy is crazy. Roll with a Power of zero.

TAGS THAT REQUIRE AN ADDITIONAL MOVE

Tags that *indirectly* improve an action cannot be invoked for that action and therefore do not add to your Power. However, they can often be used in another move that may improve your action indirectly by giving you an advantage or by shaking off impeding statuses. For example:

- Being *brave* does not directly help you throw a better punch when you **Go Toe To Toe** with an opponent, no matter how scared you are. However, if your opponent is threatening you, *brave* can help you **Face Danger** and avoid negative statuses that impede your fighting.
- Having a *trusty sidekick* doesn't directly improve your own ability to withstand blows with **Face Danger**. However, if you get your *trusty sidekick* to throw you a manhole cover with the **Change the Game** move, you could get a story tag that would help you endure harm.
- Even if you *never forget a face*, it will not directly help you **Convince** a greedy informant to play along. However, you can **Investigate** to remember when you last saw him (perhaps using a flashback, see below) and use whatever you dig up as leverage.

When you want to apply a tag that indirectly helps your action by using an additional move, you describe and make the supporting move before making the move for your main action. Note that making such a supporting move holds a risk: scoring a miss may mean you will never get to make

the move for the main action. Following the above examples, you could end up too scared to fight back, too involved with your sidekick to notice an incoming blow, or too taken by your trip down memory lane to notice the informant has left.

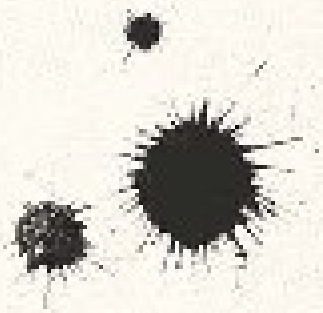
USING POWER TAGS AS WEAKNESS TAGS

Power tags are designed to be useful to the character and should not be used to weaken the character's actions, even when appropriate. However, in extreme cases where a power tag very appropriately impedes a character's action, it can be treated as a weakness tag if both the MC and the player agree to do so.

OPTIONAL RULE: TAG CAP

Different players and MCs have varying styles of tag interpretation, which can affect the average number of power tags and story tags invoked in each move and, therefore, the likelihood of player moves succeeding. If you find that players invoke four or more tags for most moves in the game (including power tags and positive story tags but not including weakness tags or negative story tags), you should tighten your tag interpretation policy, use less story tags, or make sure that players do not start the game with more than one broad tag.

Alternatively, you can set a cap on the number of positive tags a player can invoke for any single move. The recommended cap is three tags per move, as this gives players enough freedom to creatively describe their actions but keeps Power reasonably low. Another option, which can be used either instead of or in tandem with a tag cap, is activating Grit Mode (see page 212).



WEAKNESS TAGS

Weakness tags represent things that impede your character's actions. Therefore, weakness tags can only be used to reduce the Power of a move, never to increase it (see the exception below). Your character's weakness tags can only be invoked for moves made by you. Each weakness tag can only be invoked once per move; however, the same weakness tag can be invoked again and again in different moves, as long as it is relevant to all of them and unless otherwise stated.

Your character's weaknesses are also her greatest opportunity for growth. The more she faces and experiences her weaknesses, the more she'll learn about herself and evolves. Whenever one of your weakness tags is invoked, by anyone, you mark one **Attention** on the weakness tag's theme (using the track on the theme card). Marking Attention allows you to gain improvements for your theme and your character, as explained in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.

Your weakness tags can be invoked by (a) you; (b) the MC; and (c) any player whose character is the unwilling target of your move.

Weakness tags can only be invoked to reduce the Power of a move when they impede the action you are taking. In other words, you only remove a point of Power (and gain Attention) for a weakness tag when it hurts your character's chances of succeeding in the action or weakens the effectiveness of her action. For example:

- Delivering *inaccurate blows* decrease your ability to throw a punch when you **Go Toe To Toe** with an opponent.
- Being *fragile* weakens your ability to withstand blows with **Face Danger**.
- Being *reputedly penniless* can spoil your chances to **Convince** a greedy informant to play along.
- If your *aboriginal necklaces rattle too much*, it hinders your ability to **Sneak Around** a security guard.
- Being *prone to depression* can make it harder for you to overcome the strange and dark thoughts that have been haunting you with **Change the Game**.

Tags that do not directly impede the specific action you're performing in this situation cannot be invoked and therefore do not reduce your Power or grant Attention. For example, in most imaginable cases:

- Having an *unbearable personality* does not decrease your ability to throw a punch when you **Go Toe To Toe** with an opponent.
- Having an *unreliable scooter* does not weaken your ability to withstand blows with **Face Danger**.
- Being *susceptible to fire* cannot spoil your chances to **Convince** a greedy informant to play along.
- If you *can't carry heavy loads*, it does not hinder your ability to **Sneak Around** a security guard.
- If your hunting rifle *easily slips out of hand*, it cannot make it harder for you to overcome the strange and dark thoughts that have been haunting you with **Change the Game**.

When you invoke a weakness tag, but it is unclear *how* it impedes your character's action, the MC can ask you to clarify the use of the tag by asking:

OPTIONAL RULE: SLOWER THEME PROGRESSION

If you find that player characters in your game mark Attention too often or if you would like to slow the pace of their improvement (for example, if you are planning a long series), you can limit the use of each weakness tag to no more than once per session. With this optional rule, whenever a player invokes a weakness tag, he marks the checkbox next to that weakness tag on its theme card. Invoked weakness tags cannot be invoked again by the player to whom they belong but they may always be invoked by the MC and unwilling PC targets of that player's moves (in which case, the player gains Attention as normal). At the end of every session, clear all the weakness tag checkboxes.

? HOW DOES THIS TAG IMPEDE YOUR ACTION?

You can also use this question to ask the MC how a weakness tag invoked by the MC impedes your action. For example:

Lily (playing a young snoopy reporter): Now that I'm in the tycoon's office, I'm going to **Investigate.** Sadly enough, I only have *snooping around* as a power tag, so that's a Power of 1. But I'm going to activate my weakness tag — *amateurish*, for a Power of zero.

MC: How does this tag impede your investigation?

Lily: Well, I'm new to this investigative reporter thing, so I'm pretty sloppy. I might overlook some details, fail to recognize important paperwork…

MC: ...or even turn on the light and alert the guards. Okay, gotcha. Roll with a Power of zero and mark Attention. Maybe you'll learn from this experience!

USING WEAKNESS TAGS AS POWER TAGS

Weakness tags are meant to hinder the character and therefore shouldn't be used to enhance the character's actions, even when appropriate. However, in extreme cases where a weakness tag very appropriately helps a character's action, it can be treated as a power tag if both the MC and the player agree to do so.

OPTIONAL RULE: WEAKNESS TAGS AS FLAWS

While weakness tags are designed first and foremost to get in the way of your character's actions, sometimes they seem to be relevant to the story even when the character isn't taking any particular action. With this optional rule, either you or the MC can invoke your character's weakness tag outside of an action, when appropriate. Regardless of who invoked the tag, the MC can then make an MC move against you, as if you missed a move. You also get to mark Attention on the tag's theme.

For example, a player playing the Rift of the Monkey King has powers of shapeshifting and size-changing, with the weakness tag *shift to the wrong size*. In the middle of a conversational scene at a restaurant, the player decides his character changes size to the size of a gorilla. He invokes the tag and gets to mark Attention; the MC makes an MC move against the character. If the character was taking an action, such as crawling through an air ventilation pipe, the weakness tag could have just reduced the Power of the action as normal, so the MC would have been able to make an MC move only if the player had missed the move.

This optional rule allows players to bring their character's flaws and weaknesses into the limelight at moments that do not necessarily involve an action. However, MCs should use this option sparingly and only in situations where activating the weakness tag might lead to interesting and dramatic complications.

BURNING TAGS

During the game, the rules may tell you to burn one or more of your power tags. This can happen when:

- you voluntarily burn a power tag to gain a boost for an action (see below)
- you miss a move and the MC uses her move to tell you to burn a power tag
- an adversary controlled by the MC uses their abilities to impair your abilities
- a fellow PC uses the **Change the Game** move against you
- you unleash your mythical powers and burn out (see **Stop. Holding. Back.**, page 292)

When one or more of your tags is burnt, check the burn icon (🔥) next to the affected tag or tags on their respective theme card or cards.

A burnt tag is temporarily unavailable and cannot be invoked or burnt again until recovered. When one or more of your tags is burnt, translate the rules into the story by explaining why it is unavailable. The circumstances under which your tag was burnt should be included in your explanation. There can be several appropriate explanations for a burnt tag, including:

- you have lost the will to use whatever this tag represents or decided not to apply it;
- whatever this tag represents is no longer as effective as it used to be – you can still use it, but it won't really make a difference;
- your powers or abilities are temporarily shutdown, inactive, or inaccessible;
- your allies and contacts have done all they can for you, or they are upset with you (not answering your calls, etc.), or wary of helping you;
- you have temporarily exhausted the resources this tag requires, e.g., ran out of ammunition; or
- your gear or Relic is damaged, lost, or dysfunctioning.

For example:

- When you decide to go all out with your *crushing uppercut* and voluntarily burn it, it could mean you pulled a muscle in your arm and cannot use this maneuver again, or that your opponents saw you use it and will be ready for it, next time.
- When you fail using **Convince** and the MC tells you to burn your tag *commanding presence*, it could mean your character is riddled with self-doubt and does not feel up to the task of leading, for the time being.
- When you fight the Rift of the Abominable Snowman and he blows freezing winds on your *fire-wreathed Ifrit,* it could mean the fires of your Ifrit are quenched and he must take time to replenish them before he can use them again.
- When during a fight with one of your crewmates, he grabs your *baseball bat* with **Change the Game**, it could mean that he kicked it over a ledge and you lost it or that he broke it and you must get a new one.
- After you've used all of your mystical powers to put a curse on the City's most nefarious arms dealer, your powers are depleted until you rest or find a new magical power source to tap into.

Only power tags and story tags can be burnt. Weakness tags cannot be burnt.

RECOVERING BURNT POWER TAGS

Normally, burnt power tags can only be recovered with the **Montage (Downtime)** move (see page 271). In other words, burnt power tags can only be recovered during downtime, when your character has some time to rest and recover or fix her equipment. Burnt tags are not automatically recovered between sessions; instead, their burnt condition carries over from one session to the next.

When you recover one or more of your burnt power tags, uncheck the burn icon ( ) next to the affected tag or tags on their respective theme card or cards.

BURNING FOR A HIT

You can voluntarily burn a power tag to gain a dramatic boost to a move. Think of it as using up all of the tag's narrative power for a single dramatic action. As a player, this allows you to choose to succeed in important actions at the cost of burning a tag. Within your story, burning a tag for a hit translates into a moment when the spotlight is centered on your character: she performs that insane acrobatic maneuver, delivers a deadly blow, surprises her enemies with a small army of allies, or uses her magical powers to perfectly counter the destructive spell of a dangerous Rift.

When making a Core Move, before determining Power (Step 2), you can choose to burn one of your power tags. In order to burn it, you must be able to invoke the tag for this move: the tag must be relevant to the action and it cannot be used if it is already burnt.

When burning a tag for a hit, you automatically gain a Power of 3. Furthermore, instead of rolling the dice, **treat the move as if you rolled a total of 7**. Therefore, an unmodified move with a tag burnt for a hit always achieves a final score of 3 + 7 = 10, and the 10+ outcome of the move is applied.

No other tags (power, weakness, story, etc.) can affect the Power of a move made with a tag burnt for a hit. However, **statuses still apply normally and may increase or decrease the Power of the action.** If the Power of the action is modified by statutes, the final score is also modified in the same way (since it includes the Power of the action). This could bring the final score of an action into any of the outcome categories (12+, 10+, 7-9, 6 or less) and affect the outcome of the move.

If another player wants to help or interfere with your action, they can spend Juice (see page 244) or make a move to give you a status, as usual. You cannot go back on your decision to burn a tag for a hit based on the results of their move or any other rule which affects the outcome.

For example:

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Goodfellow is enraged at this bully! I'm going to thump the living daylights out of him, burning my *good in a scuffle* to **Hit With All You've Got.** I don't have any statuses so it's a clean 10+ with a Power of 3!



Or:

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): I don't have the time to deal with this status of *withering-disease-3*, while this gardener from hell is sowing those poisonous seeds all over town. I'm going to **Change the Game**, and I'm burning my *wellspring of nature* tag. Det. Enkidu is going to tap into the heart of the wild inside her and find the power to cure this thing so she can get back on the streets. That should give me a Power of 3 and a final score of 10.

MC: Unfortunately for the detective, the status of *withering-disease-3* still applies to the action of curing the disease because it's a powerful curse. That reduces your Power to zero, and gives you a final score of 7.

Jerry: Far from ideal, but at least it's a guaranteed success. I go for it.

BURNING FOR A HIT IN GRIT MODE

When you run your game in Grit Mode (see page 212), burning a tag for a hit has the same effect as in normal mode: it gives you a Power of 3 for the move, and you treat the move as if you rolled a total of 7 on the dice. However, in Grit Mode you convert your Power of 3 to a Grit of 2 and then add it to the dice roll result. This means the unmodified final score for a tag burnt for a hit in Grit Mode is 7 + 2 = 9, falling within the 7-9 outcome category. To increase your Grit to 3 and reach the outcome category of 10 or more, you must muster at least one additional point of Power from statuses and reach a Power of 4 (remember, when you burn a tag for a hit you cannot count other tags towards your Power).

STORY TAGS

Story tags are used to describe two categories of story elements:

- **Temporary abilities, qualities, perks, and items possessed by your character**, like a *cleaver* you picked up, a *wolf-form* you adopted, or the ability to *fly* bestowed upon you by a vampire.
- **Independent objects, beings, concepts, or effects included in a scene:** a quality of the environment such as *pouring rain*, a person or entity who is present at the scene, such as *the Gingerbread Man* or *the police*, an item that is readily available such as *a bottle of whiskey* or *a yellow Lamborghini*, or even a force or a concept present at the scene such as *an aura of protection* or *the hard-knock life*.

Not every detail in a scene should have a corresponding story tag. Tags are means of making a detail meaningful to the story by giving it airtime; you, the other players, and the MC must choose which details merit a story tag.

CREATING STORY TAGS

Players can create story tags using the **Change the Game** move (or any move or game option that generates Juice, see page 244). For example, a player playing the Rift of Aladdin can use his *wish-fulfilling djinni* power tag to **Change the Game** and create *a yacht*, conjure a *sand monster*, or make him *a king*. Another character can then use his *weaponsmith* power tag and **Change the Game** to install a *harpoon ballista* on the yacht conjured by the djinni. A player playing the Rift of Balor of the Evil Eye, could use his *commander of the Fomori* with **Change the Game** to summon *an army of Fomori*, and give them additional tags such as *unyielding*, *giants*, and *desolating ray*.

The MC can create story tags whenever she deems it appropriate, but is advised to use them sparingly; one or two story tags per scene should be enough to make things interesting. For example:

MC: You step into the abandoned house, amid piles of debris, rotting furniture, and crawling vines. The rain is pouring in through holes in the ceiling and the second floor, pooling on the ground, where a shattered family picture lays solemnly. We have a new story tag: *abandoned house*.

CONTROL OVER STORY TAGS

Story tags can either be under the control of a specific player or non-player character, or they can be communal, if no-one in particular controls them. Environmental conditions, such as *blistering winds* are often communal, while items lying about at a scene, such as *a bloody knife*, are communal as long as no-one specific has control over them

When you create a story tag, you can assume control over it. For example, if you summoned a *phantom lance* or an *incubus*, you have control over the lance or the incubus until the tag expires, until you give it away, or until someone else makes a move to gain control over it.

You can give a story tag you control to a willing player or non-player character or object based on the circumstances. For example, the Rift for the Queen of Hearts could make things *red* to suit her liking or a ritualistic tattoo artist can tattoo *demon-repelling symbols* onto another character. If you want to give an unwilling character a tag, you should use a status instead (e.g., *painted-red-2*, *tattooed-1*, *transformed-3*).

Depending on the circumstances, you may or may not be able to take back control over a tag you gave to another character or story element. For example, if a sorceress allows a mermaid to walk on land by giving her *feet*, she may be able to take it away at will, or not, if they signed a contract. A rich mogul who lends *lots of cash* to a crewmate may have to take action if he wants to retrieve that tag later (and presumably, he can always make more).



TRACKING STORY TAGS

When a new story tag enters the game, take a tracking card, circle the tag icon ( ), and write the name of the tag under TAG. Give the card to the player who currently controls the tag or place it at the center of the table if the tag represents a story element with no particular controller.

When a story tag expires, is burnt, or is otherwise removed, erase its tag from the tracking card and return the card to the deck.



WHAT CAN YOU CREATE WITH STORY TAGS?

Story tags allow players to temporarily introduce new characters, beings and objects into the story, even such that aren't directly represented by their power tags.

You can cluster story tags together in order to create beings and objects that are more useful. The number of story tags you can generate and their duration depends on the amount of Juice you can create using **Change the Game** or other game features.

Here are some examples of what you can do with story tags:

CONJURE AN IFRIT
A Sufi mystic can beseech the angel Jibrail to command a powerful genie, or Ifrit, to appear before him and serve him.

Tags: *fire-wreathed Ifrit*, *made of smoke, enourmously strong*, *consuming fire*

BUILD A MOTORCYCLE
A mechanic can take some time in a workshop to build a custom motorcycle.

Tags: *souped-up motorcycle*, *excellent traction*, *eat dust!*, *shotgun in the rack*

ASSEMBLE A GANG
A well-connected gangster can spread the word and rally a gang of delinquents to fight for his cause.

Tag: *street gang*, *violent*, *armed and dangerous*, *loyal*

INVOKING STORY TAGS

Story tags are neither power tags nor weakness tags; instead, **story tags can be used to either increase or decrease the Power of an action by one** per story tag invoked. You can invoke a story tag to increase the Power of the action you are taking by one. The MC or a PC opposing your move can invoke a story tag to decrease the Power of the action you are taking by one. However, since story tags are not weakness tags, when they are invoked to decrease your Power, you do not mark Attention.

Like power and weakness tags, a story tag must be relevant to be invoked. When invoking a story tag to increase Power, it must follow the guidelines of invoking Power tags (i.e., it must directly help the action). When invoking a story tag to decrease power, it must follow the guidelines of weakness tag (i.e., it must be impeding the action). If a story tag both helps and impedes an action at the same time, it can be invoked but without any effect on the Power of the action.

Differently from power tags and weakness tags, you, the MC, and any player whose character is the target of your move don't have to be in control of a story tag to invoke. For example, if a saboteur is holding *a bag full of explosives* and you attempt to shoot the bag and blow it up, you can invoke the tag even though it is under that saboteur's control, since it helps your action.

You can make moves using story tags you control, even if they represent an independent entity. For example, in the above example, the player playing Balor of the Evil Eye can use his *army of Fomori* to knock over an armored car, in which case the tag *giants* would also be helpful, giving the player a Power of 2 for his **Hit With All You've Got** move. Similarly, if the army of giants comes under heavy fire from the local SWAT team, that player rolls **Face Danger** for them and can invoke any relevant tags, e.g., *unyielding*. Using other characters in your own moves is further explained under Secondary Characters (page 248).

ABSOLUTE VALUE VS. NARRATIVE VALUE

Similarly to the difference between absolute power level and narrative power level (see page 106), there is a difference between the absolute value of a story element and its narrative value, measured in tags.

In *City of Mist*, the absolute value of details in the story is important but not all-important. If a character has the ability to create *a duffel bag full of money*, how much money exactly is in the bag is a minor detail, used mostly for flavor and to create a sense of realism.

What really matters to your story is what actions can be taken with the duffel bag: is it enough to retire? Enough to buy your freedom? Enough to pay off Ricardo Sacomán to leave your kids alone? That is determined not by the absolute value of the duffel bag, but by the fact the bag is a tag that can be used in a move, such as **Convince**. The more tags you give to a story element, the more meaningful it becomes and the greater effect it has on your moves. However, note that you cannot create the same tag over and over again to make story elements stronger. You must create different tags, giving new aspects to that important story element. For example, the *duffel bag full of money* could have additional tags such as *more where it came from* and *unmarked notes*, tags which tell us new things about the money in the bag.

DURATION

Story tags have a set duration that is determined by the rules when they are created:

- **Temporary tags** can only be invoked once. Once a temporary tag is invoked, the tag expires. So long as the tag was not invoked, it remains in the story. However, the MC may rule it expires at the end of a scene or when the conditions in the story would make it irrelevant. For example, an unused *stolen ID* tag could expire once it has been reported to the police. A temporary tag cannot be burnt for a hit; if it is burnt in another way, it expires.

- **Ongoing tags** can be invoked repeatedly. They expire when the conditions in the story would make them irrelevant. For example, *a house on fire* expires when the fire brigade overcome the fire or *a spell of invisibility* might last until dawn. The MC has the final say on when an ongoing tag expires, which may be as short as a few actions in a single scene or as long as several scenes, and even spanning across sessions. An ongoing tag can be burnt for a hit. When an ongoing tag is burnt for any reason, it expires and cannot be recovered.
- **Permanent tags** can be invoked repeatedly and do not expire. They are identical to power tags except they do not belong to a theme. Permanent tags can also be burnt for a hit and can be recovered after being burnt in the same ways as power tags.

When a tag expires, the element it describes does not necessarily leave the story; it may continue to take part in it, if it makes sense (the MC has the final say on that). For example, if a player creates the temporary tag *a pack of crooks* to help him fight a gang and uses it to **Go Toe to Toe**, the crooks do not automatically vanish after the tag is used. Depending on the details of the story and the outcome of the move, they may leave, pass out, become passive spectators, turn on the player character who recruited them, etc. Regardless, the player cannot use the tag again once it is expired, unless he recreates it using the regular rules.

BURNING STORY TAGS TO REMOVE THEM

Change the Game (or any move or game option that generates Juice) allows the players to burn story tags, thus removing them before they expire naturally. The MC can burn story tags using an MC move. For example, if a player misses a move after creating the ongoing tag *bar stool* in a bar fight, the MC can use an MC move to burn the tag and describe how the bar stool is taken from the character.

TAGS IN CREW AND EXTRA THEMES

Your crew starts the game with a crew theme which includes both crew power tags and crew weakness tags. As the game evolves, characters may gain access to a new type of theme called extra themes (see Chapter 4: Moments of Truth) as well as to additional crew themes.

CREW OR EXTRA POWER TAGS

Crew and extra power tags behave like character power tags for the most part: they follow the same rules for invoking power tags and they increase the Power of an action by one when invoked. (If there is a cap set on the number of power tags which can be used in each action, they also count towards that maximum; see Optional Rule: Tag Cap, page 219.)

Unlike character power tags, crew and extra power tags are **crispy**: they burn as soon as they are used. In other words, such tags can only be invoked *once* before they become unavailable (similarly to temporary story tags). Furthermore, these crispy tags cannot be burnt for a hit. This reflects the limited airtime that crispy tags command; they are not as central to the story as the characters' power tags.

RECOVERING BURNT CREW OR EXTRA POWER TAGS

In order to be used again, crew and extra power tags must first be recovered. Each type of tag has its own rules for recovery:

- Crew power tags are recovered at the end of a session, using the **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)** move (see page 272).
- Like character power tags, extra power tags are re-



covered when a player chooses to recover all burnt power tags during downtime, using the **Montage (Downtime)** (see page 272). All the extra power tags are also recovered automatically when a player chooses to give attention or explore the Mythos of the extra theme they belong to.

CREW OR EXTRA WEAKNESS TAGS

Crew and extra weakness tags behave like character weakness tags for the most part: they follow the same rules for invoking weakness tags, they decrease the Power of an action by one when invoked, and they allow you to mark Attention on their theme once for every weakness tag invoked.



HOW TO USE TAGS IN YOUR GAME

The descriptive nature of tags makes them a versatile game element that can be used in many different ways. When you play *City of Mist*, whether as a player or as the MC, keep in mind the following principles:

NEED THE TAG

To make a move, a character must have the wherewithal to perform the action she is attempting. This is quite simple in some cases: for example, a character that isn't holding a pistol cannot take the action of firing a pistol. Similarly, a character that lacks any mind-reading powers cannot attempt to read the minds of other characters.

The MC can require a player to have the appropriate tag or tags in order to attempt an action. For example:

MC: You bust through the rusty door at the top of the stairs. It opens up to a vista of the City lights at night. You're on the roof, and they're coming after you.

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Ahhhh! I gotta get off the roof. I'm going to rappel my way down.

MC: Do you have anything to rappel with?

Megan: Not really. Is there a rope lying around?

MC: Sorry, I don't think there are ropes normally lying around on apartment building roofs. At least you don't see one now. However, you will need the tag *rope* or something similar to even attempt this. You can search and hopefully find one with **Change the Game.**

This principle especially applies when the lead characters are facing threats they don't know or understand. For example, if one of the crew members was subjected to a terrible curse, she and her crewmates would need the appropriate mystical tags to attempt to remove the curse. If the characters don't have such power tags, they will not be able to take any action to remove the curse until they obtain them, either with an appropriate **Change the Game** move (which in itself might require some mystical tags) or by undertaking a 'quest' to find the cure.

Requiring a tag is an instrument the MC can employ to increase realism as well as add suspense by putting the lead characters in a bind.

FORGET THE TAG

As a counterbalance to requiring a tag, remember that some actions can be attempted simply because your character is a human being. Unless she is limited by other conditions, your character is perfectly capable of leaping under a table to take cover, punching someone in the face, or exploring a crime scene in search for clues. If an action is reasonably within the capacity of your character, you do not need a specific tag to perform it. If you don't have any tags to support the action, you can simply attempt the action with a Power of zero.

GET OR GIVE THE TAG

Just as the rules are translated into the story (see The Conversation, page 203), the story can be translated into rules. When a useful object, person, or effect is present at the scene and is available to the lead characters, the MC can simply make it into a story tag that the players control. For example:

MC: You exit the stairs to the roof of the construction site but your pursuers are hot on your trail. You're trapped at the edge, surrounded by cranes and scaffolding.

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Ahhhh! I gotta get off the roof. I'm going to rappel my way down. Is there a rope lying around?

MC: Sure, it's a construction site. You find a rolled up swathe of rope on the scaffolding. You get the temporary tag *rope*. Time to **Take the Risk.**

Similarly, the MC can give a player a story tag for *a love potion* that his character was given or *Triad bodyguards* if for some reason the character is being guarded by the Chinese mafia. However, giving the tag should be used only for important details and only when they already exist in the story. If players want to introduce new elements into the story, e.g., summon a flock of ravens, they should generate new story tags with **Change the Game**.

RESPECT THE TAG

As explained above, tags are not only game elements – they also define your character. Each tag you chose for your character should carry a weight in her story. Sometimes, this means receiving special benefits within the story, as long as those do not take away from the fairness and engagement of the game. If your character has a tag that describes a special quality, you can enjoy some advantages that arise from that tag. For example, if your character is *filthy rich*, you can assume she is able to afford a mansion, various vehicles, a chauffeur and a pilot, a personal bodyguard, lavish clothing, and many other luxuries. None of these are tags in and of themselves, so such benefits are meaningless in game terms (unless you use *filthy rich* to generate other tags with **Change the Game**, an action that holds a certain amount of risk). However, making such assumptions allows the character to truly be filthy rich in the story, and not just on paper.

When appropriate, the MC can even rule that certain effects do not apply to your character thanks to aspects described by her tags. This could mean you are exempt from making a **Face Danger** move that would otherwise be required. For example, if your character *doesn't breathe*, the MC may rule that a weaponized airborne toxin favoured by a squad of eco-terrorists simply does not affect your character. If you chose *invincibility* as one of your tags, the MC may allow your character to be truly impervious to mundane weapons and attacks, a la *Luke Cage*. As you will see in the next principle, this does not mean you cannot get in trouble – it simply means you'll have *different* troubles. Either way, exempting a character from certain effects and moves is at the MC's discretion.

Respecting a character's tag lets a character's details shine and allows the player to play the character he wants to play, without disrupting the story.

QUESTION THE TAG

While your character's aspects, as described by your tags, can allow you to do great things, there are always ways to go around them. Every power, ability, and advantage has a weakness (even if it is not represented by a weakness tag). When you interpret a tag, think creatively about its possi-

ble flaws. For example, Post-Mortem, the undead assassin who is the Rift of the revenant (included in the *City of Mist Starter Set*) has the tag *can't die – already dead*. This would seemingly make her invincible, as according to the principle of respecting a tag she cannot be killed. However, not being able to die is different from being indestructible. Bullets, shrapnel, and cold weapons can still cut through Post-Mortem's undead flesh and injure her, even if they can't actually kill her or cause her pain. She can still be confined, buried, dismembered, hypnotised, or otherwise prevented from achieving her goals.

The MC can decide not to exempt you from a move, even if at a first glance your tags say you should be. Going back to the above example, if you chose *invincibility* as your tag, the MC can rule you still need to **Face Danger** against the many implications of being invincible: you can still be blinded, suffocated, or buried in debris, and bullets can ricochet off of you and injure innocent bystanders or your crewmates. From a psychological standpoint, you could be building up guilt or overconfidence. All of these can become statuses that the MC gives you, statuses that are just as dangerous and just as potent in game terms as physical injuries.

Questioning a tag is the counterbalance for respecting a tag. It allows the game to keep being interesting and challenging, even when incredible abilities are involved.



STATUSES

Statuses reflect temporary conditions of all kinds that affect your character. Any imaginable condition can be a status, including:

- **Physical conditions:** scrapes, bruises, injuries, illness, gunshots, nausea, feeling energized, temporary blindness, boosted immune system, cuffed, restrained, etc.
- **Psychological conditions:** fear, ecstasy, confidence, depression, cheerfulness, suspicion, obliviousness, intoxication, etc.
- **Social conditions:** crowd's favorite, rejected, humiliated, center of attention, etc.
- **Supernatural or mystical conditions**: cursed, under a spell, guarded by an angel, a lion's strength, looks like the chief of police, etc.
- **Combat situations:** cover, cornered, good sniping position, blocked escape path, shielded, etc.

Statuses always represent transient states. They never represent things, like guns or an angry mob, or permanent qualities, like being smart. For things or permanent qualities, use power, weakness, and story tags.

POWER, WEAKNESS, AND STORY TAGS VS. STATUSES

Tags are used to describe people and objects and their essential qualities and nature, such as abilities, strengths, weaknesses, possibilities, etc. Tags never represent the current state of a person or object. Tags such as *mortally wounded* or *dead* cannot exist, unless they represent the essential nature of someone (like Post-Mortem, the undead assassin).

Conversely, statuses always represent conditions: the current state of a person or object. Statuses never represent a person, object, or essential quality. There cannot be a status of *gun-2* or *smart-5*.

Each status is composed of a descriptive **tag** and a **tier**: the tag defines the nature of the status, while the tier defines its severity or intensity. For example: *chained-2*, *sick-1*, or *hypnotized-5*. A status' tier can range between 1 to 6: tier 1 represents mild effects while tier 6 represents the worst or most intense degree of a status, one which can kill the character or essentially transform her into something else.

The tag of a status should more or less match its tier and represent how debilitating or enhancing this status is: there cannot be *dead-1* or *scratched-5* statuses, unless in a bizarre situation where being dead is a very mild nuisance and being scratched is incapacitating. When the tier of a status changes (e.g., if it is cured or worsened), rephrase its tag accordingly to match the new tier.

A status is always attached to the thing that carries the condition it describes: it can belong to a character (whether a PC or an NPC), an object such as a Relic or a building, a collective of people, the City, etc.

TIER	INTENSITY OF EFFECT, DISADVANTAGE, OR ADVANTAGE	EXAMPLES	TIER
0	No effect	-	-
1	Mild	*bruised-1*, *melancholic-1*, *distracted-1*, *partial-cover-1*	Temporary or ongoing
2	Minor	*prone-2*, *good-aim-2*, *loosing-the-match-2*	Temporary or ongoing
3	Major	*broken-arm-3*, *flat-tire-3*, *in-the-zone-3*, *playing-with-my-prey-3*	Temporary or ongoing
4	Dramatic	*suffocating-4*, *gravely-injured-4*, *the-life-of-the-party-4*, *collapsing-walls-4*	Temporary or ongoing
5 or OUT	Incapacitating	*defeated-5*, *passed-out-5*, *overcharged-5*, *excommunicated-5*, *oblivious-5*	Ongoing
6 or MC	Lethal or permananetly transformative	*dead-6*, *turned-into-stone-6*, *a-soul-without-a-body-6*	Permanent

EFFECTS OF STATUSES

Statuses of tiers 1 to 4 affect player characters by changing the Power of actions. When a player character who has one or more statuses takes action, each of these statuses is then determined to be helpful, detrimental, or neutral for that action. The player then adds the highest tier among the helpful statuses to the Power of the action and subtracts the highest tier among the detrimental statuses from the Power of the action. For example:

```
Simone is playing a con artist who has
been caught red-handed by the casino
security trying to steal a business-
```

man's checkbook, receiving the status of *suspect-3*. As the security officers are questioning the victim, the con artist tries to sneak out without being noticed (**Sneak Around**). As she's already suspected of causing trouble and security has their eyes on her, the status is considered detrimental, and her Power for the action is reduced by 3.

If the con artist had an additional status of *limp-2* from an earlier bar brawl, it would also be detrimental to the action of **Sneaking Around** as it would make it harder for her to slip outside quickly before her absence is noticed. However, since only the highest detrimental status applies, she would still only suffer a reduction of 3 to this action's Power.

The con artist decides to first use her illusory powers to wear another man's face, using **Change the Game** to give herself a status of *unrecognizable-2*. Since this status is helpful for **Sneaking Around**, and since it is her highest helpful status, its tier is added to the Power of the action. Now the Power of the action is reduced by 3 and increased by 2, or all together, reduced by 1.

Just before she attempts her getaway, the con artist's crewmates set off the fire alarm in the casino using **Change the Game** and give her an *all-but-forgotten-4* status, which helps her escape. Since this is now the highest helpful status she has (higher than *unrecognizable-2*), it increases her Power by 4. Since she is still a *suspect-3*, she reduces her Power by 3, for a total Power increase of 1.

Statuses are not inherently negative or positive (although their tags may be). The same status can be helpful to one action and detrimental to another. For example:

A hard-boiled detective takes a *gunshot-3* status. If he attempts to **Go Toe to Toe** by exchanging shots with the mobsters who are after him, being wounded certainly does not help; the status will be deemed detrimental for this action and the detective's Power will be reduced by 3. However, if the detective tries to **Convince** a compassionate nurse to help him, the MC could deem that being wounded actually strengthens his argument. The same status is then determined to be helpful and the detective gets to add 3 to the Power of the convincing action.

TIER 5 STATUSES: YOU'RE OUT

At tier 5, labeled **OUT**, the status becomes so damaging or intense that the character or object to whom it is attached becomes somehow incapacitated. The character cannot take actions for which the status would be helpful or detrimental until the status is removed. For example:

A cage fighter is hit too many times in a fight and becomes *vanquished-5*, so he can no longer take any actions that involve fighting or otherwise attempting to overcome his opponent (as he is now vanquished). He can, however, beg for mercy.

If the fight ended with him *passed-out-5*, he would not be able to take any actions that require him to be conscious. The MC might allow him to take passive actions, such as **Facing Danger** against a final blow with his *body of stone*.

Depending on the status, the character may continue to be fully functional in certain aspects while being entirely incapacitated in other fields. For example, a character who has a *frozen-heart-5* status may be able to perform tasks normally but lack the ability to relate to anyone else and perhaps even lose the will to live. The MC has the final say on which actions can or cannot be taken due to a tier-5 status.

For statuses that are mostly negative or debilitating, tier-5 marks the point when the status shuts down the character's ability to take actions that go against it. A *mind-controlled-5* character does everything her controller wishes her to do; a character *encased-in-a-web-5* is completely encapsulated and cannot move.

For statuses that are mostly positive or enhancing, tier-5 marks the point when they tip over and become detrimental. A warrior monk who can focus his concentration and grant himself *focused-3* and *unshakeable-concentration-4* statuses, would become *tunnel-visioned-5* or attain *nirvana-5* if he reached tier 5, ignoring all that is happening around him. Similarly, a potion of giant's strength could grant *immense-strength-4* but taken over

to tier 5 would cause the drinker to take a *muscle-overload-5* status.

TIER 6 STATUSES: DEAD OR MIGHT AS WELL BE

At tier 6, labeled **MC**, the player loses control over his character and turns her over to the MC. The character is either dead due to the intensity of the status or permanently transformed into something else: a bronze statue, a mindless zombie, a villain, or the wind in the reeds. The MC and the player can decide together if the character remains in the story as an NPC or leaves the story. At any rate, her death or transformation is permanent and cannot be recovered as a normal status. Reversing a tier-6 status could be the subject of an entire story arc.

When appropriate and with the player's approval, the MC may choose to trade the tier-6 status for the loss of any number of power tags, the addition or loss of weakness tags, and/or the replacement of an entire theme. This can represent the permanent transformation the character has undergone. The character's tier-6 status is then reduced to tier 5.

While it is possible to give a status with a tier higher than 6 (*e.g. total-and-utter-destruction-10*), a character cannot take a status with a tier higher than 6. After a character **Faces Danger** (or applies other defenses), if the tier of the status is higher than 6, it is reduced to 6.

STATUSES OF YOUR ITEMS OR ALLIES

Items described by your themes, power tags, or story tags – such as Relics, weapons, vehicles, etc. – can take statuses separately from you. Such statuses apply to your action when you invoke tags describing the item. For example, if your *speed boat* received a status of *enriched-fuel-2*, and you were trying to outrun a jetski with **Go Toe to Toe**, the Power of your action would be increased by 2 (assuming there are no other statuses).

If an item takes a tier-5 status, you cannot take actions with that item until that status is reduced or removed. If an item takes a tier-6 status, you might permanently lose themes and tags related to that item, as explained under Tier 6, above. The MC determines which of your themes and tags are lost.

Non-player characters described by your themes, power tags, or story tags may be your secondary characters, which follow rules similar to items. For example, if you have a tag representing your ally *Malory, hired gun* and Malory receives the status *despondent-3*, the Power of relevant moves you make using Malory will be reduced by 3 (at least until you snap him out of it). Secondary characters are further explained on page 248.

You can reduce or remove your item and ally statuses as you do your own; see Removing Statuses below.

THE DESCRIPTIVE SIDE OF STATUSES

A status' tag works like any other tag: it has both a game effect and a descriptive effect. While a status tag must describe a condition that roughly matches its tier, it may still affect and even prevent certain actions based on its descriptive nature alone.

For example, a *cuffed-2* status may make it harder for a character to punch someone or dial a phone; however, it makes it quite impossible to spread your hands apart, unless you first make a move to break the cuffs and remove the status. Similarly, a *drenched-in-gasoline-3* status means that the character smells of gasoline and could easily light up with even the slightest spark that touches her.

GIVING A STATUS

You can use the moves **Convince**, **Hit With All You've Got**, **Go Toe to Toe, and Change the Game**, as well as other game options, to give various statuses to both player and non-player characters, objects, groups, etc. When you give a status, the rules define only the tier of the status; *you* must choose an appropriate tag. In most cases, the tier of the status you give is equal to the Power of the move you used.

DANGERS AND STATUSES

Non-player characters, objects, places, and forces that pose a threat to your character, your crew, or your investigation are called Dangers. Dangers can take statuses just like the lead characters. However, statuses affect Dangers differently than they do the player characters.

First, since Dangers are not player character and cannot use the Core Moves, they do not **Face Danger** against the statuses you give them. Instead, they use different moves and game features to reduce and avoid the statuses you impose on them.

Second, Dangers status spectrums may have 6 or less tiers and follow somewhat different rules. Some Dangers are defeated when they take a low tier status while others are only defeated when they take a tier-6 status. Dangers may also be completely immune to certain types of statuses. You and the other players do not know in advance which statuses are needed to overcome a Danger and at what tier. You simply must face them and find out for yourselves or **Investigate** to learn more about them.

Third, when a Danger takes a status, it can have one of three effects: contribute to the defeat of the Danger, affect the Danger's moves, or affect your moves. (When appropriate, however, the MC can choose multiple effects.)

If a status contributes to defeating a Danger, it is said to be on the Danger's **spectrums**. Such a status does not improve your moves, even if its tag is helpful to your move.

> Det. Enkidu is fighting an 8-feet-tall golden and armored angel, a knight of the Anunnaki gods sent to destroy her. During the fight, the detective imposes a status of *injured-3* on the angel. Because this status is on the angel's spectrums, the MC rules the status does not help the detective with her move. Next time she **Goes Toe to Toe** with the angel, the status is not considered a helpful status, even if an injured angel is easier to fight, because the status already has a different effect on the angel.

If a status affects a Danger's moves, your moves will also not be affected:

> Later in the fight, the detective imposes a status of *head-ringer-1* on the angel. The MC chooses that this status will weaken the angel's moves, so now it delivers only a *system-shock-4* instead of *electrocuted-5* with its alien spear. If Enkidu then tries to strike the angel using **Hit With All You've Got**, *head-ringer-1* is not considered a helpful status, even if a dizzy angel is easier to strike, because the status already has a different effect on the angel.

If, however, the MC rules that a Danger's status applies to your moves, you treat it as your own status.

> If the MC had chosen that this status would affects Det. Enkidu, the detective would count the angel's *head-ringer-1* as her own helpful status, increasing her Power by 1 for **Hit With All You've Got** (assuming she has no higher helpful statuses).
>
> Losing the fight, the angel uses his divine light to give himself a status of *blinding-brilliance-2*. The MC rules this status affects Enkidu, so she treats it as her own detrimental status and reduces the Power of her next strike by 2 (assuming she has no higher detrimental statuses).

TAKING A STATUS

When your character is about to take a status, the MC or the player giving the status will name the tag and the tier of the status. If your character has the ability to defend herself from such a status (depending on her tags, the status, and the situation in the story), she can momentarily take the spotlight and make a **Face Danger** move against that status. As explained below, a successful **Face Danger** move allows your character to reduce the tier of the status, perhaps even completely prevent it. If your character cannot defend herself against the status, that is, she does not have the right tags or the opportunity to do so, you cannot **Face Danger**.

Furthermore, when you fail a move and the MC chooses to give your character a status, the MC can also choose to deny your ability to **Face Danger**. This reflects a moment of weakness for your character: an exposed chink in her armor (figuratively or literally), a mistake on her part that was exploited by her adversaries, or an onslaught of trouble she simply could not handle.

If you do not prevent the status using **Face Danger**, you take the status (whether with its full or reduced tier). Take a tracking card, circle the status icon ( ), write down the tag, and mark the tier:

STATUSES ON THE SAME SPECTRUM

Statuses that have similar effects – or in other words, are *on the same spectrum* – stack together. A spectrum groups statuses of similar nature, for example statuses describing physical injuries such as *graze-1, open-cut-2,* and *broken-rib-3;* a team's morale such as *inspired-2*, *encouraged-1*, and *CHARGE!!!!-4*; or trouble with the police such as *wanted-man-5*, *blacklisted-3*, and *I'm-watching-you-1*. Naturally, identical statuses, such as *hysterical-3* and *hysterical-3*, are always on the same spectrum.

When you take a status and you already have other statuses, check with the MC whether they are on the same spectrum. ("Are *dislocated-shoulder-3* and *punch-to-the-gut-2* on the same spectrum?" "Hell yeah. They're both on the spectrum of PAIN!"). If the statuses are on the same spectrum, they stack as follows:

- **A higher status supersedes the existing status.** If the tier of the new status is higher than what's on your card, erase the existing tier and mark the tier of the new status instead. For example, *drowsy-3* replaces *tired-1*. You can update the tag to reflect the union of both tags. For example, *broken-windshield-2* and *dented-3* become *busted-out-3*.



- **Two equal statuses become a single status, with the tier increased by 1.** If the tier of the new status is equal to what's on your card, erase the existing tier and mark the next tier on the card. Update the tag accordingly. So *shamed-2* and *shamed-2* become *humiliated-3*.
- **A lower status gradually adds pips to the existing status. When you get enough pips, the status increases to the next tier.** If the tier of the new status is lower than what's on your card, mark a number of boxes equal to the new tier to the right of the current tier. If there are already boxes marked, start right of the rightmost marked box. If you mark the next tier, it becomes the new tier for this spectrum. Erase the previous tier. For example, if you were already *shocked-4*:

  Taking a status of *zapped-1*, you would mark one box right of tier 4. The tier of this status spectrum would still be 4.



  Taking a status of *zapped-2*, you would mark two boxes right of tier 4. The tier of this status spectrum would still be 4.



  Taking two *zapped-2* statuses, one after the other, you would first mark the two boxes right of tier 4. (This does not affect the tier, yet.) Then you would mark the two boxes right of that, marking the box for tier 5. From this point on, the status has increased to tier 5. The tag changes accordingly, presumably to *electrocuted-5*.



  Taking two *systems-shock-3* statuses, one after the other, you would first mark the three boxes right of tier 4. (This does not affect the tier, yet.) Then you would mark three boxes right of that, marking the box for tier 5 and two boxes right of it. From this point on, the status has increased to tier 5. The tag changes accordingly, presumably to *electrocuted-5*. If you take additional statuses with a tier lower than 5, you will to start to mark boxes from the third box right of 5.



DURATION OF STATUSES

Unless otherwise specified, statuses are **ongoing**: they remain in effect until removed or until the conditions in the story dictate that they have expired. Therefore, the duration of a status can vary greatly. For example, *bound-in-ice-5* can expire within a few hours as the ice melts away or even immediately if the Snow Queen so wishes, while *a-curse-of-ugliness-2* may last forever. An ongoing status affects all relevant actions taken by the character until it expires (unless there is a greater helpful or detrimental status). Tier-5 statuses are ongoing by definition, even if they were created as a temporary status.

Some statuses are **temporary**: they expire after being applied to a single action, or when the conditions in the story dictate so. For example, if a *distracted-1* status is applied to an **Investigate** move made by a player, reducing its Power by 1, it will expire when the move is resolved and will not affect additional moves. So long as the player does not make a move to which *distracted-1* applies, the status will remain in effect until the distracting effect ends (e.g., when the colorful dragon firework parade moves away). Temporary and ongoing statuses are different in nature; they cannot be on the same spectrum and therefore cannot stack with one another.

Permanent statuses do not expire and cannot be normally recovered. Tier-6 statuses are permanent by definition, even if they were created as temporary or ongoing statuses.

When a status expires, erase its tag and tier from the tracking card and return the card to the deck.

REDUCING OR REMOVING STATUSES

The moves **Change the Game** and **Montage (Downtime)**, as well as other game options, represent actions that your character takes to alleviate or fix unwanted statuses. In game terms, these moves reduce the tiers of statuses you have taken or even remove them completely.

Change the Game represents an action taken during a scene to remove a status from either yourself, your allies, or your gear. Like any move, it requires the means and time to perform the action. For example, without using magical means, a *broken-rib-3* cannot be healed within several hours. However, instead of healing the broken rib, you can try to bandage it well enough to allow your ally to function until he can receive medical attention. In such a case, the MC can allow your move but limit the number of tiers you can remove from the status.

Montage (Downtime) offers the option to spend your downtime recovering from statuses received during your last activity. As specified in the move's description below (page 271), you can only recover statuses that are reasonably resolved during the duration of the downtime and with the resources you have.

When you reduce the tier of a status, erase its previous tier and any boxes marked right of the new, lower tier from the tracking card. If you reduce the tier of a status to zero, the status is removed. Erase its tag and tier from the tracking card and return the card to the deck.

DOES A STATUS APPLY TO THE ATTEMPT TO REMOVE IT?

Most of the time, a status does not apply to the action of removing it. In other words, it cannot weaken a **Change the Game** move made to remove it. For example, if a character is *dizzy-2* and she tries to shake it off, the status *dizzy-2* does not apply to her **Change the Game** move.

However, there are several cases where a status *is* considered detrimental to the attempt to remove it:

- **When it's especially hard for a character to treat her own status**, the MC may rule the same status applies to the **Change the Game** move that the character is making. This depends on the nature of the status. For example, if a character is *depressed-2*, the status may count as detrimental to the character's attempt to fight depression, reducing the Power of her **Change the Game** move by 2. Another player character who tries to help the depressed character would not be affected.

- **When a status is especially persistent because of its nature** (as described in its tag), it can even affect other characters who attempt to remove it. For example, if you make the move **Change the Game** to break a persistent *magical-slumber-5* curse cast on your lover, your Power would be reduced by 5.

The only way to negate this effect is to make the move under ideal conditions. This requires that your character not only have the ability to make the move but also the time, knowledge, skill, power, gear, and assistance needed to ideally handle the condition of the status. For example, to dispel your lover's magical sleep without applying the status to your **Change the Game** move, you must know the required mystical knowledge, have the rare ingredients, and perform the ceremony on the night of the full moon. To heal your own *broken-rib-3* without reducing your Power by 3, you must be in a good medical facility, have the training to patch yourself up or at least access to doctors who can do so, and enough time to let yourself heal.

The MC has the final call on whether a status applies to the attempt to remove it, and she should decide on a case-by-case basis.



CLUES

Your *City of Mist* story always involves an investigation. You and your crewmates are searching for answers to strange cases: incidents that cannot be explained, happenings that hide a deeper truth, events veiled by the Mist. To uncover the truth, you must put one and two together and follow the trail of breadcrumbs that will lead you to shocking discoveries. This trail is made of Clues.

Clues are a game resource that can be traded for information. The most common way to receive Clues is by making the **Investigate** move (page 262). Some other moves and game options also grant Clues.

Clues are a resource possessed by a player; they are not the same as evidence or information gathered by your character within the story, although the two are related, as explained below.

GAINING CLUES

Whenever you gain Clues, the rules tell you how many Clues you gain, e.g., one Clue or five Clues. Every Clue or batch of Clues you obtain has a **method** and a **source** that are determined by the action you took to receive the Clues. The method of your Clues is the means and techniques you used to obtain the information as well as the circumstances under which your character received it. Their source indicates where you got your information.

For example, if you research a mythological deity by going through crumbling tomes in the Old Quarter Library, then the method of your Clues is "research" and their source is "the Old Quarter Library". If you have a tense conversation with one Jimmy Rudolfi, a reluctant witness of a murder, any Clues generated will have "questioning" as method and "Jimmy Rudolfi" as source. Even scoping out a creepy graveyard before you enter can land you some Clues, with the method "scouting" and the source "graveyard".

The method and source of your Clues are used to track the origin of each set of Clues. If you wish, you can be even more specific and include the time and place, for example: "questioning Jimmy Rudolfi outside the 24/7 diner, a little before midnight on Thursday". You cannot change the method or the source of Clues you have, only obtain new ones using different methods and/or tapping different sources.

SPENDING CLUES

You can spend Clues to learn more about the subject of your investigation by asking the MC questions. Each Clue allows you to ask the MC a single question. **You can ask any question you can think of**, for example:

If you're doing research in the Old Quarter Library, you can ask:

- Who is Tezcatlipoca?
- Who is the modern-day manifestation of Tezcatlipoca?
- What are Tezcatlipoca's weaknesses?
- What does Tezcatlipoca want the most?
- How can I get Tezcatlipoca to serve me?
- Who are the mythological enemies of Tezcatlipoca?

If you're questioning a witness you can ask:

- Who is the killer?
- Is this witness telling the truth?
- Where was this witness in the time of the murder?
- What is the witness trying to hide?
- What does the witness think about me?
- What detail did I miss?

If you're scoping out a graveyard, you can ask:

- Is there anyone else here?
- What is my best escape route in case of trouble?
- Where is the grave I am looking for?
- Are there any dark forces at work here?
- What here is not as it seems?

There is one caveat for asking questions with Clues: you cannot use your Clues to ask for information that cannot be obtained using the method you used. For example, unless you used mind reading or psychological profiling, you won't be able to ask the MC "What are the witness's repressed childhood traumas?"

THE MC'S RESPONSE

In response to your question, the MC will provide information based on the case that she has prepared (some of the investigation threads are pre-written while others are improvised, see Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes). However, the MC does not have to expose the whole truth about the subject of your investigation. The MC can choose either to give you a **straight answer** to your question or to give you a **solid lead**. A solid lead is a useful detail that, when combined with other details, can point you toward the answer. For example, if you ask "Who is the killer?", a straight answer is "Jackie the barmaid." while a solid lead could be "There are no signs of struggle. The victim knew the killer."

The MC will provide the information based on the source of your Clues: the books and people in the Old Quarter Library, what Jimmy Rudolfi knows and how he behaves, what can be discovered in the graveyard. The MC cannot lie or provide false information – she must speak the truth, even if not the whole truth (with the exception of saying half-truths as explained under the **Investigate** move).

When the MC provides the answer or lead, she also translates it into the story, describing how your character obtains or deduces this information. For example:

Alex (playing Declan L'Estrange): I'll spend a Clue from my library research. Tell me, MC, who is the modern-day manifestation of Tezcatlipoca?

MC: You read through academic books and transcriptions in Spanish, German, and Nahuatl for hours, before you suddenly stop on a page showing an ancient Aztec symbol associated with Xochiquetzal, a goddess Tezcatlipoca once kidnapped. You remember this symbol; it was tattooed on the shoulder of the lady in the cocktail party.

Alex: She can lead me to him!

Or:

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): Good, I have 3 Clues from scouting the graveyard. I'll spend one to know if there is anyone else here.

MC: There is. As you look over the lichen-stained stone wall, you see the hidden silhouette of a tall man in a raincoat, solemnly holding an umbrella over a grave.

You never know how much of the available information the MC chose to reveal or whether it was a straight answer or a lead, unless the MC chooses to divulge that. In the above example, there may be others in the graveyard; to know for certain, the player would need to spend another Clue and ask "Is there anyone else there?"

If the MC reveals interesting information, you can ask about that too. For example,

Jerry: I want to spend my second Clue by asking: does this man pose a threat to me?

MC: Interesting question. After studying the outline of his rain coat, you see the barrel of a rifle poking out of one of his sleeves. He's standing motionless by the grave; this could be a trap.

A Clue is considered spent only if you receive an answer or a lead for your question. If you cannot get an answer or a lead for a question you asked, your Clue is not spent. For example, if you question Jimmy Rudolfi and ask "Who is the killer?" but there is absolutely nothing to learn about the identity of the killer from Jimmy, the MC will tell you that and your Clue will not be spent. The MC has the final call on whether an answer to a Clue is useful enough to consider the Clue spent.



THE ROLE OF THE MC: PACING THE INVESTIGATION

As the MC, your option to provide a solid lead instead of a straight answer allows you to control the trickle of information delivered to the players and their characters. You should provide leads instead of answers when you feel that the lead characters should work harder to discover the answers to the questions the players are asking. Conversely, you should provide straight answers when it's time to further the plot or expand on a interesting subject.

For example, if a player asks "Who is the killer?" in a murder investigation, your are more likely to provide a solid lead than a straight answer, to prevent the investigation from ending then and there.

However, remember that Clues are a game resource that is earned through taking risks and applying the character's abilities. When a player spends a Clue, they should always get something valuable for it.

USING CLUES IN A CONVERSATION

When an investigation involves speaking to other characters, make sure you highlight the difference between the questions and answers of the players and MC and those of the characters. There is a difference between questions asked in the story by a character and the questions asked by a player who is spending Clues. Similarly, the answers provided by the MC to the player are not necessarily spoken by the characters in the scene.

A character can ask another non-player character questions within the story as part of a conversation without spending Clues:

Tyrone (playing Salamander): As we're both standing in the rain watching the warehouse burn, I invite the news reporter to shack under the piece of newspaper I'm holding over my head. I ask her, "care to share my umbrella?"

MC: She looks you up and down and answers, "not very fancy, but it will do."

Tyrone: "What news channel do you work for?", I ask.

MC: She turns her back to you, and points at the logo on her windbreaker. "Channel 5".

When the player wants answers for information that isn't readily available, he can spend Clues to get them. The player can decide whether the questions he asks are also asked by his character in the conversation:

Tyrone: I want to spend a Clue to ask: What is she really here for?

MC: Okay. Do you ask her directly or just study her movements?

Tyrone: Salamander isn't one for refinement. He asks, "But you're not really here for your news channel, are you?"

Or as non-verbal actions:

Tyrone: Salamander isn't one for refinement, but he feels it's better to be subtle. While he continues the small-talk, he studies the reporter carefully.

Similarly, the MC can provide the answer or lead through dialog:

MC: She takes a deep sigh. "I'm looking for my sister. She's been involved with the people who own this warehouse. You wouldn't know anything about that?"

Or, alternatively, outside of dialog:

MC: "I'm just doing my job," she says, and you know she's lying. While she is watching the warehouse going up in flames, you spot a photocopied paper popping out of her backpack, a missing persons file with a picture of a girl who bears a striking resemblance to her."

CLUES FROM A PLAYER CHARACTER

You can obtain Clues by investigating another player's character. When you spend them, the player of that character provides the answers instead of the MC. The same applies to you when another player gets a Clue on you. While your characters may lie in the story, as players you must provide truthful information: either a straight answer or a solid lead.

OPTIONAL RULE: REVERSED CLUES

Instead of asking for details, players can spend Clues to introduce details into the investigation. When you spend a Clue this way, you loosely describe what your investigation turned up and the MC then adds details to tie it into the case she prepared.

For example, while inspecting a crime scene, you spend a Clue to say your character finds a matchbook. The MC completes the details by saying the matchbook has the logo of the famous Ambrosia nightclub with a scribble saying "Don't forget me!". In another instance, you could be searching files and say that you find a record of an incident that is similar to the one you are investigating. The MC thinks about how this could tie in to the case (she may or may not have another similar incident ready in her notes) and describes additional details about the related incident. Or a player can say that they reach out to their contact "Handbag, the Fence", who has some hot leads for them about missing works of art.

Reversed Clues are simply another way of asking a question, one that gives the players more freedom in narrating their actions. By finding a matchbook the player is asking "Where can I find more information about this crime scene?"; finding a record of a similar incident is akin to asking "Has there been a similar incident before?", etc.

Note that the details introduced by the player must match the method and source of the Clues, just as when spending Clues normally.

Since reversed Clues require a great amount of improvisation on the MC's part, the MC should consider whether they can be used in your game. If reversed Clues are used, the MC may always negotiate the detail with the player in order to better integrate it with the existing case. For example:

Megan (playing Goodfellow): So, since Donna Rice stole my money, I'm going to turn her apartment upside down until I find something that will tell me where she went. I spend one Clue to find a picture hidden in the back of drawer: it's Donna and her mother in front of a famous mansion.

The MC reviews her notes for the case and sees that it would be a stretch to tie Donna's to the City's elite, but her childhood home in the suburbs is important to the investigation.

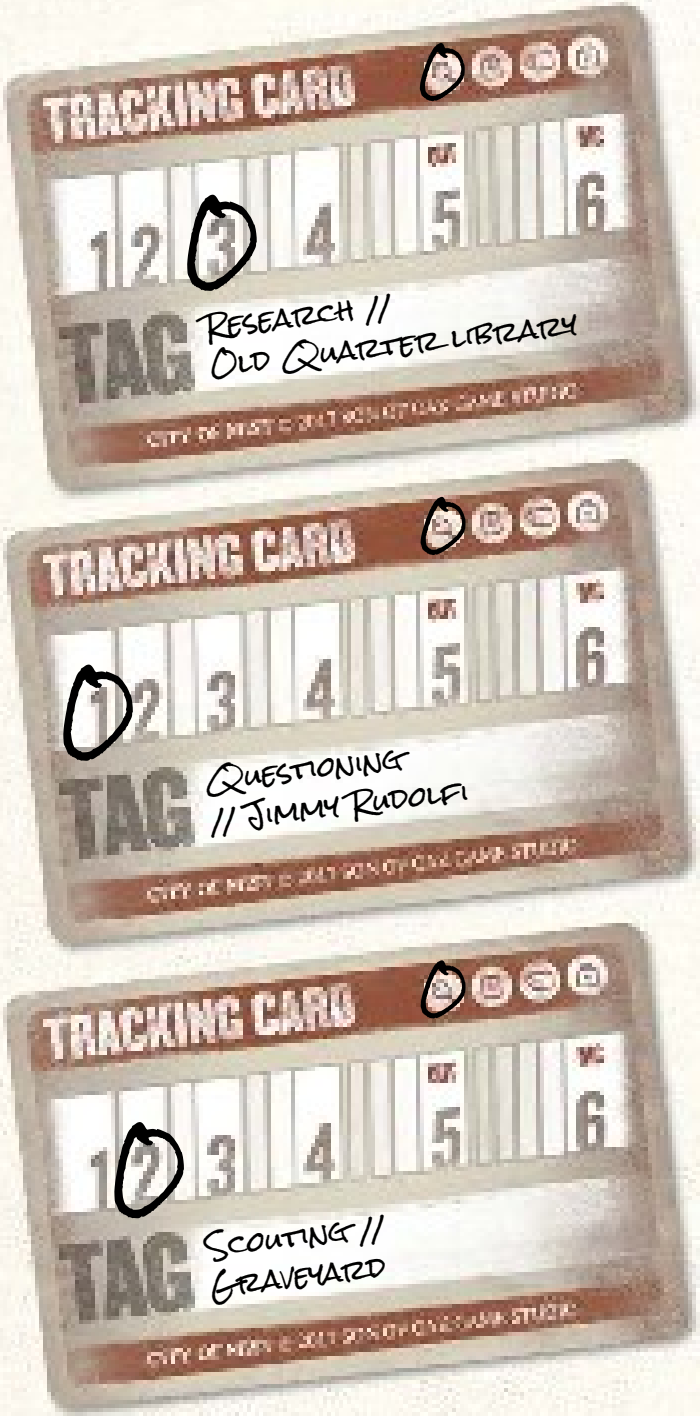
MC: How about instead of a mansion you see a suburban house with a unique green roof; if you ask around, you might be able to find it.

Megan: Great. Whatever helps me catch her!

BANKING CLUES

Most of the time you'll be spending your Clues the moment you get them. However, you always have the option to keep the Clues you gained for later use. Your Clues retain their method and source: the method you used when you obtained them and the source as it was when you conducted your investigation. When you spend Clues later, the questions you can ask and the answers you can get are still limited by their method and source. In other words, you cannot use your banked Clues to ask questions on a different subject. Spending banked Clues could be described by flashbacking to your conversation with the witness and remembering additional details, or reviewing your notes from your research at the library and finding new information.

You can track your banked Clues using a tracking card. Take a card, circle the Clue icon (🔍) and mark the the number of remaining Clues on the status bar; write down the method and source of your Clues in the TAG field. When you spend your Clues, update the number of remaining Clues. Discard the card when you have no remaining Clues of this origin.



Clues expire when the information they represent becomes obsolete. For example, when you scope the graveyard for dangers and gain Clues, they expire when you leave the graveyard. If you came back, you would need to scope the graveyard again to learn if there were new dangers lurking there.

JUICE

The scenes you play out in *City of Mist* are dynamic and dangerous: a villainous media magnate can besmirch your reputation, giving you a status of *infamous-3*; hungry ghosts can give you paralytic kisses that burn out your tags; and an army of killer rag dolls can close in on your crew and cut you off from each other. As an investigator, a vigilante, a criminal, or just someone trying to survive in the City, you need to be able to take actions that change the battlefield in your favor. Rallying your crew and leading them out of a cult's underground complex or conjuring a pack of wraith-like wolves from the abyss are all in a day's work for a Rift.

Juice points represent your ability to shape what is going on around you by using your abilities, resources, and allies. They can stand for an advantage in battle, a healing touch, psychological stability, or even general preparedness when you pull out just the right equipment out of the back of your pick-up truck. They can also reflect Mythical resources like a cloud of elemental power, the power to conjure beings and items, or spells you dig up in your grimoire.

In game terms, Juice points allow you to create and remove story tags, give and remove statuses, and burn other players tags, giving you immense freedom to use your character's abilities creatively.

The most common way to receive Juice is by making the **Change the Game** move (page 254), but other moves and game options also grant Juice.

GAINING JUICE

When you gain Juice, the rules tell you how many Juice points you gain, e.g., four Juice or two Juice.

Every batch of Juice points you receive has a **method**: the means you used to gain that advantage and the specific circumstances in which you did so. Your Juice's method is determined by the action you took to gain it.

For example, if you open a crate of weapons in the middle of a downtown shootout, handing out gun after grenade after gun to your henchmen, then the method of your Juice is "dispensing arms out of a crate". If you summon the restorative powers of Gaia in an effort to heal your fellow investigator, your method is "healing powers". If you sing a mesmerizing siren's song to captivate the attention of all who hear, your method is "enchanting song". Once Juice is generated, you cannot change its method, only obtain more Juice using different methods.

SPENDING JUICE

You can spend your Juice at any point in the game: before, during, or after a move made by you, another player, or the MC. However, for your Juice to affect another player's move, you must use it before the dice are rolled for that move.

The effects you wish to generate with your Juice must fit its method and the circumstances in which you are using it. For example, if your method was "healing powers" you cannot use your



Juice to conjure a suitcase full of money or give yourself an advantage in a battle of wits. Similarly, if you are an ordinary paramedic patching up a crewmate in the heat of battle, the MC may rule that you cannot heal the injuries completely, only reduce the pain and provide first aid.

Juice points can be spent to activate one or more of the following options:

CREATE A NEW STORY TAG

For each Juice point spent, you can add a new temporary story tag of your choice to the scene. All story tags you create must be distinct from one another. For example, depending on your abilities, you can:

- control the elements and make the scene *stormy*
- empty an oil tank from your running speedboat to create an *oil spill*
- call *the police*, bringing them into the scene
- search your spellbook for *a spell that summons fog*
- search your backpack for *a compass*, *a climbing axe*, or *a flare gun*
- call your lawyer for some *legal advice*
- conjure a *nightmarish horror*, give it *claws*, and make it *difficult to banish*

BURN A TAG

For each Juice point spent, you can burn a temporary or ongoing story tag, removing it from the scene. For example, depending on your abilities, you can:

- control the elements and disperse the *stormy* weather
- lie to *the police* to make them leave the place
- throw the *revolver* out the window so no-one can grab it
- calm down everyone and remove the *gang animosity*

Alternatively, for each point of Juice spent, you can temporarily burn a power tag belonging to a fellow player's character or a permanent story tag. A temporarily burnt tag is recovered after the target makes any one move (without using the burnt tag, of course). If this option is made ongoing, using the **Change the Game** move options, the tag is burnt "for real" and can be recovered using the normal methods for recovering burnt tags (see page 222). You cannot spend Juice during another player's spotlight to burn a tag they invoked in their move.

Finally, for each point of Juice spent, you can burn a crispy tag (crew or extra theme power tag). It can be recovered normally.

GIVE A STATUS

You can give one target a temporary status of your choice with one tier for each point of Juice spent. For example, you can spend 2 Juice to give a target the status *glued-2*. You cannot increase an existing status using Juice, except by giving a status on the same spectrum, which will stack with the existing status as usual (see Statuses on the Same Spectrum, page 235). Note that temporary and ongoing statuses do not stack.

You can divide your Juice points between different targets to give each of them a temporary status of your choice with one tier for each point of Juice



you spend on that target. For example, you can spend 3 Juice to give one target the status *dazzled-1* and another target the status *shocked-2*, or give three different targets the status *dazzled-1*.

The target of your status can be your character, another player's character, or a non-player character or object. If you choose to give the status to an unwilling player character, they can make the **Face Danger** move to reduce or avoid it.

For example, depending on your abilities, you can:

- prepare to acrobatically evade the guards with your feline grace, making yourself *uncatchable-2*
- analyze an opponent's fighting style and give her the status *exposed-weakness-3*
- take over the lighting and sound in a nightclub to give your crewmate *spotlight-1*
- put yourself in the line of fire to give a helpless bystander *shielded-4*
- put a sleeping spell on the bountry hunter *(drowsy-3)* and his Rotweiler *(sleepy-1)*
- get your motorbike's engine *revved-up-2* to prepare for a crazy jump
- use your martial arts training to give yourself *deadly-strikes-2* and your enemy *exposed-1*

REDUCE OR REMOVE A STATUS

For each point of Juice spent, you can reduce the tier of any single status by one. If you reduce a status to tier zero, you remove it altogether. For example, you can spend 1 Juice to reduce a *mesmerized-2* status to *distracted-1*, or spend 2 Juice to remove *mesmerized-2* altogether.

You can divide your Juice points between different statuses to reduce each of them by one tier for each point of Juice you spent on that status. You can affect statuses attached to different targets.

You can affect a status either before or after it is attached to a target. For example, you can reduce or even prevent *shrapnel-wounds-4* by using Juice to block the explosion before it hits the target or, if the damage was already done, you can use Juice to accelerate the target's natural healing (depending on its method).

For example, depending on your abilities, you can:

- use your medical training to reduce your buddy's *broken-leg-4* to *leg-in-cast-2*
- pull it together after being *drugged-3* and reduce it to *dazed-1*
- send a showgirl from your cabaret to distract the mobsters and remove their *nervous-and-alert-2*
- use your empathic connection with your mother to help her overcome *infuriated-4*
- cut the ropes binding your two crewmates, removing *bound-2* from one and *loosely-bound-1* from the other
- block the claws of a Manticore coming right at your face and reduce *crushed-skull-6* to *slashed-face-3*

BANKING JUICE

Since you can only use Juice to create effects that are related to its method of generation, most Juice expires soon after it is generated as its method becomes obsolete.

For example, if you tried to suck the alcohol out of a *drunk-2* crewmate and generated 3 Juice, the remaining Juice point (after removing the tier-2 status) would expire immediately because you can only use it to suck the alcohol out of your drunk crewmate in the current circumstances and your crewmate is now sober.

If your method remains relevant for longer, you can save Juice you generated for later use. For example, if you summon the dead to your help and generate 2 Juice, you can create one story tag *zombie* now and bank the remaining one point of Juice for later in the scene. Depending on your method, the MC may rule that your Juice can be banked for any length of time.

Your banked Juice retains its method until you use it or until it expires because its method becomes obsolete. You can use it at any time appropriate to your method. However, **while you have Juice banked, you cannot generate any more Juice using the same or similar methods**. All the game elements you used to create this batch of Juice (power tags, story tags, statuses, and any other game options) are locked down: they cannot be used to generate more Juice until you either spend your remaining banked Juice or discard it. You may discard your banked Juice at any time. Furthermore, **batches of Juice never stack together**; you cannot add them to make a bigger batch.

You can track your banked Juice using a tracking card. Take a card, circle the Juice icon ( ) and mark the number of remaining Juice points on the status bar; then write down the method of your Juice in the TAG field.

When you spend your Juice, update the number of remaining Juice points. When all your Juice is gone or when it expires, clear the tracking card and return the card to the deck.



GRIT MODE: JUICE

The grittier your story is, the harder injuries are to heal and the harder it is to overcome trouble and adversity. If Grit Mode is activated in your game (see page 212), you can choose to make things harder for the players by limiting the options to **BURN A TAG** and **REDUCE OR REMOVE A STATUS** to temporary tags and statuses only. In order to affect ongoing story tags and statuses, a player must score 10 or more on your **Change the Game** move and spend a Juice point to activate the option "Make the effect ongoing".

OPTIONAL RULE: RECOVER A BURNT TAG WITH JUICE

Normally, burning a tag is a lasting effect which continues through at least one scene until your character has the option to use the **Montage (Downtime)** move to restore her burnt tags. This is true whether your tag was burnt by someone else or voluntarily by you, for a hit. As an optional rule, the MC may allow players in your game to spend Juice to choose on this additional option:

RECOVER A BURNT POWER TAG (1 OR 3 JUICE)

For every three points of Juice you spend, you may recover any single burnt power tag, whether it belongs to your character or to another player character. As always, the method of your Juice must reasonably allow you to do so. This depends on the story circumstances under which you lost the ability to use the tag. If the tag is only temporarily burnt or if the tag is crispy (crew and extra themes power tag), you may recover it by spending just one point of Juice. To remove a permanently burnt tag you must be able to remove permanent effects, as specified in the **Change the Game** move, in addition to spending three Juice for this effect.

HELP & HURT

The Help & Hurt points you established with each one of your crewmates during crew creation are a special type of Juice points and function in a similar way. The method for the Help & Hurt Juice is based on your ongoing relationship with each crewmate. Therefore, Help & Hurt points do not expire as long as that crewmate is in the story. Furthermore, Help & Hurt points can only generate effects related to your character's relationship with that particular crewmate.

Help points represent your desire and ability to help your crewmate, whether by taking actions to help her or by helping with the actions she takes. They can only be used to create effects that enhance actions you take for your crewmate's sake or enhance actions your cremate takes. In rare cases, when you believe interfering with your crewmate's action would serve her best interest, you may use a Help point to create effects that interfere with her action.

Hurt points represent your desire and ability to hurt your crewmate, whether by taking actions to hurt her or by interfering with the actions she takes. They can only be used to create effects that enhance actions you take to hurt your crewmate or interfere with actions your crewmate takes. In rare cases, when you believe supporting your crewmate's action would hurt her, you may use a Hurt point to create effects that enhance her action.

You receive new Help & Hurt points at the end of every session, using the move **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)** (see page 272).

SECONDARY CHARACTERS

Characters and beings that feature exclusively or mostly on your themes and tags are considered your **secondary characters**. For example, if you have a Defining Relationship with a rescue dog or a set of tags describing a sidekick, they could be a secondary character. Characters and beings you create using story tags may also be secondary characters, if you have control over them.

For all intents and purposes, secondary characters are considered an extension of your character. When you receive the spotlight, you can choose to act with one of your secondary characters instead of your primary one; you do not receive spotlight more often for having secondary characters.

> Finding himself cornered by hired armed thugs, Merlin the Wizard summons a green dragon, creating the story tags *green dragon*, *scaly*, and *talons*. The dragon is now an extension of Merlin. Elliott, who is playing Merlin, controls the dragon's actions, describing what the dragon does, where it goes, what it looks like, etc.

The exception is when your themes and tags refer to a character whose role in the series extends beyond your primary character's story. In such a case, the MC decides whether the character is a secondary character of yours or not. If not, you can use these tags when you take actions that involve that character, but not as that character.

> Clare's character, Charmaine, has a Routine theme named Assistant To The Mayor, including a tag *friendly with the mayor*. The MC rules that since the mayor is a major character in the series in and of herself, she is not an extension of Charmaine and therefore is not considered a secondary character of Clare. However, Clare can still invoke the tag when she tries to **Convince** the mayor to do something.

You can portray your secondary characters, describing their actions, words, behavior and appearance as you would for your primary character. Alternatively, you can choose to have the MC portray your secondary character and decide on her actions. Regardless of what you choose, you can always invoke tags related to this character to support your moves.

Lamar, who is playing Sullivan, decides to leave Sullivan's sidekick, Sánchez, in the hands of Alice the MC. He thinks it would make Sullivan's interactions with Sánchez more interesting as he and the MC will each play a character (it's weird to have a dialog with yourself). However, Lamar can still invoke tags related to Sánchez when he's taking action with Sullivan.

When Sullivan later falls off a fire escape stair, Lamar invokes the power tag *saves my butt every time* from his theme My Sancho Panza (which describes his relationship with Sánchez) in his **Face Danger** move. The MC says that Sánchez shows up at the last minute, pushing a dumpster right under Sullivan and saving him from breaking his neck.

PLAYING SECONDARY CHARACTERS

When you describe your secondary character taking action, you use the rules in the same way you would for your primary character. For example, if the actions of your secondary character trigger a move, you play the move as you would for your primary character.

Elliott wants to use the dragon to defend Merlin from the thugs. When he receives the spotlight, he **Hits With All He's Got**, using the tags *green dragon* and *talons*.

Statuses taken by a secondary character affect only actions you are taking with that secondary character; they do not affect your primary character's actions (unless they are somehow made relevant to you). You can remove statuses from secondary characters using the same moves and game options you use to remove them from yourself.

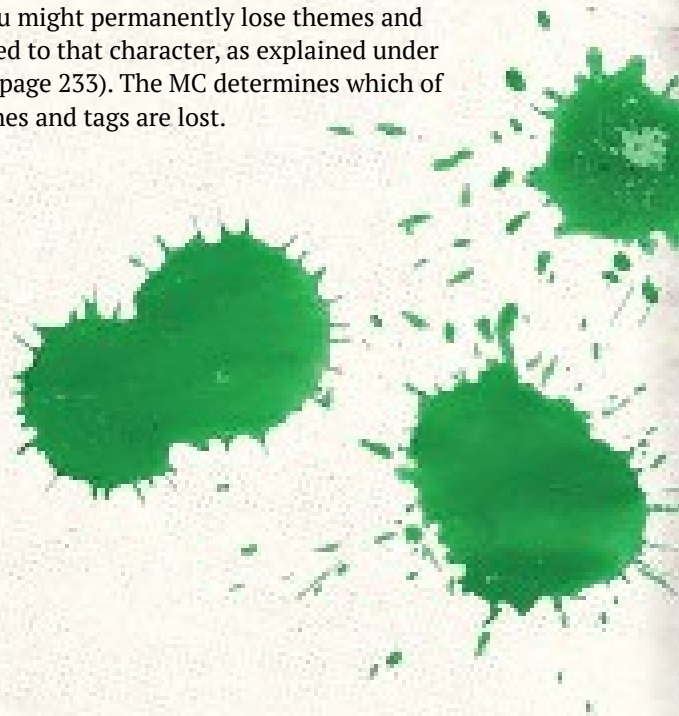
The slashed muggers open fire at the dragon, inflicting *full-of-lead-4*. Eliott rolls **Face Danger** for the dragon using *green dragon* and *scaly*, and reduces it to *gunshot-wounds-3*. This status affects any further relevant actions with the dragon, but it does not affect Merlin's actions.

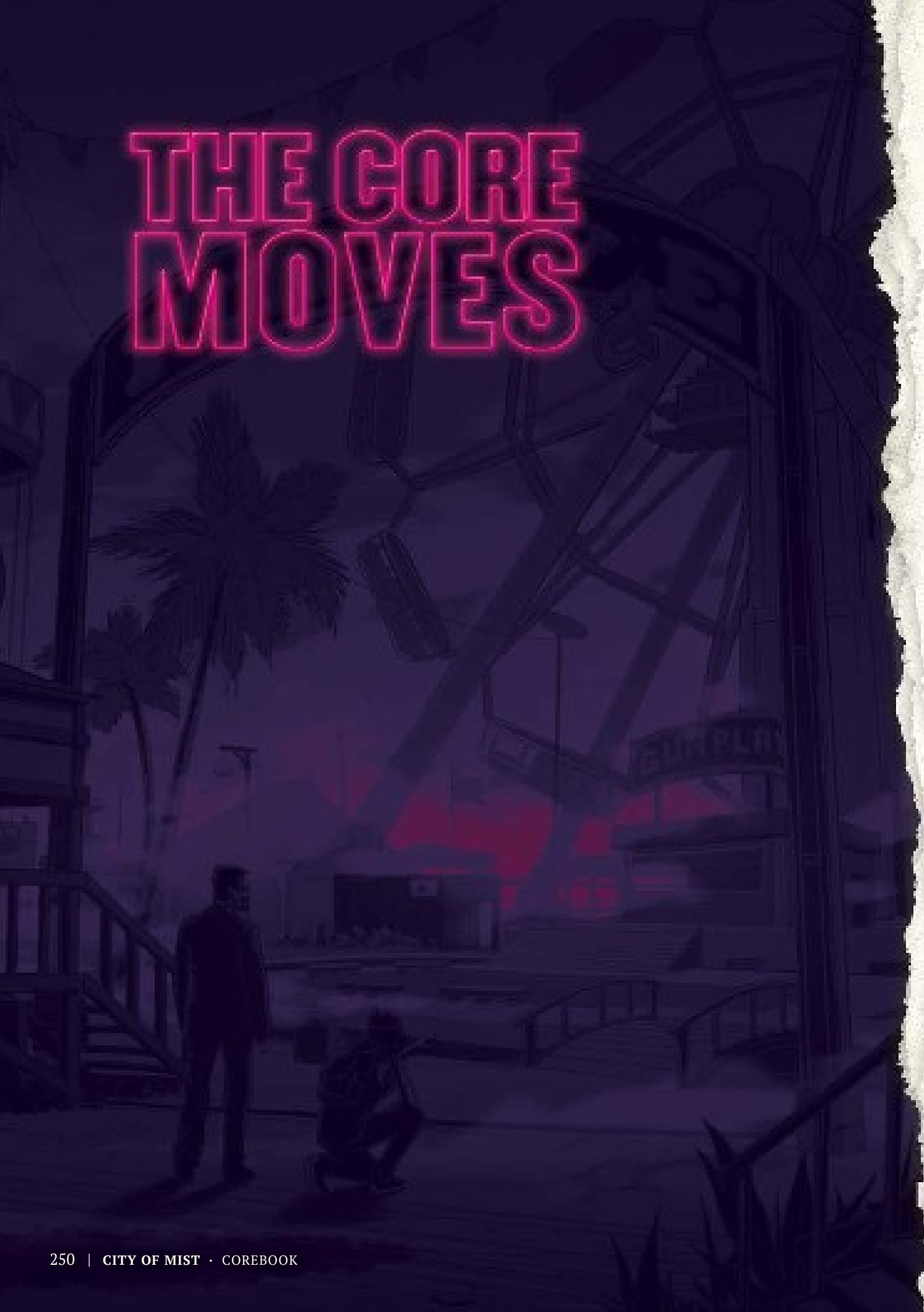
The MC rules when it is possible for your main and secondary characters to combine their tags, depending on the action taken:

Merlin and the dragon now team up to vanquish "the foul bandits". However, since they are attacking separately, one with *talons* and one with *bolts of fire*, the MC rules Elliott will make a separate move for each of them. Elliott then decides to have Merlin support the dragon's attack with **Change the Game**, while the dragon will **Hits With All It's Got.**

After surviving this onslaught, the last thug standing takes a final shot at Merlin. Eliott rolls **Face Danger** for Merlin. Since the dragon is nearby and can easily block the shot, the MC rules Eliott can invoke *green dragon* and *scaly* to boost Merlin's Power.

Secondary characters can be incapacitated and killed separately from you. If a secondary character takes a tier-5 status, you cannot take actions with that character until that status is reduced or removed. If a secondary character takes a tier-6 status, you might permanently lose themes and tags related to that character, as explained under Statuses (page 233). The MC determines which of your themes and tags are lost.




THE CORE
MOVES

The eight Core Moves cover the vast majority of actions players can take in *City of Mist*. The following section illustrates the moves and explains their conditions and possible outcomes. The rules for making a move are explained under Moves: Taking Action, on page 208.

THE RULE OF "MINIMUM ONE"

Some Core Moves define the benefit you derive from the move, such as Clues, Juice, or statuses you give, in terms of Power. For example, when you score a hit with the **Investigate** move, you gain a number of Clues equal to your Power.

When you make a move with a Power of zero or less and score a hit, **you always get at least one point of benefit**: one Clue, one Juice, or a tier-1 status.

DYNAMITE!

Several character improvements can make a Core Move *Dynamite!* Most commonly, these improvements make it so every time you make a specific Core Move with that theme's tags, it's *Dynamite!*

Normally, a result of 12 or more is treated as a result of 10 or more. When a move is *Dynamite!* the 12 or more outcome category becomes available, and a result of 12 or more activates it. The 12 or more outcome category represents an outstanding success with special benefits, as explained in each move.

HELPING OR INTERFERING WITH CORE MOVES

Crewmates can help or interfere with each other's moves by spending Juice, including Help & Hurt points, to give each other helpful or impeding statuses or change the environment to support or hinder the move, etc. When a crewmate makes a move, before the player rolls the dice, you can ask for the spotlight temporarily to help or interfere with their action.

The simplest way to help or interfere with an crewmate's action is to spend a Help point or a Hurt point to give them a positive or a negative temporary status. Describe how you help or interfere with your crewmate's action and what status you give them. They cannot **Face Danger** from this status.

The other way to help or interfere with a crewmate's action is to spend Juice. If you have relevant banked Juice that you can use, you can spend it. If you don't, but your character is able to take action to affect your crewmate's action before they act, you can make a **Change the Game** move, generating Juice specifically for this purpose. You can also burn a tag for a hit to ensure the success of this **Change the Game** move.

Finally, if you are the unwilling target of your crewmate's move, you may invoke the crewmate's weakness tags when appropriate.

IMPOSING STATUSES

Relationships can be a dangerous thing; being close to someone allows them to really hurt you and vice versa.

When a crewmate spends Juice to give you a temporary status just before your action, you cannot reduce it with Face Danger. Instead, the effect is instant. The exception to this are cases where the interference is clearly blockable by your defenses; the MC may then allow you to **Face Danger**.

MULTIPLE CREW MEMBERS HELPING OR INTERFERING

Each crewmember may ask for the spotlight to attempt to help or interfere with an action, if their character is capable of doing so. However, note that to compound helping or interfering statuses given by different team members, they must be on the same spectrum. Otherwise, helpful and detrimental statuses do not stack; only the status with the highest tier among the helpful statuses and the status with the highest tier among the detrimental statuses apply.

HELP AND INTERFERE EXAMPLE

Sullivan, Goodfellow, and Det. Enkidu face off with sinister businessman Craig Cetus on a wharf in the docklands. Mr. Cetus has used his Mythos powers to call forth a monstrous sea creature from the bay

and had it attack the lead characters. Det. Enkidu has an opening and wants to shoot to kill, before Cetus does any more damage. However, Sullivan wants to keep him alive to question him about where he is keeping a young man who has incriminating information about Cetus. Goodfellow is still undecided.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): This has gone too far. I have to shoot him. I'm going to **Hit With All I've Got**, and I have a Power of 3.

Lamar (playing Sullivan): I am going to interfere with this action. I don't have any Hurt points left with Enkidu, so I will **Change the Game.** Sullivan is going to push Enkidu's hand up before she pulls the trigger. Since my motivation is to help save a victim of Cetus, I'll burn *sorrow for the victims* for a score of 10 and a Power of 3. I give Enkidu a temporary status of *off-her-mark-3*.

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Yikes, this is getting heated. Goodfellow wants Cetus to talk, but he's too dangerous. He shouts, "Sullivan, don't!" to warn Enkidu. I'll use my Help point to give Enkidu a temporary status of *fore-warned-1*.

MC: Jerry, this means you have a helpful tier-1 status and an detrimental tier-3 status, leaving you with -2 Power. You roll with a Power of 1.

CONVINCE

When you use your abilities to talk, threaten, or seduce someone into doing something, roll+Power. On a hit, choose a relevant status with tier=Power. Your target can choose either to take the status or:

- on a 7-9, to give in a little, but protect their own agenda.
- on a 10+, to change their agenda to include yours, at least for the time being.

HOLD SOMEONE AT GUNPOINT · BRIBE AN OFFICIAL · CLOSE A DEAL · FLIRT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT · THREATEN WITH VIOLENCE OR A PROMISE OF FUTURE PAIN · BLACKMAIL SOMEONE · ETC.

Convince is activated when your character openly tries to influence another character to do something that character wouldn't normally do. How you influence your target is determined by the tags you invoke. When a character tries to influence someone to provide information, use **Investigate** instead. When a character tries to influence someone deceptively, use **Sneak Around** instead.



LEVERAGE AND COUNER-LEVERAGE

If you have something the target wants or if you can threaten the target with implications she wishes to avoid, the MC may translate such leverage into an appropriate temporary story tag or tags, depending on how much added influence this leverage provides. This story tag only affects the Power of this specific action. For example, if you are convincing an auctioneer to open the vault, and you are threatening to smash his favorite artifact, the MC may give you the temporary story tag *favorite artifact*.

Conversely, if the target has a great deal to lose by doing as you say or if she is under someone else's influence, the MC may translate such counter-leverage into an appropriate temporary story tag as well. This story tag affects the Power of this action only. The MC may also rule that an existing status of the target affects your attempt. For example, if you are attempting to convince a *threatened-3* shop owner to report his loan shark to the police, his status may apply to your Power.

Sullivan (played by Lamar) is on a crane in the Industrial Zone, trying to dissuade a *suicidal-4* teenager from jumping to his death after a traumatic discovery. Lamar invokes Sullivan's power tags of *sorrow for the victims* and *long unbreakable speeches* for a Power of 2. He also knows the kid likes burgers, so he gets a *burger* which the MC declares a temporary story tag, raising the Power to 3. However, the teenager's tier-4 status applies as a negative status, so Lamar rolls with a Power of -1. He rolls 2 and 6 for a total of -1 + 2 + 6 = 7, or a 7-9.

OUTCOME

A hit indicates you managed to exert some influence over your target. Choose a "stick": a status that reflects a negative outcome for the target in case the target decides to resist and act differently than you asked. The tier of the status is equal to your Power in this action.

The "stick" status could be a psychological or social outcome such as *guilty-3*, a practical repercussion e.g. *wanted-for-questioning-2*, or even physical punishment, such as *gunshot-4*. The status you choose must match the nature of your action. However, it cannot be identical to the action you want the target to perform. For example, if you order a bank robber to drop his firearm, you cannot give him the status *disarmed-3* instead.



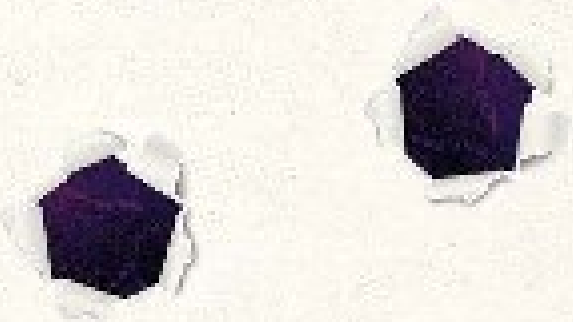
The target of the action can choose whether to take the status or do as you say. On a 7-9, the target needs to do something for you to avoid the status, but can continue to protect her own agenda. On a 10+, she must fully promote your agenda, at least temporarily, to avoid the status.

> Lamar chooses to give the kid a status of *paralyzed-1* (tier-1 because the Power is zero or less). The MC must choose whether the kid takes the status or listens to Sullivan. Since Lamar scored a 7-9, the kid can listen to Sullivan but still protect his own agenda. He slowly moves away from the edge of the crane, agreeing to hear Sullivan out, but the drama is not over yet. Since he chose to listen to Sullivant, the kid does not take the status *paralyzed-1*.

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, the tier of the "stick" status you give the target equals Power+2. To avoid it, target must change their agenda as in 10+, but in addition the target must take a tier-2 temporary status of your choice representing your influence, such as *indebted-2*, *convinced-2*, *friendly-2*, etc. Its tag cannot be the same as that of the "stick" status.

If the target is a player character, you can trade tiers of the status (either the "stick" or the influence) for Hurt points against the target, one-for-one. For example, if your Power is 2, the "stick" is a tier-4 status. If a player character chooses to take this status, you can choose to reduce the status by 3 tiers to a tier-1 status and instead receive 3 Hurt points against that player character.



CHANGE THE GAME

When you use your abilities to give yourself or your allies an advantage, roll+Power. On a hit, you get Juice=Power. Spend your Juice to gain the following effects, one-to-one:

- Create a story tag
- Burn a power tag or a story tag
- Give or reduce a status (one tier per point of Juice)

On a 10+, you get a minimum of 2 Juice, and you can also use your Juice to choose:

- Scale up the effect (greater area or more targets)
- Prolong the effect (make it ongoing)
- Hide the effect
- Any other improvement you and the MC agree on

HEAL, RESTORE, OR FIX · GET OUT OF A TOUGH SPOT · GAIN OR GIVE A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE · SET UP A DEFENSE · CREATE OR ACQUIRE A USEFUL OBJECT · WEAKEN THE OPPOSITION · CONJURE, SUMMON, OR RALLY ALLIES · ETC.

Change the Game is the most versatile of the Core Moves. It applies whenever your character is trying to gain advantage for herself or for her allies by improving their abilities, changing the situation to their benefit, helping herself or her allies shake off negative effects, inflicting a disadvantageous condition on their foes, or creating useful objects, beings, or conditions.

OUTCOME

On a hit, you gain Juice equal to the Power of this action. On a 10+, you get at least 2 Juice. You can spend the Juice to create various effects as explained under Juice (page 244). Note that the tags you use to **Change the Game** determine the method of your Juice and limit what you can use your Juice for. For example, you cannot invoke the tag *a healing touch* and then use your Juice to give someone a harmful status.

Story tags and statuses you create using Juice are temporary and affect a single target or a small area per point. Furthermore, like all actions, they are discernable to those around and those who come in contact with the effects of the move.

EFFECT IMPROVEMENTS

On a 10+, you have the option to enhance your effects by spending Juice on one or more of the following improvements. An effect is a single tag or status (of any tier) you created, reduced, removed, or burned. Each point of Juice activates a single improvement for a single effect. You can add these improvements at any time you spend Juice. You can only use Juice to improve effects created with the same batch of Juice.

- **Scale up the effect:** You make a single effect bigger, make it cover a greater area, or make it affect a small group of targets (normally up to 10 targets, but the final decision is up to the MC). With this option you can make your *fire elemental* the size of a small building, spread *moonlight* over an entire block, and have your *protected-by-wards-1* or *gassed-to-sleep-2* statuses affect multiple targets.
- **Prolong the effect:** If you use this option on newly-created temporary story tags or statuses, you make them ongoing. If you use it on a power tag you burn, it stays burnt until recovered by ordinary means. (When Grit Mode is activated, this improvement allows you to reduce/remove ongoing statuses or burn ongoing story tags).
- **Hide the effect:** You make a single effect indiscernible to those you wish to hide it from. At the MC's discretion, a scrupulous investigation may reveal something about the effect, but would still not reveal it completely.
- **Other improvements:** You or the MC can come up with additional improvements for your effects, such as affecting other dimensions or allowing the effect to slip past an enemy's defenses. Once you agree on the improvement, you can spend a single point of Juice to activate it, as usual.

"Prolong the effect" and "Hide the effect" may be chosen only once for each effect you want to improve. The other options may be chosen multiple times for a greater improvement, at the MC's discretion.

> The Rift of Gepetto is calling upon his toys to help him fight off two crooks trying to set his workshop on fire. The player invokes *puppeteer & toymaker*, *cluttered workshop* (because he's there), and *necessity is the mother of invention* for a Power of 3. Rolling 3 and 4, the player scores a total of 3 + 3 + 4 = 10, or a 10+. This generates Juice equals to Power, in this case 3 Juice. The player can also choose from the effect improvements. He decides to get his toys to move chaotically around the workshop and make a ruckus, throwing off the crooks and giving them *bewildered-1* (1 Juice). To affect both of them he chooses to scale up the effect (1 Juice) and to keep them at a loss he chooses to prolong the effect (1 Juice). The crooks now both have an ongoing *bewildered-1*.
>
> Later, as the drama unfolds, Gepetto is *held-back-2* by one of the crooks as the other pours gasoline around his precious workshop. The player **Changes the Game** again, using the same tags, but rolls 1 and 5, for a score of 3 + 1 + 5 = 9, or a 7-9. He gets 3 Juice again, but can't choose any effect improvement. Gepetto gets an electrical toy to zap the crook holding him so he can escape, removing the tier-2 status entirely (2 Juice) and then grabs a *chinese finger trap* off one of the workbenches, creating a temporary story tag (1 Juice). On his next action, he will use it on the crook who was holding him.

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you get a minimum of 3 Juice and can choose to activate one of the following special improvements by spending 1 Juice:

- **Large-scale effect**: scale up a single effect to a large scale or make it affect a large group. The exact limit of this scale is up to you and the MC.
- **Permanent effect:** make a single effect permanent or be able to use one of your effects to remove or reduce a permanent effect (except tier-6

statuses). You can only have one permanent effect at a time. You can discard a permanent effect you created whenever you wish.

- **Mist-hidden effect**: make a single effect Mist-hidden. The Mist itself conspires to hide the existence of this effect even from Rifts so that no-one can know about it without your approval.

As with the the 10+ effect improvements, these special improvements can only be applied to effects created with Juice from the same batch.

OPTIONAL RULE: STATUS FILTER

You can allow players in the game to use the option **Reduce or Remove a Status** to set up an ongoing effect that reduces incoming statuses from a target. To do so, a player must score 10 or more on his **Change the Game** move and spend a Juice point to activate the option "Make the effect ongoing". Every additional point of Juice spent to **Reduce or Remove a Status** adds one tier to the filter. From that point on and until the effect expires, any relevant status the target takes is reduced by the number of tiers in the status filter

> The Rift of the divine blacksmith Hephaestus wants to use his control over metals to block incoming bullets. The player scores 10+ on his **Change the Game** move and gains 3 Juice for erecting this magical barrier. He spends 2 Juice on the reduction effect and one point to make it ongoing. This sets up a tier-2 status filter, which reduces two tiers from any status related to metals that might affect him, such as *perforated-by-bullets-5* or *ricochet-2*, for as long as the status filter effect remains.
>
> Alternatively, the blacksmith can spend 1 Juice on the reduction effect, 1 Juice to make it ongoing, and the final Juice point to scale up the effect. Now his entire crew is protected by a tier-1 status filter.
>
> Similarly, a samurai garners 2 Juice from invoking her *martial prowess* and scoring 10+. She can then set up a tier-1 status filter on her opponent, reducing any combat advantages statuses he tries to give himself by one tier.

Depending on the method of your Juice, the MC rules whether this filter activates before or after a player character's **Face Danger** move, affecting either the incoming status or the status remaining after the **Face Danger** move. As usual with the **Reduce or Remove a Status** effect, statuses reduced to tier 0 are removed completely.

Note that the tags you used to set up a status filter cannot be used again to attack or defend the target while the status filter is active. For example, if you used your *amulet of protection* to erect a magical barrier, you cannot use this tag in any **Face Danger** moves to protect yourself from statuses filtered by the magical barrier; nor can you use your *martial prowess* to enhance an attack on the opponent while he is under the effect of the status filter. (See Linked Moves, page 214)

You can reduce or remove an existing status filter by using any effect that could reduce or remove an ongoing status, including **Reduce or Remove a Status**.

FACE DANGER

When you use your abilities to avoid an incoming hit, endure harm, resist a malign influence, or hold it together, the MC (or player) will name a status with its tag and tier. Roll+Power. On a 10+, you fend off the effect and take no status at all. On a 7-9, you take the status, but with -1 tier. On a miss, you take the full status.

TAKE A HIT · DODGE A HIT · BLOCK A HIT · WITHSTAND HARSH CONDITIONS · PROJECT A PROTECTIVE BARRIER · FEND OFF ENEMIES · ENDURE THE EFFECTS OF A TOXIN OR DISEASE · OVERCOME FEAR · ETC.

Face Danger triggers whenever your character is about to unwillingly take a status and has the capacity to resist or avoid it. The MC or the player giving you the status names its tag and notes its tier. The given status represents the worst effect that you can suffer; you **Face Danger** to see how well your character defended herself from its harm or influence. Therefore, **Face Danger** often follows other moves and game options that impose statuses.

In order to **Face Danger**, your character must be able to defend herself in the way you described and have the wherewithal to tackle the status: either because any person can attempt to do so (for example, take a punch), or because you have the specific tags to do so (for example, *counterspell* to avoid a *turned-into-a-frog-5* status).

Face Danger isn't automatically applied against all incoming harmful statuses. When you miss a move, the MC can choose to give your character a status without the chance to **Face Danger**. For example, your character can suddenly become surrounded by enemies, not realizing it before it's too late, taking *overrun-3* without **Facing Danger**.

If you **Face Danger** as a result of another move you made, you cannot use any power or story tags you invoked in the first move to **Face Danger** (see Linked Moves, page 214).

If you take a status from another player's move, you usually have the option to **Face Danger** (based on your ability to defend yourself and exempting temporary statuses created with Juice, as explained under Helping or Interfering, page 251). However, if you invoked any of your power or story tags to interfere with the other player's move, they cannot be used again to **Face Danger** against the resulting status.

The status you are defending against is never counted as a detrimental status for the **Face Danger** move itself. Only statuses you already have affect the Power of this move.

OUTCOME

On a 10+, your character completely defends herself from the danger at hand and takes no status at all. On a 7-9, your character mitigates only some of the harm or influence; she takes the status but reduces its tier by one. The MC or the player who gave you the status rephrase the tag to represent the reduced tier. For example, *staggered-2* can be reduced to *lip-cut-1* and *turned-to-sea-foam-5* could be reduced to *melting-into-sea-water-4*.

On a miss, you take the full status as named by the MC or the player who gave it. Unlike with other moves, the MC does not make a move when you miss **Face Danger**; getting the status is bad enough.

Post-Mortem, the undead assassin, Excalibur, the steely dame, and Kitsune, the fox-spirit teenager, inadvertently crash their car into a pizzeria while being chased by murderous ninjas. The MC states they all take *banged-up-3*.

Post-Mortem **Faces Danger** first; she invokes *can't die — already dead* and *can't feel pain*. The player wants to also invoke *force-field generator*, but the MC rules that it's unlikely that Post-Mortem had the time to reach for the device. So Post-Mortem's action has a Power of 2; rolling 6 and 2, she scores a total of 2 + 6 + 2 = 10, or a 10+, avoiding the status completely.

Excalibur has one tag, *tough as nails*, to **Face Danger** with. Rolling 4 and 3, she scores a total of 1 + 4 + 3 = 8, or 7-9. She reduces the original tier-3

status by one to a tier-2 status, which she takes. The MC dubs this new tier *cuts-and-bruises-2*.

Kitsune, unfortunately, is in trouble. He cannot invoke *parkour artist* or *nimble as a fox* because he is stuck in a car, buckled to the seat; so he has no relevant power tags for this action. The MC rules Kitsune can still try to **Face Danger**, but invokes his weakness tag *fragile* (the player marks Attention). With a Power of -1, the player rolls 1 and 1 for an all-time low score of -1 + 1 + 1 = 1, or a miss. Kitsune takes the full status and is *banged-up-3*.

Declan L'Estrange is *passed-out-5* and *tied-up-3* in the trunk, recovering from a close encounter with the ninja's mistress. The MC rules he cannot **Face Danger**, so he takes the full *banged-up-3* status. Since this is on the same spectrum as the hurt that made him *pass-out-5*, Declan's player marks 3 pips next to tier-5 on his tracking card, and the MC rephrases the status to *bleeding-to-death-5*. If he takes 2 more pips, he's a goner.

Indicator lights blink while the alarm tears through the trashed pizzeria and the empty street. Smoke and steam rise from the engine and curl all around. Shadowy figures slink closer and closer to the crash site...

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you avoid the status completely and choose one:

- You reflect the status at your attacker or otherwise use it against them. You give your attacker an appropriate status of your choice with tier=tier of the original status.
- You bolster your defenses. You take an appropriate ongoing tier-1 status of your choice describing your improved defenses.

If you **Faced Danger** as a follow up to a move in which you already gave a status, like **Hit With All You've Got** or **Go Toe to Toe**, the status you give using the reflect option can only replace the status you gave in the original move; it cannot stack with it.

GO TOE TO TOE

When you use your abilities to overcome someone or something in a struggle for control, state what your goal is. Your opponent can describe how they respond, at their option. Roll+Power. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- **You manage to achieve your goal, e.g., take something they hold.**
- **You get them good, giving your opponent a status with tier=Power.**
- **You block, dodge, or counter their best attempts. If you don't choose this, they can impose a status on you. If they are a PC, its tier=their Power.**

ENGAGE IN MARTIAL-ARTS OR CLOSE-QUARTERS COMBAT · EXCHANGE FIRE · FIGHT SOMEONE FOR CONTROL OF A POSITION OR OBJECT · OUTSHINE OTHERS AT A SOCIAL GATHERING · TRY TO OUTRUN PURSUERS · GAIN THE UPPER HAND IN A GAME · ENGAGE IN A BATTLE OF WITS · ETC.

Go Toe to Toe is a catch-all move for situations where your character is trying to achieve a goal, such as grabbing an object or securing a position, but in doing so faces opposition. It represents any kind of challenge or contest between your character and another party or force. Depending on the situation, your character could be **Going Toe to Toe** with an opponent, a predicament, a mystical force, etc.

When you **Go Toe to Toe**, you state the goal your character is trying to achieve before invoking tags and rolling the dice. Your goal could be anything related to the current scene, such as knocking an opponent out of the way, banishing a ghost from a possessed person, blocking the rival crew's getaway car, pulling strings to get someone out of jail, etc. The tags you use must fit your goal and the means you employ to get it.

If your primary goal in this action is to successfully hurt or affect someone by imposing a status on them, then say so. The MC may also tell you that

the goal you are trying to achieve requires imposing a status (especially if you cannot achieve it in a single action).

The MC or the player playing your opponent can also describe how they respond before you roll. For a player, this affects their counter-attack later on.

OUTCOME

On a hit, you choose out of the following outcome options. You choose one option on a 7-9, two on a 10+. You can choose each option only once.

- **You manage to achieve your goal or gain an advantage:** You achieve the goal you set before you rolled the dice or any advantage that can be gained through your action, such as grabbing something they hold, blocking their path, creating an opening for an ally to attack, etc. This option dictates a story development. It does not have any particular game effect, but it changes the situation significantly in your favor by allowing you to achieve what you set out to do. If your goal was to impose a status, this option can provide a secondary advantage.
- **You get them good:** You give your opponent a status of your choice with a tier equal to the Power of this action. The status must be reasonably connected to the circumstances and the tags you invoked.
- **You block, dodge, or counter their best attempts:** You defend yourself from your opponent's attempts to get you. If you do not choose this option, the MC or the player who plays your opponent will give you a status of their choice against which you can **Face Danger** (unless you don't have the means to do so). If your opponent is a player character, the tier of the status they impose on you cannot be greater than the Power they would have for the action they described as their response.

  Det. Enkidu, played by Jerry, is caught in the middle of a masterfully-planned bank robbery. The masked robbers, armed with assault rifles, are pinning her down to a cramped position behind a concrete post, where she's taken cover, exchanging random shots with them. A few yards away from her lies a knocked out security guard who has a radio attached to his belt. The detective wants that radio so she can communicate with her crew. Since the robbers don't want her to reach the radio, raining bullets down on her cover, the MC rules going for the radio would be **Going Toe to Toe.**

  Jerry chooses reaching the radio and calling Enkidu's crew as the goal, and invokes *beastily athletic* (Enkidu is going to take a leap) and *standard issue pistol* (firing back at the robbers gives her the pause she needs to jump) for a Power of 2. Jerry rolls 5 and 5, scoring a total of 2 + 5 + 5 = 12, or 10+. He can now choose two options. He definitely wants the radio, so he chooses to achieve his goal. For his second choice, he could choose to land a tier-2 status on the robbers, such as *man-down-2*, or avoid the status they would give him. Since Enkidu's Mythos power allow her to heal quite quickly, Jerry chooses to take a few robbers out. However, the MC gives Enkidu the status *pinned-down-3*, against which she can now **Face Danger.**

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you receive all three move options.



HIT WITH ALL YOU'VE GOT

When you **have a clear shot** and you use your abilities **to hit someone or something with all you've got**, roll+Power. On a hit, you give the target an appropriate status of your choice with tier=Power. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- You take cover or secure a superior position. If you don't choose this, they can impose a status on you. If they are a PC, its tier=their Power.
- You get them good or get many of them (+1 tier).
- You control the collateral damage.
- You hold the target's attention, if possible.
- You gain the upper hand. Take 1 Juice.

THROW A PUNCH AT SOMEONE · THROW A CAR AT SOMEONE · FIRE AT SOMEONE · USE A SUPERNATURAL ABILITY ON SOMEONE AT FULL POWER · SPRAY-FIRE INTO AN AREA · ETC.

Hit with All You've Got covers moments when your character has the chance to really thump the living daylights out of a foe or blast them to smithereens. The purpose of the move is to attack, dealing the the maximum possible impact to your target; for anything else, such as threatening your target with possible harm, use other moves.

To trigger this move, you must have a clear shot or a golden opportunity to hit your opponent; if you're in a struggle, e.g., close-quarters combat or exchanging fire with fortified targets, you should use **Go Toe to Toe**.

Hit With All You've Got is not limited to inflicting physical harm; you can just as well **Hit With All You've Got** using your psychic powers, your evil-banishing children's rhyme, or your political influence in the City. The difference is only in the status you deliver.

OUTCOME

On a hit, you give your target an ongoing status of your choice with a tier equal to the Power of this action. You can only give your target a status that is appropriate to the nature of your hit and its tier. You then choose from the following list of options. On a 7-9 you choose one option, while on a 10+ you choose two options. You can choose each option only once.

- **You take cover or secure a superior position:** You defend yourself from any retaliation coming from your target or from other eminent threats. If you do not choose this option, the MC or the player who plays your opponent can give you a status of their choice against which you can **Face Danger** (unless you don't have the means to do so). If your opponent is a player character, they can describe their retaliation; the tier of the status they impose on you cannot be greater than the Power they would have for such an action (see example under **Go Toe to Toe**).
- **You get them good or get more of them (+1 tier):** If you are fighting a single target or a collective, increase the tier of the status you give by one. If you are affecting multiple targets, give the same status to two targets instead of one. You must be able to reasonably affect them in the same way.
- **You control the collateral damage:** You can choose whether your action causes a great deal of collateral damage, some collateral damage, or no collateral damage at all. You can define the nature of the damage you cause to the environ-

HITTING COLLECTIVES

Fighting groups in *City of Mist* is identical to fighting individuals. Dangers that represent a collective are considered a single target. Compared to an individual target, a collective can deal statuses with higher tiers and can take higher-tier statuses before it is defeated. Hence, the option of increasing the tier of your status by one can also be interpreted as hitting more members of a collective, thereby weakening the collective as a whole.

ment. If you do not choose this option, the MC chooses the collateral damage.

In any case, the collateral damage is descriptive: while it affects the story, you do not give any status to represent it (if you want to affect the environment, you should target objects in the environment directly). However, the MC may choose to reflect the damage in a status, perhaps forcing others around you to **Face Danger** against it.

- **You hold the target's attention, if possible**: The target of your attack remains focused on you, temporarily ignoring other goals and threats. The target could be enraged, interested in you or what you have to say, focused on you as the biggest threat, etc. This effect lasts until the end of the encounter, until the circumstances change, or until someone else uses this option on the same target.
- **You gain the upper hand:** Your attack gives you a secondary advantage and you gain 1 Juice. The method for this Juice is your attack; you can only use it to create effects that reasonably emerge from hitting your target. If you choose to use this Juice to give your target a status, it cannot be on the same spectrum as the attack's main status. However, you can give other targets a status similar to the attack's main status (although note that 1 Juice only allows you to give a tier-1 temporary status).

Goodfellow and Tlaloc, the Rift of the Aztec rain god, are on the roof of the museum, trying to stop a cat burglar from escaping with an ancient figurine that is key to their investigation. The burglar already tried to kill them by knocking over an Egyptian statue, so now there are no holds barred.

Goodfellow uses his shapeshifting tricks to **Hit With All He's Got** and change the burglar's legs to chicken legs. He has a Power of 1, and rolls 3 and 4, for a score of 1 + 3 + 4 = 8, or 7–9. With a Power of 1, he gives the burglar a tier-1 status, but chooses to get the burglar good, increasing it to a tier-2 status, or *chicken-legs-2*. Unfortunately for Goodfellow, he did not choose to protect himself. As the cat burglar trips over his new chicken legs, he reaches for his golden medallion and mutters dark words, giving Goodfellow a status of *turned-into-a-tree-5*. Goodfellow can't **Face Danger**, since he has nothing to counter this dark magic with, so he turns into a tree.

Things just got real. Seeing his friend transformed, Tlaloc calls forth a lightning from the heavens to smite the cat burglar. He has a Power of 2 but the MC rules that the burglar's *chicken-legs-2* works for Tlaloc's benefit, so his Power is 4. He rolls 5 and 2, scoring 4 + 5 + 2 = 11, or 10+. He chooses to impose a status of *fried-chicken-4*. For his two options, he chooses to take cover from the medallion's effect behind a water tank, and to get 1 Juice with which to reduce Goodfellow's status to *branches-for-limbs-4*, saying his lightning interferes with the medallion's powers. However, not choosing to control the collateral damage, he left it in the hands of the MC. The MC considers the lightning hit and informs the players that the museum's roof collapses under their feet.

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, choose one option from this list:

- **Outstanding hit:** Choose three options from the move's standard list.
- **Defend another:** You protect both yourself and another ally from a counterstrike. The target of your attack cannot attack that ally on the target's next move.
- **Hit them hard:** You hit them hard, increasing the tier of the status you give by two or hitting two more targets with the same status.
- **Extreme collateral damage:** everything and everyone around the target takes a status similar to the main status, with a tier equal to Power. This includes you or any allies, if you are nearby.
- **Control the conflict:** Take 2 Juice and you can use it to choose effect improvements from **Change the Game**.

INVESTIGATE

When you use your abilities to seek answers to burning questions, roll+Power. On a hit, you get Clues=Power. Spend your Clues one-to-one to ask the MC a question about the subject of your investigation or ask another player a relevant question about their character. They must give you either a straight answer or a solid lead. On a 7-9, they can also choose 1:

- **Your investigation exposes you to danger.**
- **The clues you get are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false.**
- **Whoever or whatever you are asking the question(s) can ask you one question as well. You answer on the same terms.**

SEARCH USING YOUR SENSES · ASK QUESTIONS IN A CONVERSATION · INSPECT AN OBJECT OR A SCENE · LOOK UP OR DECYPHER INFORMATION · MAKE CALLS TO CONTACTS · EVALUATE A PERSON OR A SITUATION · ETC.

Investigate is triggered whenever a character is using her abilities to garner more information or when a player asks for more details that are not readily available to the character. **Investigate** also applies to longer actions, such as spending a day snooping around an important location or hitting the streets and asking questions.

Note that not every question from the player to the MC constitutes **Investigating**; simply using the character's normal senses to observe the perceivable surrounding does not usually require this move. However, if you want to find that which is hidden, as things often are in City of Mist, you need to **Investigate**.

Separate methods of investigation require separate **Investigate** moves; you can only invoke tags related to a single method of investigation in each move. For example, you can either investigate by employing your knowledge of *history* and *research methods* or by asking your *underworld connections* and stating you were *born in this neighborhood*, but you cannot mix all tags into a single move.

As explained under Repeating a Move (page 214), you cannot use the same tags to investigate the same source more than once, at least not until the circumstances change: the source has new information, you gain new access, the attitude of the source toward you changed, etc.

OUTCOME

On a hit, you gain a number of Clues equal to your Power. You can spend your Clues to ask the MC (or another player) questions about the subject of your investigation and receive either a straight answer or a solid lead, as explained under Clues (page 239). The **method** and **source** of your Clues are derived from the tags you invoked and the circumstances. They affect the questions you can ask and the answers you can get by spending Clues in this batch.

Salamander and Kitsune are looking for Kitsune's school teacher, Ms. Applebaum, who has gone missing. Salamander uses *snooping around* and *streetwise* to ask questions around her apartment block in the blue-collar residential neighborhood. With his Power of 2, he rolls 2 and 3, scoring 2 + 5 + 3 = 10, or 10+. He receives two Clues, which he uses to ask "Where is Ms. Applebaum?" and "Who is responsible for Ms. Applebaum's disappearance?"

The MC answers based on the details of the case that she wrote. Her notes tell her that Ms. Applebaum is actually dead, having jumped off the Bay Bridge after being threatened with a fate worse than death over a debt she could not repay; but the players don't know that yet. The MC considers the method of investigation (asking around) and the source (the people in Ms. Applebaum's apartment block), and comes up with the following answers:

For the first clue, regarding Ms. Applebaum's whereabouts (the morgue), the MC doesn't want to divulge too much. Instead she says: "You see the mailman on the next stop and go over to have a chat with him. He says Ms. Applebaum hasn't collected her mail for a week, but today a request came in to redirect her mail to an address in the City's industrial zone, signed by her."

The MC wants to use the second clue, regarding the people involved in Ms. Applebaum's disappearance, to give the players a thread to follow. She says: "The next person you speak to is an old lady in Ms. Applebaum's building. She's happy you are trying to help and tells you Ms. Applebaum has fell in with the wrong crowd, some money lenders; she can't recall the full story, something to do with her half-sister, Ms. Lind."

On a 10+, your investigation runs smoothly without any complications. On a 7-9, something goes awry. The MC can choose one of the following complications, before or after you ask your questions:

- **Your investigation exposes you to danger:** the MC introduces a new threat or complication into the story. It can be minor or major, but not insignificant. While this threat has no immediate game effect, it can rapidly escalate into serious trouble. Possible complications include:
  - » You are noticed or caught by whoever is in charge
  - » You are ambushed by the subject of your investigation, an involved party, a local Danger, a nemesis, etc.
  - » You run into obstacles in the environment: you get tangled in wires or branches, you get interrupted by a person or a crowd, etc.
  - » You lose track of time and miss an opportunity, a date, or a deadline
  - » The subject of your investigation flees, shuts down, become unavailable, etc.

  The MC should use this option to increase the suspense and intensity of the scene or to emphasize the personal cost you pay for this investigation.

  If Salamander had scored 7–9 and the MC chose the first option, she could decide that the people who were after Ms. Applebaum have a Rift in the building, who deals with anyone asking questions. She would then describe how the duo's investigation leads to a direct confrontation with that Rift.

- **The clues you get are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false:** the MC can answer your Clue questions with vague leads rather than solid leads. Alternately, the MC can incorporate some falsehoods into his straight answers or solid leads. The information you receive must still be valuable, although it may be harder to decipher or use. The MC should use this option to raise the challenge level of an investigation or add mystery around it.

  If Salamander had scored 7–9 and the MC chose the second option, she could explain that the people of the neighborhood seem reluctant to speak to the pair. Instead of the information above, she would say that the mailman tells the due that Ms. Applebaum redirected her mail but he's not at liberty to say where to (incomplete clue); and the old lady says Ms. Applebaum has only herself and her half-sister, Ms. Lind, to blame for what happened to her, and refuse to say more (part-true part-false clue).

- **Whoever or whatever you are asking the question(s) can ask you one question as well:** If you investigated another player, he gets a Clue on you. Otherwise, the MC asks you a question, to which you answer on the same terms: with a straight answer or a solid lead. Your answer is considered information that one of the Dangers in the story obtained, either at this instant, or by collecting it over time. The Danger can then use this information against your character or it can otherwise affect their decisions and change the course of the story. Possible questions include:
  - » What are you willing to do to find out?
  - » What is the thing you care about the most?
  - » Who do you think is responsible for this?
  - » Can you be trusted?
  - » What are your intentions towards the subject of the investigation?

  The MC should use this option to ask provocative questions that reveal something important about your character, to put your character on the spot, and to remind you that while you are conducting your investigations, other forces are at play – and they are watching you.

  If Salamander had scored 7–9 and the MC chose the third option, she could decide it means someone was spying on the investigative duo and ask the player something that the villains would want to know, such as "What would make Salamander drop this case?" If the play-

er answered "Nothing", then the money lenders would have to do away with him once and for all; if he answered, "Knowing Ms. Applebaum is well", then the money lenders may try to fake a message from Ms. Applebaum, etc.

If you investigated a player's character, the player of that character must provide the information under the same terms as the MC and chooses the complication instead of the MC (possibly gaining a Clue on you).

LOOK BEYOND THE MIST

When you reach inside to get in touch with your Mythos, you can feel the truth behind things without even knowing how. Play it out like the Investigate move, but roll+Mythos instead. On a hit, you get Clues=Mythos.

In some cases, it is not enough to work with your abilities. You must tap into something deeper if you want to uncover the mythical forces that operate behind the veil of the Mist. Your character can use her connection with her Mythos to investigate. However, instead of using her abilities as in the **Investigate** move, she instead receives inexplicable intuitions as she uncannily senses what lies beyond the Mist. For a while, she can perceive the world naked of its trappings and see things for what they truly are.

Unfortunately, the Mist sets in soon thereafter, and your mind struggles to interpret the symbolic language of your Mythos. When you use this move, you can get clues that are closer to the true essence of the subject of your investigation and are less obscured by the mundane appearances of the Mist. However, since these clues are coming from the perspective of your Mythos, they may be difficult to interpret (e.g., visions, gut feelings, sensations) or skewed by your Mythos' relation to the object of your investigation (e.g., attraction, indifference, clash, etc.). They also rarely constitute valid evidence that can be shared with others.

To make the move **Look Beyond the Mist** you must explain how your character taps into her Mythos and how she receives information from her Mythos. Does she meditate in a specific place? Does she perform a forgotten ritual or one that she came up with herself? Does she fall into a trance? Does she speak to herself, mumbling in a strange language?

Look Beyond the Mist works like the **Investigate** move, with some changes. When you **Look Beyond the Mist**, you add the number of Mythos themes you have (also simply called your Mythos) to the result of the roll instead of Power. No other game elements are included in this roll: tags and statuses are irrelevant (so you cannot burn a tag for a hit). This also applies to tags that describe your Mythos powers.

On a hit, you receive a number of Clues equal to the number of Mythos themes you have (your Mythos). The method for this batch of Clues is your method of connecting with your Mythos, while the source is your Mythos itself so the MC should describe the clues appropriately.

On a 7-9, the MC or the player who plays the character you are investigating choose a complication from the list given in **Investigate.**

Lamar is playing Sullivan whose Mythos is the story of Don Quixote, the romantic yet rather deranged Spanish nobleman who fought windmills thinking they were giants. Sullivan has 1 Mythos theme and 3 Logos themes, so his Mythos is 1.

Sullivan arrives at a strange crime scene: a man seemingly pecked to death by a murder of crows in an abandoned subway tunnel. Sensing something's off, Sullivan turns to his Mythos for answers. Lamar describes it as a bout of daydreaming; Sullivan's eyes glaze over and he sees faraway places and times immemorial. With a Mythos of 1, he rolls 4 and 2, scoring 1 + 4 + 2 = 8, or 7–9. He gets one Clue, asking "Who did this?"

The MC tells him what Sullivan sees: flying over golden barley fields and rivers, Sullivan's mind's eye follows the path of a raven. Crossing a stormy channel and flying over white cliffs, the raven finally arrives at green but dreary land, spotted with silver lakes and rivers. There, in a foreboding castle, lives a sad king, surrounded by ravens. He seems to be chained.

This is all the MC says, but she uses the 7–9 outcome to ask Lamar a question about Sullivan. In his daydream the king faces Sullivan as if he knows he is being watched. He asks: "How far would you go to protect your kingdom, knight?" The MC plans to use Lamar's answer to determine "the king"'s attitude toward Sullivan.

When the vision ends, Sullivan is still in the abandoned subway tunnel, surrounded by a crime scene and black feathers. He doesn't know who this king is or where to find him, but he has a solid lead to go on.

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, your investigation reveals a key detail. The MC will reveal the most valuable detail in the scene that your investigation could reveal. You can then use your Clues to ask follow-up questions or other questions as usual.

SNEAK AROUND

When you use your abilities to act secretly or deceptively, roll+Power. On a hit, everyone that should fall for it falls for it. On a 7-9, it's complicated. The MC chooses 1:

- **Someone unimportant noticed you, but that just made them important, right?**
- **You are perceived only by a secondary sense (someone picks up your scent while you're stalking them; you're seen whispering a message but the message is not heard).**
- **You must leave something important behind – or be discovered.**

LIE OR DECEIVE · IMPERSONATE · PICKPOCKET · MOVE UNDETECTED · EAVESDROP · HIDE IN PLAIN SIGHT · ETC.

Sneak Around can be triggered by any action that your character is trying to carry out discreetly or any action intended to make one thing look like another (i.e., being sneaky). **Sneak Around** applies only when the focus of the action is its subtlety; if subtlety is a secondary goal of the action, use a different move.

Sneak Around can be made in conjunction with another move. For example, if you hide in the shadows and pounce on an unsuspecting victim, the MC may rule that your **Sneak Around** roll will determine whether you take them by surprise: a hit would mean getting a clear shot that can be followed with a **Hit With All You've Got** move, while a failure could spell a messy struggle with **Go Toe to Toe**.

However, not every action that follows **Sneak Around** requires its own move. If the focus of the action is its secrecy, just roll **Sneak Around**. For example, if you're spying on someone and succeed in **Sneaking Around**, you don't have to **Investigate** to simply see what they are doing (unless you want to garner information that isn't readily available, e.g., speak with the ancestral spirits guarding the house).

OUTCOME

On a 10+, all the targets of the move believe what you wish them to believe or perceive what you wish them to perceive (including nothing at all). For example, if you sneak behind a monster and its babies then none of them perceive you at all; if you con a rich man into giving you his car he is certain he is doing the right thing until it is too late.

On a 7-9, while you manage to fool most of your targets, there are some flaws in your performance. The MC can choose one of the following complications:

- **Someone unimportant noticed you, but that just made them important, right?** The MC chooses a previously insignificant character or introduces a new one; this character has seen through your act, caught you red-handed, became aware of your machinations, etc. and that makes her the only person who knows about you. The question of whether this character will spill the beans on you or not becomes a problem that you need to address. When the MC chooses this option, you always know that you have been spotted and you know who spotted you

(for someone to spot you without your knowledge requires an MC move).

For example, while sneaking into an office building on your way to steal the blueprints of the City Hall, you are spotted by a homeless woman pushing a shopping cart across the road. Will you stop to talk to her? Come back later? Leave her and hope for the best?

- **You are perceived only by a secondary sense:** The MC chooses a sense secondary to the action you are carrying out, which you fail to mask sufficiently. The target of your move may not know the whole truth about what you've been up to, but it knows something. For example:
  - » someone picks up your scent while you're stalking them, eliminating the element of surprise;
  - » you're seen whispering a message but the message is not heard;
  - » you are wearing a mask but your target takes note of your voice – they will recognize it if they hear it again.
- **You must leave something behind – or be discovered.** The MC chooses an object, piece of evidence, ally, or even aspect of your character that you must leave behind in order to avoid being discovered. What you leave behind may be evidence linking you to the scene or simply something that matters to you. You then must choose whether or not to make the sacrifice. If you do, you fool your targets as if you scored 10 or more. If the sacrifice chosen by the MC is represented by a tag, the MC may rule it is burned. If you do not make the sacrifice, you are discovered. However, the MC cannot make an MC move as when you score 6 or less, although she can describe the consequences of being discovered.

  Flicker is in the mayor's office, flicking through secret files about a shadow organization, when suddenly someone knocks on the office door. Through the milky glass, she sees two unidentified suits, probably federal agents of some sort. The mayor's staff seem to have disappeared. Flicker then decides to use her Mythos powers to move faster than humanly possible and zip out of the office before the two can even perceive her. Unfortunately, the player scores a 7-9. The MC decides that, as Flicker is zooming away, it dawns on her that she left her glasses on the mayor's desk. It's up to the player now whether she swooshes back in and picks up her glasses just in time to welcome the agents in, or leave her glasses behind as evidence of her unauthorized visit.

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, your target is so entirely fooled by your secretive or deceptive actions that you can continue to move and/or act completely undetected by this target for the rest of the scene, so long as you do so in the same way you did when you scored 12 or more.

For example, if you broke into a bank safe by overriding its security systems, you can move in and out of the safe undetected by those systems for the rest of the scene; however, if you try to leave the bank in the guise of a security guard, you must roll again. Similarly, if you fooled the police detectives to think you are an innocent bystander, they will continue to believe any story you will tell them so long as it does not exceed the nature of the tags you used in this move.

TAKE THE RISK

When you perform a daring, risky, or outright stupid feat, roll+Power. On a 10+, you do it, somehow. On a 7-9, things get messy. The MC will offer you a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

CLIMB A SLIPPERY LEDGE · DEFUSE A BOMB · DRIVE THROUGH A MARKETPLACE · SLIDE UNDER A CLOSING GATE · DIVE THROUGH A GLASS CEILING · STEP UP TO AN ARMED GANG OF MOBSTERS AND START TALKING · ETC.

Take the Risk applies when your character attempts a feat of daring. Such feats are often all-or-nothing; while there can be complications, the

high stakes involved imply the action as a whole can either succeed or fail miserably.

OUTCOME

On a 10+, you somehow perform your daring feat well without any glitches, flaws, or complications. On a 7-9, things get hairy and the MC will present you with a difficult choice between two or three negative outcomes for your feat.

For each negative outcome, the MC can give you a status, burn one of your tags, complicate the situation, deny you something you want, etc. In other words, in exchange for success in your feat of daring, the MC will make an MC move as if you scored a miss (specifically **Force Them to Choose**, an MC move explained in Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes).

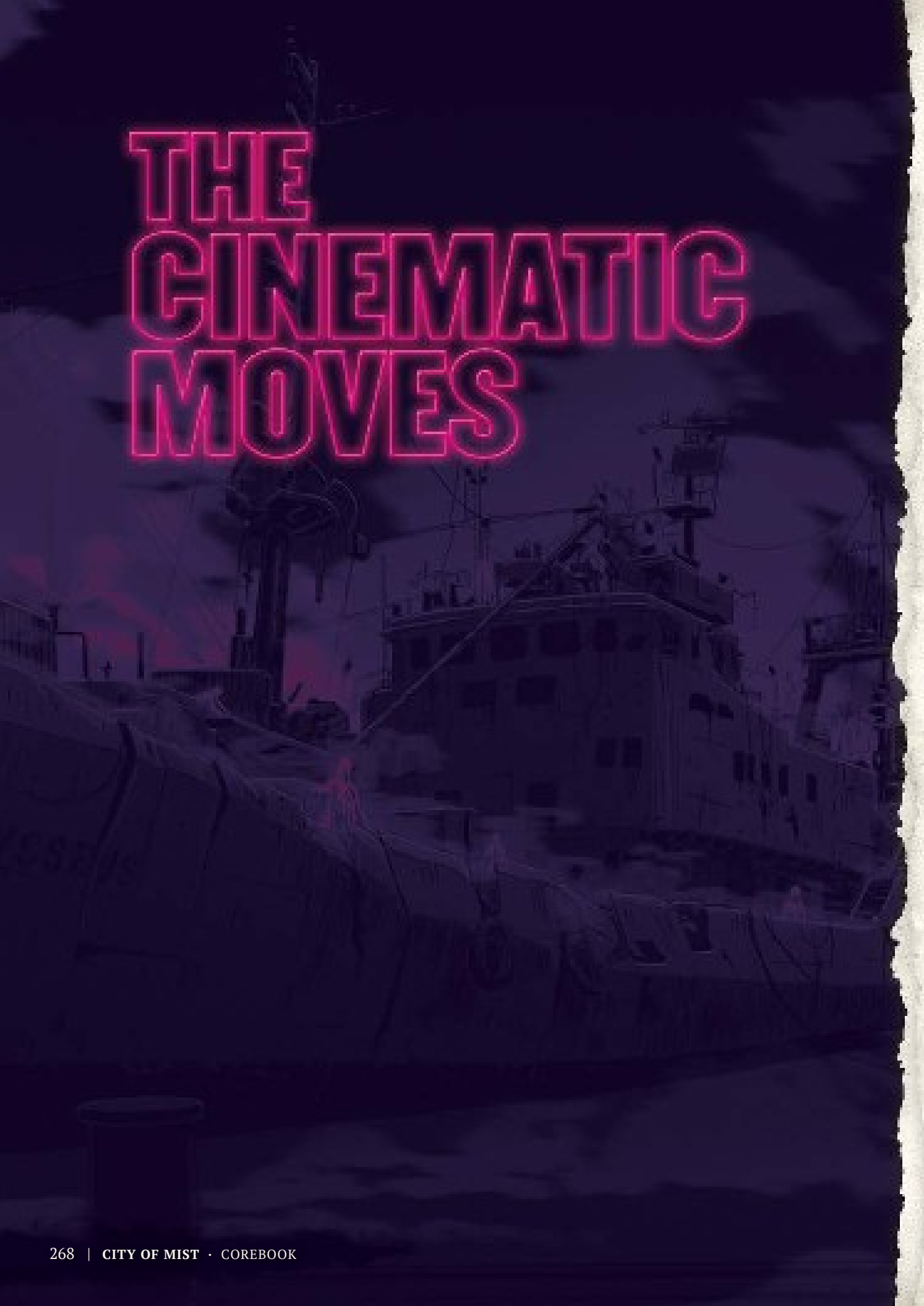
You cannot choose to forego the feat to avoid choosing a negative outcome. You have already **Taken the Risk**; a score of 7-9 simply means you pushed through despite complications and suffered one consequence to mitigate another. For example:

- When walking on the window ledge of a skyscraper in the rain, you slip; choose whether you drop your pistol (burn a tag) or your radio (burn a tag).
- When performing a motorcycle jump over sixteen burning trucks, you screw up the stunt; choose whether to jump off your motorcycle mid-air and take *bike-in-flames-5* (status without **Face Danger**) or stay on the bike and **Face Danger** against *spinal-injury-4* (status).
- When free-diving through the hull of a sunken ship in the harbor, searching for the Rift of a water nymph, you're diving too deep; choose whether you run out of air (complication) or you take *raptures-of-the-deep-2* (status).
- When groping for a vaccine vial through a lab full of disease-ridden rats in a *hazmat suit*, one of them climbs on you; choose whether to shake him off aggressively and be attacked by the pack (complication) or let it bite you and risk infection (burn the suit tag).
- When defusing a bomb, you run out of time; choose whether you pull a random wire and end up with *adrenaline-overload-3* (status without **Face Danger**) or that you must keep your finger on a specific button in the bomb or it will go off (complication).

DYNAMITE!

If your move is *Dynamite!*, on a 12+, you pull it off spectacularly and even turn the situation to your advantage. Take 2 Juice and you can use it to choose effect improvements from **Change the Game**.




THE
CINEMATIC
MOVES

VOICEOVER MONOLOGUE (SESSION START)

At the beginning of every session, one player goes into a monologue as his or her character, relating the character's thoughts and feelings at this point in the story.

Every good noir story starts with a voiceover monologue: we hear the voice of the lead character sharing her thoughts with us, the audience, as view of the city and previously seen locations slide by on the screen.

Every time you start a session of *City of Mist*, one player takes the role of the voiceover monologue. Throughout the series, make sure to cycle through all the players so that all the characters get to talk. The MC can also join the pool with a monologue by one of the non-player characters central to the series. When you finish your voiceover monologue, the MC takes over and starts the first scene of the session.

FLASHBACK

Once per session, when you have the spotlight, choose 1:

Describe an action carried out by your character in the past and make a move for that action. The outcome of the move affects the current scene.

Describe events from your character's backstory that become relevant now. The MC can award you with 1 Juice or 1 Clue based on your description.

Flashbacks are a staple of the noir genre: they help reveal new information in a dramatic way. When you have the spotlight, you can choose to describe something that happened in the past: either an action your character carried out in advance and is now coming into play, or events from your character's backstory that are now becoming important. Your description must have repercussions that affect the story right now (or it would make a rather uninteresting flashback). Furthermore, you should avoid describing details that make too great assumptions, such as having defeated a major villain in the story; the MC will help you by limiting your storytelling.

FLASHBACKS TO A PAST ACTION

If you choose to describe a past action, you make the move for that action as if you were taking it now. For example:

MC: Arthur walks into the library overlooking the mansion grounds, followed by two goons armed with shotguns. He turns to you, Excalibur, and says "Give it up, babe. You're surrounded and defenseless. I will not have you interfering with my plan to blow up the district's police department."

Dani (playing Excalibur): I reply "Darling… It's over… but not for me. The police are already here." Flashback time! A few hours earlier, Excalibur is sitting at the her desk in the library. She looks at the setting sun, pondering her upcoming face off with Arthur. She realizes the man she loves has become power-hungry and that it's up to her to bring him to justice. Reluctantly, she picks up the handle of an antique phone and dials the number of the chief of police, a close friend of her family. "Be here soon if you want him alive," she says and hangs up the phone. I'm **Convincing.**

The outcome of the flashback move always applies to the present moment in the story. Use the move's outcome descriptions as usual to determine the impact that the past action has on the current scene. For example, if Lee scored 10 or more, the outcome could be:

MC: As you finish your sentence, the sound of sirens echos all around the mansion.

Dani: "Who's surrounded now, darling?"

If Dani scored 7-9, the success could be less overwhelming:

MC: As you finish your sentence, two policemen appear at the door. One is podgy and chewing on a doughnut, the other tall and lanky, rubbernecking around the mansion in awe. When they realize there are armed men in the room, they fumble sloppily for their guns.

Dani: Excalibur facepalms.

If Dani missed the move, the MC would get a move of her own, as usual:

MC: As you finish your sentence, the sound of sirens echos all around the mansion. A few moments later, the chief of police enters the room followed by twenty officers. The looks he and Arthur exchange tell Excalibur that she has been betrayed. "Arrest this woman!" he commands.

Dani: Uh oh.

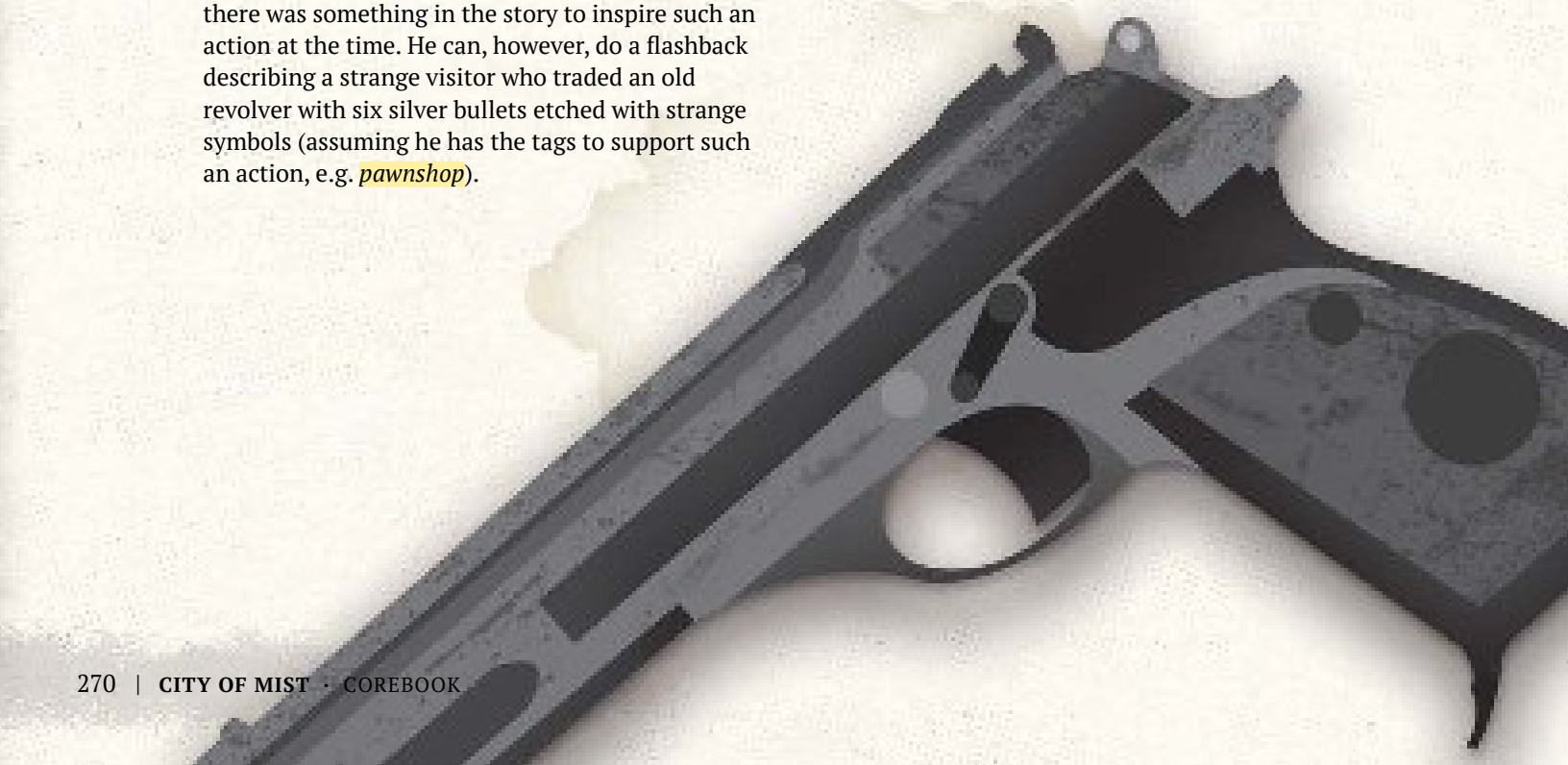
Naturally, actions taken in the past cannot be informed by any knowledge or involve any abilities or benefits gained after performing the action. For example, a player playing a neighborhood pawnshop owner who finds his store is attacked by werewolves cannot do a flashback describing how he boughts silver bullets in advance, unless there was something in the story to inspire such an action at the time. He can, however, do a flashback describing a strange visitor who traded an old revolver with six silver bullets etched with strange symbols (assuming he has the tags to support such an action, e.g. *pawnshop*).

FLASHBACKS TO YOUR BACKSTORY

Flashbacks are a great cinematic tool to use in your story, even when they are not associated with a move. You can use flashbacks to expand your character's backstory and add interesting details to the series. They can give meaning to a character's actions and decisions. Flashbacks should only be initiated when their content is relevant to the current scene.

> At a critical point in the story, Lamar, Jerry, and Megan all decide to do a series of flashbacks to the night their neighborhood was submerged under the pond (see Series Concept Example: Lakeside Drive, page 91). Each player describes where each of their character was and who she was with when water started flowing in from nowhere. At the end of the flashback, the players and the MC learn more about the lead characters' past and motives and perhaps a few details about some supporting characters.

At any point in the flashback, or when it concludes, the MC can award the player with a single point of a game resource, such as a Clue or Juice, to represent the effects of the memory.



MONTAGE (DOWNTIME)

Whenever your character has some downtime, choose one way to spend it:

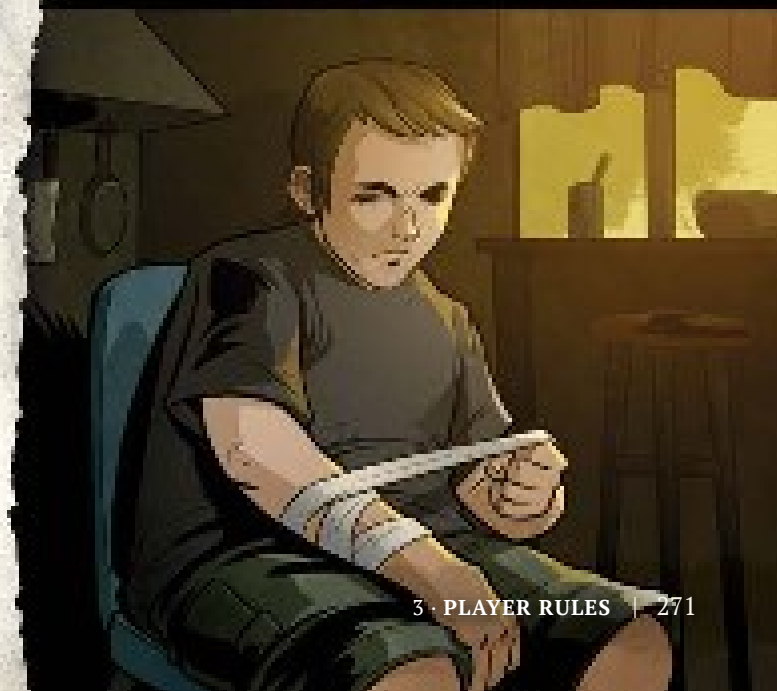
- **Give attention** to one of your Logos (or extra) themes. Tell everyone at the table how you do it and mark Attention on that theme.
- **Work the case.** Tell everyone at the table how you do it, and gain 3 Clues with a method and a source based on your description.
- **Explore your Mythos.** Tell everyone at the table which Mystery you explore and how you do it. You gain 1 Clue with a method and a source based on your description. Mark Attention on that Mystery's theme.
- **Prepare for your next activity.** Tell everyone at the table how you prepare and choose one: recover all your burnt power tags OR gain 3 Juice with a method based on your description. You can choose from the effect improvements under **Change the Game**.
- **Recover from you last activity.** For each ongoing status still affecting you, the MC will tell you if and how it can be reduced during your downtime and by how many tiers. Alternatively, the MC can allow you to reduce any or some of your statuses by one tier for each relevant tag you have.

The MC can cue into any of the montage events and continue them as scenes.

Like in any story, the scenes in your game follow one another in succession, mixing action, drama, and investigation. Sometimes, however, a long period of time passes between two scenes, during which your character could be doing other activities, e.g. working on a project or spending time with loved ones.







The time characters spend between scenes has consequences, reflected in the **Montage (Downtime)** move. When you have some downtime in the story, go around the table with each player taking their pick of how their character spends her downtime. For example:

MC: It's noontime, but your raid on the Mononoke drug factory will not begin until nightfall. Looks like it's time for a **Montage (Downtime)**. What does each of you do in the hours before the raid?

Megan (playing Goodfellow): Goodfellow goes home. It's been a while since he had an adventure like this and that reminds him of his heyday. I'm going to spend time giving attention to my Defining Event Logos theme, Heyday Adventure. He will look at pictures of his old wartime buddies and reminisce. I mark Attention on that theme.

Jerry (playing Enkidu): Det. Enkido has nothing much to come back to. She's going to continue working the case by staking out the drug factory and learning more about the Mononoke clan. I get 3 Clues but I will bank them for later.

Lamar (playing Sullivan): Sullivan is going to follow the mysterious beautiful woman from the last scene and explore his Mystery "Where is my Dulcinea?". I mark Attention on that theme and I get 1 Clue. I'll use it as a reverse Clue to say I follow her to a poor neighborhood, where I see her speaking to some of the locals who seem to admire her. She may be the one I was looking for.

MC: Cool. Let's say you also see her putting on an apron before walking into the back room of a small supermarket called Lorenzo Foods. You can follow up on that later. Who's next?

Dani (playing Excalibur): Excalibur wants to prepare for her next meeting with the Mononoke Syndicate. She's going to a secluded area on her mansion grounds to practice until she can evoke what she needs out of her bracelet. I get 3 Juice which I will use to take the tag *cut through spirits* (1 Juice), make it ongoing (1 Juice) and hidden (1 Juice). The Mononoke are in for a surprise.

Clay (playing Mitosis): Mitosis is messed up after the last encounter with the Mononoke delivery team. I got a *slashed-by-a-demon-sword-3*, can I recover from it?

MC: Your healing is pretty strong but this is no ordinary cut. In the time you have, you can bring it down to *festering-demon-wound-1*. Okay, that's everyone. So I think we'll pick it up with Detective Enkidu. You stake out the Mononoke's drug factory, when suddenly...

GEEK OUT DURING CREDITS (SESSION END)

At the end of the session, when the credits roll, go around the table. Each player can answer one or more of the following questions:

- **How has the crew grown this session?**
  Recover a burnt crew power tag or mark Attention on a crew theme.
- **Which character had the most meaningful interaction with your character this session?**
  Add one Help point or one Hurt point next to their name on your character card.
- **Which of your themes is under the most strain? If it collapses, what new aspect will show up in its place?**
  Write down the answer under FLIPSIDE on that theme's card.

The end of a session can be likened to the end of an episode in TV show or the last page of a comic book issue. Just like you would geek out after an episode or an issue concludes, analyzing the events that took place, this move allows you to geek out about what happened this session. Remember to leave time for this move at the end of each session. Alternatively, you can do this later (possibly online) after you've had the chance to process the events of the session.

Geek Out During Credits takes a look at three aspects: the crew as a whole, your individual relationships with other player characters, and the state of your character and her themes.

- **How has the crew grown this session?**
  Looking at the development of the crew as a whole, you have the option to back your impression by recovering a burnt crew power tag or by marking Attention on your crew theme (this applies to just one theme, if you have several crew themes).
- **Which character had the most meaningful interaction with your character this session?**
  Reviewing your interaction with each of the other player characters and considering your character's intentions towards them, you can decide whether to give yourself a Help or Hurt point with one of them. If you feel closer to them or think that your agendas are aligned, you can add a Help point which will allow you to offer better support. If you think you are going to work behind their back or betray them, you can take a Hurt point instead, as it may come in handy.
- **Which of your themes is under most strain? If it collapses, what new aspect will show up in its place?**
  Take a look at all of your themes. Which of them are in danger of fading or cracking? Which of your Mysteries have you been neglecting and which of your Identities have you ignored this session, or came close to? Identify the theme with the most potential to change. Now, speculate: if this aspect of your character was gone, what would happen to her? How would she survive the crisis? And most importantly, what new theme would take the place of the lost theme?

  When you lose a Logos theme, you get a Mythos theme instead, and vice versa. Think about what new Mythos powers or new ordinary aspect would emerge in the ashes of the theme you might replace. This is its **Flipside**. Write it down on your theme card.

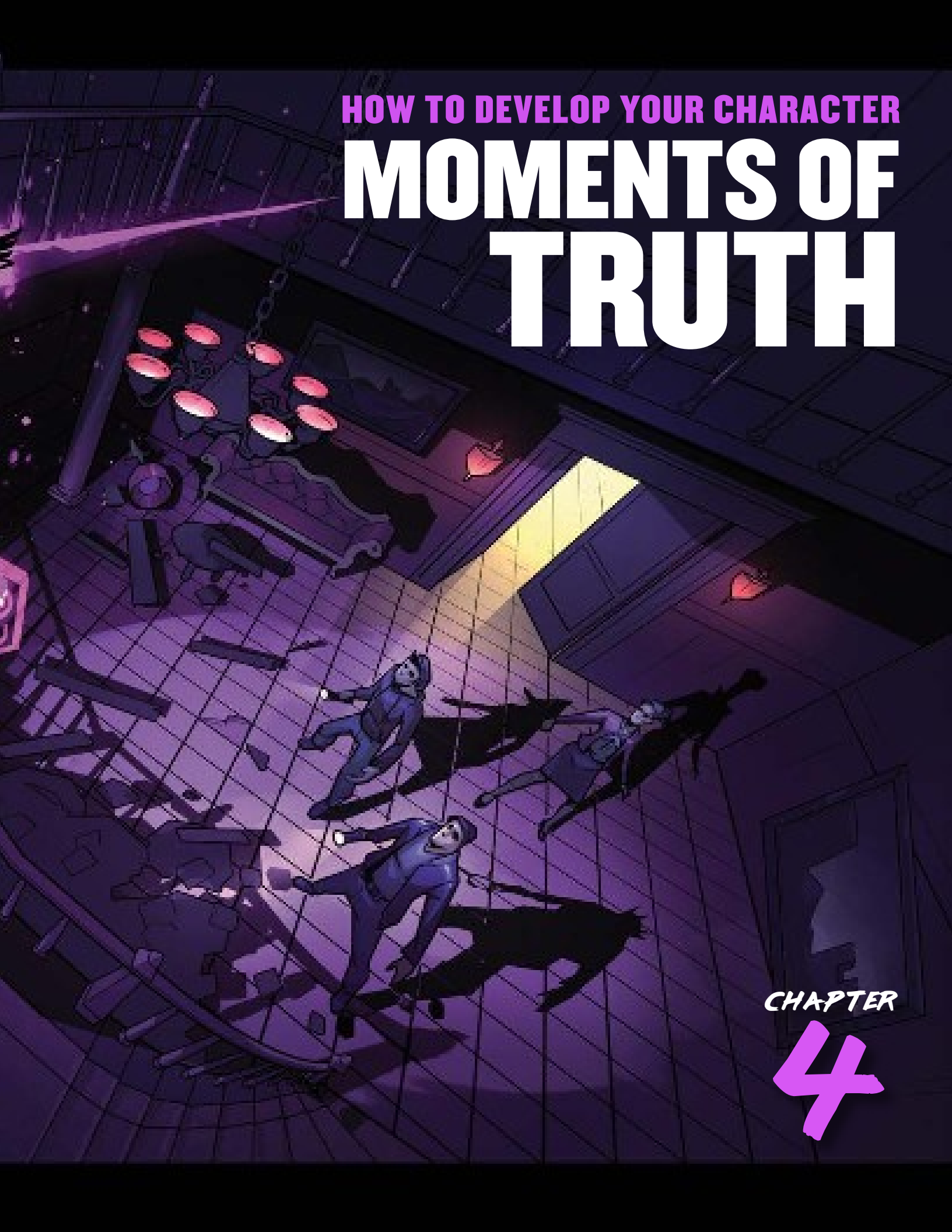
  Flipsides help you think about interesting angles for character development, and prepare for the inevitable change. Read more about character development and replacing themes in Chapter 4: Moments of Truth.




RICCALDON?
HIS BATTERY MUST HAVE BECOME TOO DRAIN OUT OF HAND
CLICK!
NOOOOOO!!!
THERE'S NO POWER HE'S DEAD!
HER OWN FATHER...


MAKE YOU BOY HERE TO TALK!
NO MORE.
"NO MORE HIDING AS AS A TOOL."
"NOT FOR ACHIEVEMENT..."
"NOT TO HELP OTHERS..."
"NOT FOR KNOWLEDGE..."
I'M FREE OF YOU ALL.


I'VE BEEN OF MYSELF!
I AM JUSTICE...
...AND DESTRUCTION!


HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTER
MOMENTS OF TRUTH
CHAPTER
4

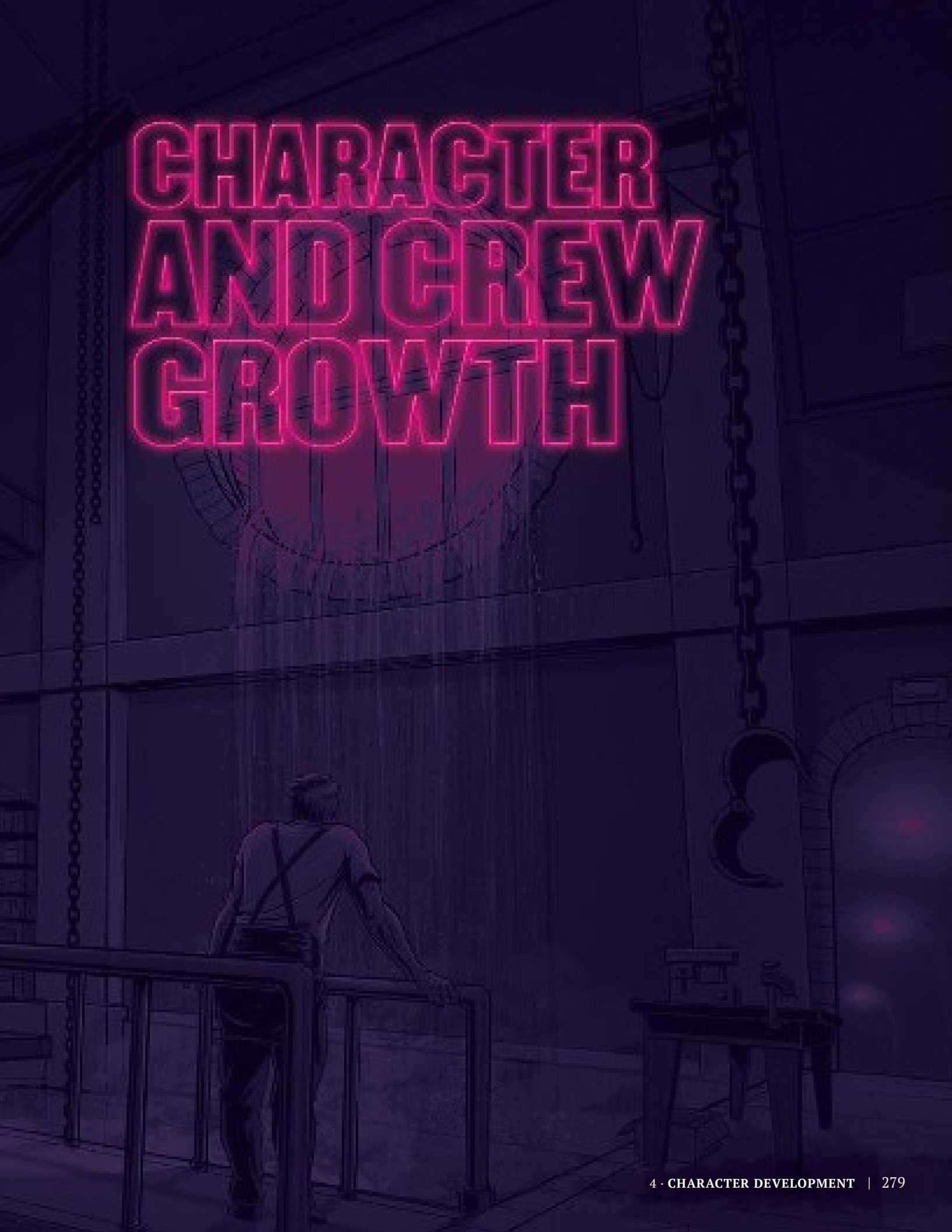


As your group's story in *City of Mist* evolves, your characters will go through experiences that will change them irrevocably. Whether they will be harrowed by their own weaknesses, forced to make gut-wrenching choices, or haunted by the consequences of their decisions, the lead characters continuously learn, grow, and reveal new dimensions within themselves: perhaps they unlock strange new legendary powers; meet a new ally that will become their sidekick or mentor; or acquire a very unique object.

Maybe they will sacrifice their job for their Mythos, or vice versa. One of them might even completely lose her inner balance and give in to either her Mythos or the Mist. Anything can happen; this is why we play. This section presents the rules that will help you get the most out of your character's development.

PLAYER-DRIVEN CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

You, not the MC, are responsible for driving your character's story forward. While some character development rules are explicit, others are open to your interpretation. For example, a character's Mystery or Identity may or may not be applicable in any given situation – depending on *your* decision. Unlike other game systems and unlike elsewhere in *City of Mist*, the final arbitrator on interpreting matters of character development is the player playing that character. Therefore, as a player, you have the power and the responsibility to shape the narrative direction in which your character is going. You may choose to emphasize some character development options while downplaying others. You may choose to let go of some useful aspects of your character for the sake of narrative impact, or vice versa. The only exception to this rule is the invocation of weakness tags; as tags, the final arbitrator on when they can be invoked is the MC.


CHARACTER
AND CREW
GROWTH

ATTENTION AND IMPROVEMENTS

Attention is the most basic form of character development. It represents the straightforward growth that can be achieved by focusing on a specific aspect in your character's life, represented by one of her themes.

Every theme card has an Attention track with three boxes. When the rules tell you to mark Attention on a given theme, check one of the boxes on the Attention track of that specific theme. You cannot choose to mark Attention on a different theme instead. When all three boxes are checked, reset the track to zero (erase all check marks) and choose an improvement for that theme (see below).

GAINING ATTENTION

You can gain Attention in the following ways:

INVOKING WEAKNESS TAGS

When your character must face her own weaknesses, she inevitably grows. The more your weaknesses come into play, the faster you will evolve.

Whenever you or anyone else invokes one of your weakness tags, you mark Attention once on the theme to which that tag belongs. If more than one weakness tag is invoked, you mark Attention once for each tag, on its corresponding theme. Note that you can only invoke your weakness tags when they are relevant; therefore, a weakness tag is a valuable resource for your character's growth.

DOWNTIME

Your character can spend whatever spare time she has to improve or develop an aspect of her life, represented by a theme. When your group has some downtime and the MC asks you to make the **Montage (Downtime)** move, you can choose to **give attention** (for Logos themes) or **explore your Mythos** (for Mythos themes) and mark Attention on a single theme of your choice.

MYSTERIES AND IDENTITIES

As explained under Dramatic Moments (page 285), when you find answers to your Mystery or when you sacrifice something to maintain your Identity, you have the option to mark Attention on the theme to which the Mystery or Identity belongs (or sometimes on another theme).

OTHER RULES

Theme improvements and custom moves may tell you to mark Attention or change the way you gain Attention.

CHOOSING IMPROVEMENTS

When the Attention track on one of your themes is full, reset it and choose one of the following improvements (you may pick the same option again and again):

CHOOSE A NEW POWER TAG

Adding a new power tag means introducing a new detail, such as an ability or a resource, into your character's story. This could mean she has developed a new power, gained a new ally, bought new gear, learned a new skill or maneuver, etc. Alternatively, you could say that the subject of the new power tag has always been a part of your character's life, but is only now receiving attention in the story, like a previously unrevealed ability, skill, contact, power, etc.

To choose a new power tag, refer back to the themebook of the theme you are improving and choose a power tag question to answer. You may not choose a power tag question you previously chose if you still have the tag from that question. Answer the power tag question following the rules given in character creation (see page 114). Your answer becomes your new power tag. Write it down on the theme's card under POWER TAGS.

> Lamar gains an improvement on Sullivan's theme, My Sancho Panza (Defining Relationship). He wants to improve his investigative side so he decides to choose a new power tag. Out of the Defining Relationship themebook, he chooses a yet unchosen power tag question: *B. Name a useful quality or skill they have and can use to help you*. He

answers *electronic surveillance* which becomes his new power tag under this theme. In the next session, the group is about to discover that Sánchez knows how to bug a phone, use a gun microphone to eavesdrop, etc.

ADD, REMOVE, OR REWRITE A WEAKNESS TAG

Weakness tags can potentially speed up a theme's growth, but they can also get in the way of your actions. As an improvement to your theme, you may choose to:

- **Add a weakness tag:** Refer back to the themebook of the theme you are improving and choose a weakness tag question to answer. You may not choose a weakness tag question you previously chose if you still have the tag from that question. Answer the weakness tag question following the rules given in character creation (see page 116). Your answer becomes your new weakness tag. Write it down on the theme's card under WEAKNESS TAGS.
- **Remove a weakness tag:** if you have two or more weakness tags on the theme you are improving, you may remove one of them. Erase the weakness tag from your theme card. When you choose to remove a weakness tag, choose another improvement as well.
- **Rewrite a weakness tag:** you may remove a weakness tag and choose another weakness tag instead (see "Add a weakness tag", above). You may choose any unanswered weakness tag question in the themebook, including the one you are rewriting. When you choose to rewrite a weakness tag, choose another improvement as well.

The appearance of a new weakness tag represents a new difficulty that is arising in your character's life in relation to that specific theme. Conversely, the removal of a weakness tag can be ascribed to a difficulty that has been solved, permanently or for the time being.

Lamar gains an improvement on Sullivan's theme, Imaginary Knight (Bastion). Since Sullivan has become more grounded and realistic recently, Lamar finds his weakness tag *reality hurts* outdated, not to mention that it often weakens his defense against mundane threats. Therefore, he decides to remove it, noting that Sullivan has learned to block ordinary attacks with the same effectiveness as he does legendary ones.

CHOOSE A THEME IMPROVEMENT

Each theme type has its own unique improvement options, described at the end of its themebook. As an improvement for your theme, you may choose one of these theme improvements. You cannot choose a specific improvement twice.

Every theme improvement describes either a permanent new rule, or one which may be invoked at certain times, such as once per session, once per scene, etc. The rules introduced by the theme improvements change the standard rules in various ways: they may allow you to make a Core Move *Dynamite!* or allow an ally to use the results of your move instead of theirs. Where there's a doubt, the rules given in theme improvements override the standard rules of the game.

A theme improvement does not necessarily require an explanation in the story. Some improvements are simply game elements that make a character better at what she does or allow her to do what she already does in new ways. In that, theme improvements resemble cinematic decisions made by the creators of the series (you!) to emphasize a detail or a set of details and allow the character to do more with existing abilities. However, you can always interpret an improvement as a change that your character has undergone: a new understanding on how to use her powers or skills, a stronger bond with an ally or her Relic, or an improved social position that gives her more leverage.

Lamar gains an improvement on Sullivan's theme, Retro Renegade (Possessions). Going over the theme improvements on the Possessions themebook, he chooses **Quality Matters:** every Core Move he makes with his *old beat-up Mustang* power tags is now *Dynamite!*

Lamar decides that this doesn't have a direct parallel in Sullivan's life; he's acting the same as always. However, it does mean Sullivan will be doing cooler things with his car from now on.

RESET FADE OR CRACK

Fade (for Mythos themes) and Crack (for Logos themes) are tracks that represent the deterioration of a theme. Gaining Fade or Crack means a theme is in danger of leaving the character's life (see Dramatic Moments, page 285). As an improvement, you can choose to reset the Fade or Crack track on the theme you are improving. When you do so, erase all checkmarks on the track.

Resetting Fade or Crack means your character has taken the time to patch up that aspect of her life, stabilize it, and return it to its functioning state. Perhaps she spent some time rekindling her love with her spouse (Defining Relationship) or a recent brush with death bolstered her connection with her ancestral spirits (Divination).

Lamar gains an improvement on Sullivan's theme, Searching For The Lost (Routine). Seeing that the Crack track on this theme is almost full (he has been busy with other affairs recently), Lamar decides to use this improvement to reset the track and stabilize this theme. He describes it as Sullivan returning home on his next downtime, opening a box full of case files of the individuals lost in the flood, and starting to go over all of them one after the other.



CREW THEME DEVELOPMENT

Just like character themes, crew themes can gain Attention and evolve. At certain points in the game, the crew may receive additional themes or replace existing themes.

Attention on crew themes can be gained in the following ways:

- **Invoking a crew weakness tag:** Whenever a crew weakness tag is invoked by anyone, mark Attention on that theme.
- **The Geek Out During Credits (Session End) move:** At the end of every session, each crew member can choose whether to recover a crew power tag or to mark Attention on the crew theme.

When all three Attention boxes are checked, reset the track to zero (erase all check marks) and choose together an improvement for the crew theme. You may choose any of the improvements available for player themes.

GAINING NEW THEMES FOR THE CREW

A crew theme represents the unified overarching goal or purpose the crew has and the resources and problems associated with it. This doesn't refer to just any milestone or goal the crew has; it refers to the very essence of the crew, the reason for which the crew members work together – who they are as a team.

Sometimes during a series, especially a series with multiple story arcs and seasons, the essence of the team changes or expands. This usually happens at the beginning of a new story arc: either the characters start operating in a new way and the MC writes a story arc for them to investigate or the MC writes a story arc which makes the crew change its purpose, or add an entire new way of operating.

When this happens, the crew's new overarching goal or purpose can be reflected by choosing a new nascent crew theme, if everyone agrees on that.

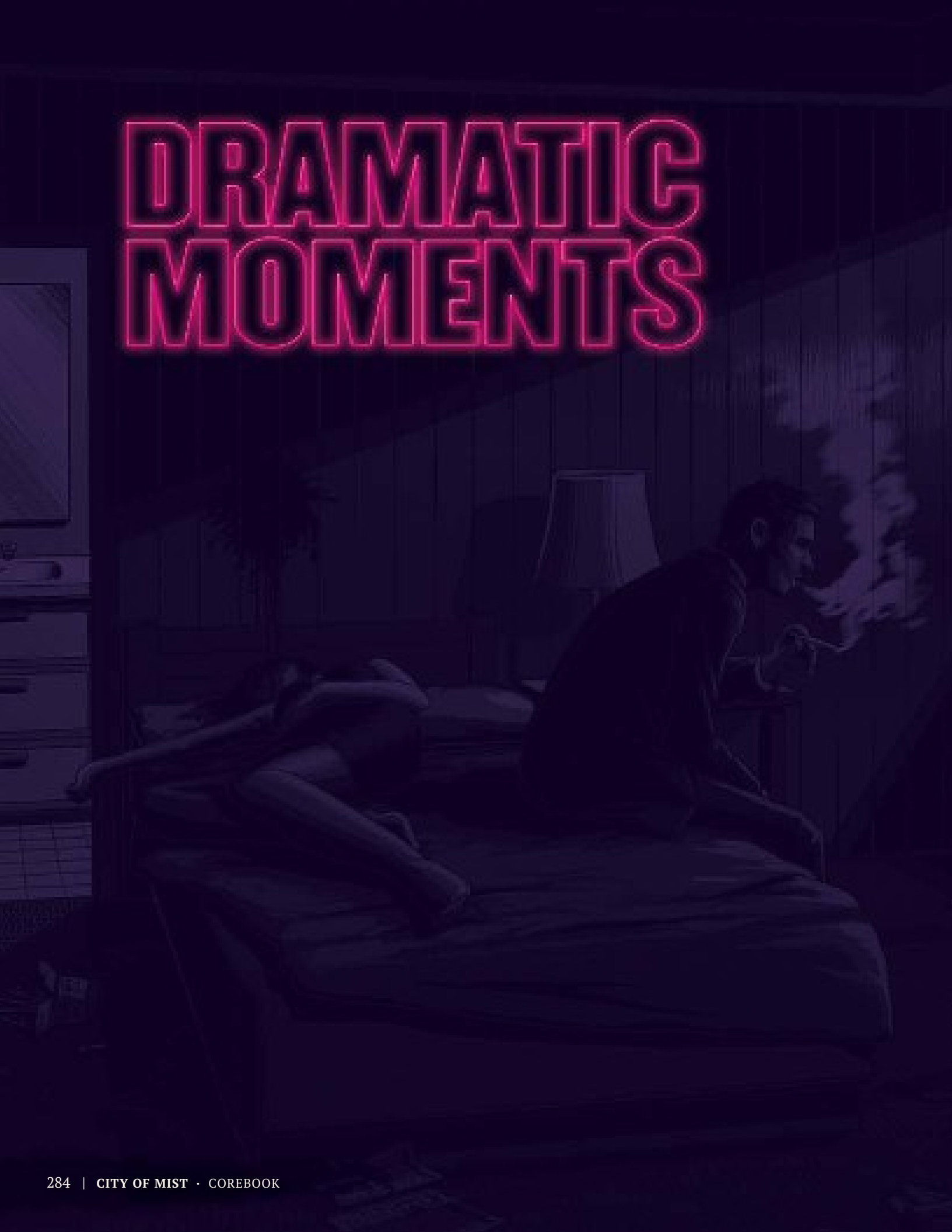
Similarly, a crew may eventually complete one of its overarching goals or fulfill its purpose (e.g., bring peace to the neighborhood), which usually ends the story arc associated with that goal. As seen below in the moves **Finally, Some Answers** (page 287) and **End of the Road** (page 289), this may bring the crew to replace its current crew theme with a new crew theme, at the players' discretion. In addition to that, if everyone agrees that the crew completed its goal or fulfilled its purpose, the crew evolves and may choose an extra theme (see page 318) to represent their growing possibilities. This extra theme functions like a crew theme in terms of its tags, Mystery or Identity, gaining Attention, etc. However, if the crew ever loses this theme, they may choose to shelve it instead, as explained under Extra Themes.

Since choosing a new overarching goal and completing it corresponds to the beginning and ending of a story arc, it therefore often corresponds to a season's premiere and a season's finale, respectively (although not necessarily the same season, as story arcs may span several season). The move **Season Premiere, Season Finale** summarizes the rules regarding new crew themes and crew extra themes:

SEASON PREMIERE, SEASON FINALE

When all of you, including the MC, agree that your crew has a new overarching goal or purpose, you receive a new nascent crew theme (in addition to any existing ones) to represent this new aspect of your crew.

When all of you, including the MC, agree that the crew has achieved its overarching goal or purpose, take a new nascent extra theme for your crew.


DRAMATIC
MOMENTS



Your character's life as a Rift will be wrought with dramatic developments. There's a reason your character is solving strange cases: she's looking for answers. To find them, she may be forced to make unspeakable sacrifices, both personal and moral, and persevere through challenges from within, from without, and from beyond the Mist.

When those answers are finally within reach, your character will have to choose, and you as the player will be faced with the same dilemmas. Do you even want to know anymore? Aren't you afraid that knowing will change your character forever? Everything in your character's personal life will conspire to keep her in the dark; everything inside her will tell her to walk away from the answers. And even if she chooses to know, the truth might shock her, break her, destroy what she thinks she knows.

Rifts are constantly living on the edge of their **Mythos** and **Logos**. On the one hand, there is your Mythos: a force so unfathomably sublime that you may never be able to truly understand it. It urges you to question the present makeup of your life, go out there and investigate. It pushes you to the boundaries of the everyday and beyond. It wants you to discover what you truly are, what *it* is, and bring it back to life. Its call echoes inside you all the time, whether you heed it or not.

On the other hand, there is Logos: the life you know. Regardless of whether it is a life of misery, pleasure, indifference, or a mixture of them all, your Logos is always drawing you back to the comfort of what you know, backed by the lulling effect of the Mist. Your life is ahead of you; there are people whom you want to make happy or people you want to hurt; there is your work, your home, your habits, your family and friends. All these things are real, are they not? Sometimes they are more real than the legend living inside you. Even if you could let go of them, why would you ever want to? They define you, they make you who you are.

This struggle within your character is the foundation for her development. On the surface, it may seem your character wants to keep the status quo, keep things as they are now, with Mythos and Logos somehow balanced. But, in fact, your character continuously takes actions that put this balance at jeopardy: she investigates and she fights for what she believes in. Sooner or later, you will have to make hard choices: will I overlook a vile crime to learn about the origin of my powers? Will I forfeit a chance of a lifetime to save my family? When you arrive at the moment of truth and make such decisions, you and your friends at the table learn more about your character: you discover who she truly is.

But there are consequences within the story, too. **The aspects of your character's legendary powers and ordinary life rise and fall based on the decisions you make.** As some bridges are burnt, your character loses something of herself (a friend, a source of meaning, a dimension of legendary powers, etc.). At the same time, new doors open and new aspects take root in your character's story. Things from her past or echoes of life-altering decisions she made come back to haunt her. A beautiful and intricate tapestry of the forces within your character transpires, but it is a very delicate one. Pushing too far in one direction has the potential of tearing this tapestry to shreds, setting free an unstoppable power or quenching the spark of mystery altogether.

THE ROLE OF THE MC: DRAMATIC MOMENTS

As the MC, you create the situations which allow the players to trigger their dramatic moments. Read more about the MC's role in this aspect of the game under Considering the Lead Characters' Development (page 346).

THE BALANCE OF MYTHOS AND LOGOS

At the beginning of the game, your character is made of four themes, divided between Mythos and Logos. Each theme represents a major aspect of your character. However, themes are not permanent elements. As the game progresses and you make hard choices, some of the themes that make up your character may erode, gradually slipping to oblivion. If your character doesn't take action to stabilize her themes, they will end up fading and cracking, eventually giving their place to new themes. As these changes take place, the balance of Mythos and Logos within you may change. This process of evolution that is happening inside your character may be slow or rapid, but it is always there.

Your character always has four themes. Any other themes, such as crew themes and extra themes, exist outside of the scope of your inner balance, although they may contribute to the struggle within you.

MYSTERIES FADE

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS

Every Mythos theme has a Mystery: a burning question that your character is seeking the answers for, something that your Mythos wants you to find out. During the game, you can decide to take action or spend downtime investigating your Mysteries. Furthermore, the MC will continuously present opportunities for you to answer your Mysteries, or at least discover clues that will eventually lead you to answers.

FADE

Unfortunately for you, Mysteries can be forgotten, especially in *City of Mist*, where the Mist is constantly working to cut you off from your own destiny. Using your ordinary life (Logos themes) against you, the Mist strives to distract you and pull you away from any discovery that will deepen the bond between you and your Mythos.

To represent the possibility of forgetting your questions and giving in to your everyday routine and habits, each Mythos theme has a Fade track. Whenever you take action or make choices that draw you away from the answers you so desperately seek, or when you are subject to an influence that makes you forget your Mythos, you mark Fade.

When you mark Fade, translate the rules into the story and explain how you are beginning to lose touch with the powers described by this Mythos theme. For example:

- In a clinch, your divine powers of banishing evil (Expression) fail you momentarily.
- Your Armor of Jeanne D'Arc (Relic) starts falling apart.
- You get a feeling that your Dukun charms (Bastion) are not as strong as they used to be, but you don't know why.
- The all-knowing Buddha sends messengers to warn you that you are losing your path and with it your swiftness of motion (Mobility).
- As you transform into a jaguar (Adaptation), you notice you have a human hand instead of one of your paws.
- Kuebiko, the god of agriculture and knowledge, is cross with you and becomes increasingly difficult to get information from (Divination).
- You lose faith in subtlety, turning to direct conflict and neglecting your mastery of the Invisible Hand Technique (Subversion).

As you mark additional Fade, the chasm between you and this aspect of your Mythos becomes so unbridgeable that the you are unable to manifest the powers associated with it.

When all three boxes on the Fade track are checked, you lose contact with that aspect of your Mythos (or all of it, if it's your last Mythos theme). A new aspect of your ordinary life takes the place of the lost Mythos theme. To represent that, you replace the Mythos theme with a new Logos theme. Read more about replacing themes on page 297.

FINDING ANSWERS

Your character can find answers to her questions in many different ways. Perhaps she hunted down the people responsible for her transformation, meditated for weeks until the truth was revealed to her, or travelled through a dream-like forest in the City Park to reach a fabled hidden lake. Your character may receive a clear-cut answer or she may get a dumbfounding one that only leads to more questions.

When you find answers, what answers your character uncovers are largely up to you. You can work out the details with the MC to ensure your answers do not conflict with the case, but the MC should be as open-minded as possible, even if the answers you choose shuffle the deck entirely. You can then let everyone know what information you discovered. As an alternative, you can leave the answers entirely up to the MC and be surprised, or give the MC some guidelines or details you wish to include in your discovery, and leave the rest to her.

Sullivan, played by Lamar, is investigating his Mystery "Who is my Dulcinea?". In a previous investigation he obtained a lock of hair from his beloved maiden, although he doesn't know her identity. Now, he received the DNA results and he's about to learn the truth. Lamar wants "Dulcinea" to be a rather villainous NPC named Margo. He thinks it would be interesting to see Sullivan try to win her over. Alice the MC agrees. When Sullivan opens the DNA test results, he sees a match with a known criminal named Margo Falls.

Jerry, who plays Det. Farrah Enkidu, prefers to be surprised. Throughout the game the police detective investigates her Mystery of "Why do the gods want me dead?". When she finally finds answers, after working her way through the power pyramid of the Anunnaki gods, Alice the MC reveals the answer she had prepared. An angel sent to kill Det. Enkidu tells her: "You are a threat, because Gilgamesh would do anything for you; he would even turn on the gods."

Goodfellow, played by Megan, has finally found Oberon, the fairy king, and is about to discover the answer to his Mystery, "How can I make Oberon set me free?" Megan asked Alice the MC to choose an answer for her, but she wants it to be connected to a crime Goodfellow must commit. Alice thinks for a while and describes an ancient scroll that depicts a ritual that allows a fairy to escape the control of her king if the fairy puts another fairy under the king's power in its place.

Once your character finds answers, how she comes away from these answers is also up to you. Your character can be elated, shocked, satisfied, or all of the above. Use the **Finally, Some Answers** move to choose the implications of this revelation:

FINALLY, SOME ANSWERS

When you find answers to your Mystery, choose one, two, or all three:

You gain a deeper understanding of your Mythos, of the subject of your Mystery, or of the link between your Mystery and your Mythos. Mark Attention on the theme to which this Mystery belongs.

You are shocked by the discovery to the point of rejecting your Mythos or an aspect of your ordinary life. Mark Fade or Crack on any theme.

Your questions are answered. Choose a new Mystery for this theme.

In the above example, Lamar imagines that Sullivan is rather shocked by the discovery that his Mythos is pointing him to a relationship with a master criminal. He is so confused by the idea, that he is afraid to explore further, at least for the time being. He marks Fade.

Pleased with the twist provided by the MC's answer, Jerry feels Det. Enkidu's questions were answered. She now knows why her enemies are her enemies. Jerry decides to change Enkidu's Mystery to "How can I get Gilgamesh to help me fight the gods?"

Megan, on the other hand, feels like Goodfellow is emboldened by his discovery. The scroll helped him better understand the laws that bind fairies and the cold, cruel nature of his Mythos. Megan marks Attention on Goodfellow's Subversion Mythos theme.

IDENTITIES CRACK

REAFFIRMING WHO YOU THINK YOU ARE

Every Logos theme has an Identity: a statement that your character firmly believes in, that defines who your character is (or thinks she is). During the game, different circumstances will call you to play your character in accordance with her Identities, affecting your character's decisions and actions.

CRACK

Identities are often the target of rebuttal by your character's Mythos. Seeking to emerge into the world in all its glory, your Mythos strives to break apart the worldly conglomeration of habits, desires, and fears that you call 'me'. No matter how lofty your self definitions are, or how exotic, your Mythos wants to show you an existence beyond them. It always calls you to question their significance.

To represent the possibility of your identity cracking, crumbling, and falling away, every Logos theme has a Crack track. Whenever you take action or make choices that contradict your Identities or when you are subject to an influence that makes you abandon your beliefs, you mark Crack.

When you mark Crack, translate the rules into the story and explain how your Logos theme is beginning to lose its place in your life. For example:

- Your company (Possessions) comes under threat of hostile takeover.
- Your Defining Relationship with your son is fraught with tension and unexpressed anger.
- You no longer feel the rage you felt after your house went up in flames (Defining Event).
- As gangsters strike roots in every social layer of your neighborhood, the Mission you undertook to clean the streets becomes virtually impossible.
- Your boss has had enough with your absence from work (Routine).
- You begin to feel your Training as a con man is not the path for you anymore.

As you continue to mark Crack, these issues become aggravated to the point that the subject of the theme may no longer be a part of your life.

When all three boxes on the Crack track are checked, your Identity is lost along with everything it represented: you quit or lose your job, you lose custody over your children, you get over an event that defined you or an attitude you had, etc. A new aspect of your legendary powers takes the place of the lost Logos theme. To represent that, you replace the Logos theme with a new Mythos theme. Read more about replacing themes below.

RESOLVING AN IDENTITY

Some Identities, such as the ones that define your core personality and nature, may go with you forever. Others, however, may eventually be resolved, leaving you with an awkward space inside. This is especially true for characters who dedicate their lives to achieve a specific goal; once the goal is achieved, the Identity is resolved and can no longer remain as it is.

Jeff's character, Malory, a two-bit crook from the blue-collar neighborhood, has sworn an oath in his youth to kill the mafia boss responsible for the disappearance of his childhood friend, Sammy. To represent this, Jeff has chosen a Mission Logos theme with the Identity "I will not rest until the mobster who took Sammy is dead."

After playing through numerous sessions with his crew and after facing many dangers, missed chances, and qualms, Malory finally manages to enact his revenge upon the mobster. His Identity is resolved.

When one of your Identities is resolved, use the **End of the Road** move to choose the implications:

END OF THE ROAD

If your Identity ever becomes resolved, rephrase it in the same spirit to describe a new goal, a greater scope, a new angle, etc. Alternatively, if this aspect of your life truly ended, you may replace this Identity's theme.

Now that Malory's Identity has been resolved, Jeff has two options. He can rephrase Malory's Identity so that it redefines his Mission. For example, he could say Malory now decides to become a vigilante and fight all mobsters in the City ("I will not rest until organized crime is dead.") or he gets big ideas of becoming the next leader of the City's underworld ("I will not rest until I rule this City."). The other option is to drop this aspect of Malory entirely, and let his Mythos take over; now that his journey of revenge is complete, Malory suddenly has a vast space in his life, a space into which his legendary powers can grow.



MAKING A HARD CHOICE

As explained above, the push and pull of Mythos and Logos within you and the machinations of the MC will often put you in a situation where you must choose between your Mysteries, your Identities, and/or some other benefit or course of action in the story. In such situations, your Mystery will require that you continue the investigation and make the necessary sacrifices in order to secure the answers you want. Your Identity, on the other hand, will demand that you do everything, even the unspeakable, to uphold your beliefs. Thirdly, the story may present a host of other incentives and considerations that limit your character, even if they are not represented by a Mystery or an Identity. Such considerations may include, among other things:

- **Acts your character deems undesirable and wishes to avoid**, such as immoral actions, criminal activity, or socially inappropriate behavior.
- **People your character wishes to impress or is beholden to**, such as a tycoon threatening to ruin her career or a father who may be disappointed if he finds out about her actions.
- **Things your character desires and are on the table**, like money, fame, a captive loved one, etc.
- **Your character's survival instinct**, if the choice holds the risk of death, injury, or other significant loss.

Your Mysteries, Identities, and circumstantial considerations can clash in any possible constellation. You may be forced to choose between:

- one of your Mysteries and one of your Identities;
- one of your Mysteries and circumstantial considerations;
- one of your Identities and circumstantial considerations;
- two of your Mysteries;
- two of your Identities;
- and so on.

(If the MC is feeling really inspired, she could even try to orchestrate a dilemma with three facets.)

Note that while your Identities may clash with one another quite regularly, a clash between two or more Mysteries can be contradictory to a Mythos' agenda; it occurs only when different aspects within the same Mythos are competing against one another.

> Det. Enkidu works hard to find a way to turn Gilgamesh against the Annunaki gods. When she finally finds him, Gilgamesh, who happens to be her former squad car partner, is willing to reestablish their partnership with the condition that she never brings up the subject of betraying the gods. Jerry, who plays Det. Enkidu, feels that this is a hard choice for her: she must either give up investigating her Mystery "How can I get Gilgamesh to help me fight the gods?" or give up her friendship with a very old and dear friend.
>
> Meanwhile, Sullivan managed to get a hot date with the super-criminal Margo Falls, who was revealed to be his "Dulcinea". He is planning to meet with her and further investigate his Mystery, "Who is my Dulcinea?". Unfortunately, his sidekick Sánchez has found out about this and warns him that he should never meet Falls. Lamar, who plays Sullivan, feels that if Sullivan chooses to ignore his friend's warning, he'd be going against his Identity "If it wasn't for him, I'd be dead." (which belongs to his Defining Relationship theme, My Sancho Panza).

You decide when your character is facing a dilemma. The MC can only introduce the complications in a way that she thinks will be interesting and interacts with your Mysteries, Identities, and circumstantial considerations. The MC and the other players can also ask you whether you think

your character is facing a hard choice. However, it's up to you to respond to such opportunities in order to advance your character's story.

Whenever you feel your character is thus conflicted, check whether one of the triggers in the **Make A Hard Choice** move is activated, and follow the outcome:

MAKE A HARD CHOICE

When **answers to your Mystery are within reach, but you forego them**, mark Fade on that Mystery's theme.

When **your Identity demands you act or speak in a given way and you don't**, mark Crack on that Identity's theme.

When **you sacrifice something you truly want in order to abide by your Identity**, mark Attention on that Identity's theme.

If Det. Enkidu favors her friendship with Gilgamesh and decides to forego her search for a way to enlist him to a war with the gods, she must mark Fade (she is ignoring her Mystery). If she gives up the friendship and continues to prod Gilgamesh for answers, there are no game effects. However, in the story, Gilgamesh and she are finished.

As for Sullivan, if he chooses to meet Margo Falls despite Sánchez's warning, he is going against his Identity and chooses to mark Crack on Sánchez's theme, My Sancho Panza. Conversely, if he forgoes the opportunity to learn more about his Dulcinea, he chooses to mark Fade on his Imaginary Knight theme, but at the same time, since he is sacrificing something he truly wants to abide by his Sánchez Identity, he marks Attention on the theme My Sancho Panza.

Note that there is no reward in this move for choosing to investigate your Mystery over other benefits; the reward of investigating a Mystery lies with finding the answers and is covered by the **Finally, Some Answers** move.

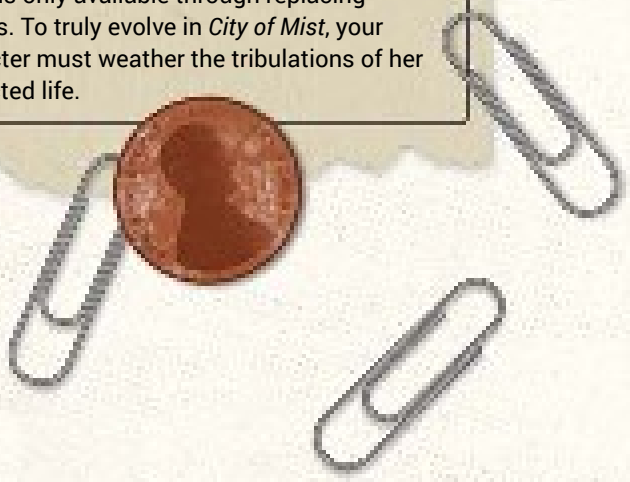
WHY SHOULD I CHOOSE TO MAKE A HARD CHOICE?

As you may have noticed, building up Fade and Crack can lead to some dramatic changes in your character. You can lose some abilities and resources and gain others. At your option, you can completely ignore your Mysteries and Identities, or use them purely as character role-playing guidelines, without ever invoking **Make a Hard Choice**. Your character will continue to develop linearly, albeit without any great leaps of evolution.

However, you'd be missing out on one of the best aspects of *City of Mist*. Ultimately, this is a game of storytelling, designed to take your character through dramatic changes. The *City of Mist* character development system is all about changing and re-discovering yourself – not about linear improvement in power level, toward a single goal.

The reason we enjoy good comic-book and TV series is the ups and downs their characters have to go through; life-altering moments, like losing a loved one or being denied of your powers, which then lead up to a new (and occasionally improved) version of the character. **Make a Hard Choice** allows you to introduce these dramatic moments into your character's story so you can enjoy not only the development of her powers, but also the unique story path that makes her who she is.

Furthermore, there is a special and permanent type of improvement, Moments of Evolution, which is only available through replacing themes. To truly evolve in *City of Mist*, your character must weather the tribulations of her conflicted life.



MARKING FADE OR CRACK WITHOUT A DILEMMA

Sometimes, you may recognize that a certain situation in the game is eroding your character's connection with an aspect of her Mythos or is putting some distance between her and an aspect of her ordinary life (Logos). In such cases, even though there is no dilemma at hand (and so, you are not **Making a Hard Choice**), you can decide to translate the story into the rules: mark a single box of Fade or Crack on the theme that has come under threat or that is on the wane.

However, since every point of Fade and Crack has dramatic consequences, marking Fade or Crack should be kept for occasions when the weakening of the theme is obvious and substantial.

> In the living room of his town house, Goodfellow has entered his furious state (Mythos Expression theme) to scare a fence he was working with into giving him a better deal. Unfortunately for him, Goodfellow's ten year-old grandson walked in just when it happened. Horrified and frightened, the kid runs out into the street in tears. Megan, who plays Goodfellow, feels that this is a shattering blow for him. Something inside him never wants to tap into that furious state again, even if it's useful. She marks Fade on that theme. Whether he lets go of this part of his Mythos or not remains to be seen.

MYSTERIES AND IDENTITIES OF CREW THEMES

Like your character themes, crew themes also have a Mystery or an Identity which can demand certain actions from you, as well as a Fade or Crack track that can eventually lead the crew to fall apart or reform itself around a new concept. These aspects of the crew theme use the same rules as character themes:

- When the crew or a crew member finds answers to crew Mystery, the crew as a group chooses options from **Finally, Some Answers**.
- When your crew Identity is resolved, use **End of The Road**.
- When a crew member **Makes A Hard Choice** about the crew (ignores a chance to find answers for crew Mystery, acts against the crew Identity, or sacrifices something important for the crew Identity), the player making the move must have the support of at least one other player to activate the move. The supporting player does not have to agree with the actions of the other player's character, only to agree that they indeed ignore a crew Mystery, go against a crew Identity, etc. If the move is triggered, mark Fade, Crack, or Attention on the crew theme as explained in the move.

If the third box is marked on a Fade or Crack track of a Crew theme, the theme is replaced. Read more about Replacing Crew Themes on page 301.

STOP. HOLDING. BACK.

You are a Rift in the Mist, a gateway through which the miracles of myth and legend can become real. The power of the Mythos that wells out from inside you is vast beyond fathom, capable of altering the fabric of reality itself. However, you are also just an ordinary person, full of doubts, fears, and mortal limitations. The power of your Mythos cannot flow freely through you, except in the specific ways that you allow it. But what would happen if you stopped holding back? How would you even do that?

There are specific moments in a Rift's life when all barriers seem to drop, when he or she truly becomes a channel through which the Mythos can work its wonders on the City. These moments are rare, no matter how awake you are. Touched, Borderliners, Legendaries, and even Avatars have an equally slim chance of opening up so fully. In theory, even Sleepers could experience such a revelation, at the very moment they awaken to the legend within them.

Fateful circumstances and the intense psychological and emotional stress that is associated with them can knock your inner walls down and unleash the power of your Mythos into the world. While your character cannot control when it happens, you as a player have the choice of declaring when you would like her to employ her Mythos powers to their utmost potential. To do so, you make the **Stop. Holding. Back.** move

STOP. HOLDING. BACK.

When you **use your powers in a new and never-before-seen way or scale**, tell the MC what you hope to achieve. The MC will tell you the sacrifice it will take from you. Then roll+Logos. On a hit, you achieve exactly what you wanted to achieve and pay the price:

Significant: On a 7-9, mark Fade/Crack and burn all the power tags on one theme. On a 10+, mark Fade/Crack on one theme.

No Return: On a 7-9, replace one theme. On a 10+, mark Fade/Crack and burn all the power tags on one theme.

Ultimate: On a 7-9, you are killed, destroyed, or transformed forever (for now). Take a tier-6 status. You cannot **Face Danger**. On a 10+, replace one theme

On a 6 or less, you pay the price given for 7-9, but you also lose control over your powers or fail to use them as planned. The MC will decide how, and what the consequences are.

To trigger **Stop. Holding. Back.**, you must describe using your powers in some new way that has not been described before in your series. This could mean using your powers in a way that exceeds the descriptors of your power tags or on a scale much greater than your powers normally affect.

Describe to everyone at the table how your powers are unleashed and how you use them. The specifics of your power tags no longer matter. You are able to pull off anything, *anything*, as long as it's reasonably related to your Mythos. Don't hold back when you think about the effect you want to achieve with this move; the MC will have to work around whatever you come up with and decide on the appropriate level of sacrifice. You could, for example:

- banish an invading horde of demons
- turn back time
- melt down the entire Central Train Station
- cure an incurable disease
- bring peace to a war-torn neighborhood
- pierce the defenses of an unbeatable Rift
- become the richest man in the City overnight

You should, however, consider both what your character wishes to achieve and what would be interesting for your series as a whole. For example, defeating the arch-villain and banishing his demons forever with the ultimate display of power may be a great culmination of a series or an annoying anti-climax, depending on the circumstances. Don't ruin the whole series just because you can.

The general recommendation for the MC is to try to accommodate your actions as much as possible. However, if after consideration the MC feels what you intend to achieve will be detrimental to your group's enjoyment, you can talk it out and find a happy medium.

After you describe your action, the MC will choose the degree of sacrifice your character must make to open up to her Mythos, from the following:

- **Significant:** Your character will probably burn all tags in a theme (which is temporary) and mark Fade or Crack. At the very least, she will mark Fade or Crack.
- **No-return:** Your character will probably replace a theme (which is permanent). At the very least, she will burn all tags in a theme and mark Fade or Crack.
- **Ultimate**: Your character will probably die or be transformed forever. At the very least, she will replace a theme.

If you don't like the odds, you can still back out, or negotiate your action with the MC to reduce the sacrifice. Once you roll the dice, however, you're committed to the results.

THE ROLE OF THE MC: DEGREES OF SACRIFICE

As the MC, when a player makes the **Stop. Holding. Back.** move, it's up to you to decide what degree of sacrifice is required from the character in order to use her Mythos powers in the manner described by the player.

The criterion for choosing the degree of sacrifice is the degree of change the character is trying to enact on the story. The question you should ask yourself is:

? HOW DRAMATICALLY IS THIS GOING TO AFFECT THE STORY?

The guidelines below are given as a suggestion only; you should base your decision on the specifics of your series:

- a **significant** sacrifice befits a significant change:
  - » changing a detail that will affect the course of a case / session
  - » permanently defeating a minor Danger
  - » temporarily evading or surviving the main Danger of a case / session
  - » overcoming or circumventing a significant challenge or circumstance
  - » effecting a change with small repercussions on the entire series
  - » anything that is not covered by the character's power tags, but is on the same general scale as them
- a **no-return** sacrifice befits a change from which there is no return:
  - » changing a detail that will affect the course of a season
  - » permanently defeating a major Danger
  - » resolving one of the main challenges of a case / session
  - » temporarily evading or surviving the main Danger of a season
  - » overcoming or circumventing a major challenge or circumstance
  - » effecting a change with major repercussions on the entire series
- the **ultimate** sacrifice befits the ultimate change:
  - » changing a detail that will affect the course of the entire series
  - » permanently defeating a top-tier Danger
  - » resolving one of the main challenges of a season
  - » temporarily evading or surviving the main Danger of a series
  - » overcoming or circumventing an extreme challenge or circumstance
  - » effecting a change with dramatic repercussions on the entire series

Note that the degree of change an action effects in the story is not the same as the power level of the action. A character may wish to travel five minutes back in time so she can enter a building before the villain does. Travelling back in time is usually considered an extremely powerful ability; however, you should judge it based on its story implications, not its power level. If the character simply wants to ambush the villain, it may require only a significant sacrifice; if the character wants to go back in time because the villain just killed her loved one and she wants to stop him, that would be a major change to the story, and may require a no-return sacrifice or perhaps even the ultimate sacrifice.

ROLL+LOGOS

Instead of roll+Power for this move, you add the number of Logos themes you have (simply called "your Logos") to the results on the die to get the final score. While Touched, Borderliners, and Legendaries are all just as likely to **Stop. Holding. Back.**, a greater degree of Logos helps your character control the outburst of mythical power. The more a Rift is grounded and enveloped in the Mist (the more Logos themes a Rift has), the greater her chances are to be able to tame her Mythos when it finally breaks out and thereby avoid harsh consequences.

Tags and statuses have no effect over this roll.

OUTCOME

On a hit, you succeed in manifesting your Mythos powers in the manner you described, and you pay the price (see below). The effects of your action are mostly resolved by describing them; when necessary, however, the MC will update the statuses, tags, etc. in the game to match the way the story changed. For example, if you healed someone from an incurable disease and they had a status *incurable-disease-5*, the MC will remove it.

On a miss, you still pay the price as if you rolled a 7-9, but there's more: you lose control over your powers. The MC then describes the repercussions, using MC moves with a severity that matches the degree of sacrifice and the circumstances.

The sacrifice you are forced to make for unleashing your Mythos powers is somewhat mitigated on a 10+, and worse on a 7-9 and on a miss. Depending on your sacrifice and score, it may involve:

- Marking Fade or Crack on a theme
- Marking Fade or Crack on a theme and burning all the tags in that theme
- Replacing a theme

You choose the affected theme. It may be:

- **a theme you had to let go of** in order to open up to your Mythos: something you had to give up or that was holding you back from your true powers;
- **the theme that you burnt out** due to the unchecked use of your Mythos powers: one of your Mythos themes that is most closely associated with the powers you activated or one that was eclipsed by the powers you activated; or
- **the theme that suffered the most as a result of your action:** e.g., someone close to you who died, an object that was destroyed, a position that was lost, or a way of thinking that came to an end because of what you did.

If you scored a 7-9 or missed the move while making the ultimate sacrifice, your character takes an instant tier-6 status without **Facing Danger**. In other words, your character is either dead, otherwise destroyed, or transformed forever. The status' tag and nature are decided by the MC. This is resolved in the same way as a character hitting tier-6 of a status (see Statuses, page 233).

Salamander and his crew are on the roof of a skyscraper, facing Jörmungandr, the snake who eats the world. The crew recently exposed Jörmungandr's ploy: unless stopped, he plans to tamper with the Mist itself, allowing him to consume the entire City! Unfortunately, Jörmungandr is ahead of the game and his associates are keeping the crew at bay while he proceeds with his evil scheme, bringing about Ragnarök, the end of days.

Tyrone (playing Salamander): That's it, we've tried everything and we can't get him to stop! Salamander is at wit's end. He understands that the City, maybe creation itself, is about to be consumed by this agent of the Void. And something primordial awakens in him. I'm going to **Stop. Holding. Back.**

MC: Yikes! What's going to happen?

Tyrone: Salamander taps into the depth of his primordial nature, the place where fire and water are one. He will use that to permanently fill the void of Jörmungandr.

The MC considers the issue. Jörmungandr is a major villain, and Salamander is trying to shut him down permanently.

MC: Filling the void with the essence of creation. That sounds like it would demand the ultimate sacrifice.

Tyrone: Holy cannoli. Not sure I'm ready to lose Salamander over this… but he is willing to give his life to save the City. That's his destiny. I rolled 5 and 3, and my Logos is 3, so a total of 11. Yay, I got a 10+!

(Tyrone and the MC narrate the clash of both titanic forces. Jörmungandr is vanquished and his plan to swallow the City into the Void is thwarted. His associates, however, continue to battle the crew.)

MC: Let's talk about the sacrifice Salamander just made. On a 10+, for an ultimate sacrifice, you replace a theme. What part of Salamander's life is no longer?

Tyrone: Since he maxed out his Mythos powers, I guess it will be his Mythos Expression theme, Nimbus of Primordial Plasma. I guess creating life in a complete void just drained him of all his powers. Maybe even his Mythos moved from him over to Jörmungandr, that would be cool. At any rate, he can no longer use his powers. Salamander collapses to his knees, in the midst of all the fighting, looking at his steaming hands, realizing his powers are gone. "You're still here," he says to himself, tears streaming down his cheeks, "so get up, and fight!" And with great effort, he does.

MC: Intense.

WITH LOGOS

While **Stop. Holding. Back.** is more intuitively used with Mythos powers, it is possible to push one's Logos themes to the maximum using this move. For example, the filthy rich Excalibur could try to overturn the economical status quo in the City. Using **Stop. Holding. Back.** with your Logos aspects still requires the player to describe a radical action that exceeds the normal use of his character's power tags.

When you **Stop. Holding. Back.** with your Logos abilities and resources, you roll+Mythos (the number of Mythos themes you have) instead of rolling+Logos, to indicate that you must call on the miraculous power of your Mythos to evoke such an extreme result using your mundane possibilities.

OPTIONAL RULE: INESCAPABLE SACRIFICE

If your group seems to use **Stop. Holding. Back.** at the ultimate tier too often, and if you feel you need an even greater tier to cover some of their actions, you can add an additional tier of sacrifice to the mix. This sacrifice is reserved for characters trying to take down the major threat or villain of a series or attempting to alter the very cosmological fabric of your group's City of Mist. It posits that the powers the character is trying to harness and shape are so immeasurable and arcane that the character is facing certain death, or worse. In this case, making the move is not about surviving the attempt, but rather determining whether the character's outburst of power has the desired results and whether no-one else is hurt. The **inescapable** sacrifice option is as follows:

Inescapable: On 10+, you are killed, destroyed, or transformed forever (for now). Take a tier-6 status. You cannot **Face Danger**. On a 7-9, the same, and the MC chooses one: you only partly manage what you attempted OR your crew members, loved ones, or even the entire City is caught in the maelstrom of forces you unleashed.

CRISIS & BEGINNING: REPLACING A THEME

The life of a Rift is full of turmoil. Big moments will always come, sooner or later, be they earth-shattering discoveries, tragic losses, unforeseen betrayals, or cold disillusionment. When they come, these moments signify the death of a part of you. What you once considered to be an integral component of who you are is now gone forever.

Stories, like nature, abhor a vacuum. In the ashes of your old self, something new will take root: a new beginning. As time goes by, it too may become an important part of you.

Replacing a theme is a dramatic moment for your character. It can happen in one of two ways:

- **Gradually:** You mark a total of three Fade or three Crack on a theme.
- **Suddenly:** You make a move that tells you to replace a theme, such as **Stop. Holding. Back.**

When you replace a theme, you discard the theme card of the theme you are replacing. Instead, you gain:

- Build-Up points (and possibly a Moment of Evolution)
- a new Nemesis, revealed when the MC chooses
- a new nascent theme, revealed when you choose

The theme you gain is always from the opposite side to the one you lost. If you lost a Mythos theme, you gain a nascent Logos theme; if you lost a Logos theme, you gain a nascent Mythos theme.

The exception to this rule applies when you lose your last Mythos theme (if you play a Touched character) or last Logos theme (if you play a Legendary character). When you lose your last Mythos theme, you become a **Sleeper**. When you lose your last Logos theme, you become an **Avatar**. Read more about these special conditions below.

LOST THEMES

Losing a theme represents a rattling experience for your character, if not a traumatic one.

If your character lost a Mythos theme, she lost touch with her essential nature, what she truly is underneath all her everyday masks. Her ordinary life may continue and even evolve (as she gains a new Logos theme instead of the lost Mythos theme), but something is lost inside her, something that despite being vague and unknown felt more real than anything else. To wit, she loses an aspect of her powers as her Mythos is further veiled by the Mist.

If your character lost a Logos theme, she lost a defining aspect of herself. Something she used to call her own has cracked and broken, revealing itself to be an empty shell and leaving her in a state of bedlam. In the story, this could be interpreted as either your character losing her interest or reason to have the subject of her theme in her life, or the subject of the theme breaking down or breaking away from your character.

When you lose a theme, translate the rules into the story and describe the circumstances for everyone at the table:

> Ignoring Sánchez's warnings for years, Sullivan puts the last nail in the coffin when he decides to meet the super-criminal Margo Falls despite the advice of his best friend and investigative partner. He marks the last box of Crack on his theme My Sancho Panza.

MC: On your last call with Sánchez, he said: "If you do this, don't bother showing up on Monday. You and I are through."

Lamar (playing Sullivan): That's right. He's an investigative photographer, so I imagine him following me to the restaurant where I am meeting with Margo Falls, the super-criminal and sitting in his car outside, snapping pictures of us together, as evidence. He's probably fuming and swearing in Spanish.

Losing a theme is permanent. The power tags and weakness tags of the lost theme cannot be invoked again and the Mystery or Identity are no longer



relevant to your character. Any improvements you had on the theme are also lost. Translating the rules into the story, you may say that:

- Your powers have shut down and cannot be activated.
- Your Relic or equipment was destroyed or broken beyond repair.
- You have lost faith in your former practices and are unwilling to employ them again.
- Your relationship ended and you want nothing to do with that person or group.
- You lost access to the privileges you once had or lost your social standing.
- You lost all your fortune and possessions.
- You forgot or lost some of the knowledge you possessed (perhaps following some head injury)

As an alternative, you may decide that some or all of the abilities and resources described by the lost theme's power tags are still available to you but are sidelined as a result of recent events. The MC may rule that you can still take actions related to such abilities and resources, on occasion. However, you cannot invoke any tags from the lost theme; the theme remains in the story only as a part of your character's background.

Lamar discards the theme card for My Sancho Panza. From this point on, Lamar cannot invoke the power tags from the lost theme: *saves my butt every time*, *reality check*, and *long unbreakable speeches*. The first two seem reasonably ineffective without Sánchez around. For the third tag, Lamar explains that Sullivan can still give long unbreakable speeches, but they're just not the same without the short podgy guy around. He also cannot invoke his weakness tag from that theme, *ignore his warnings*. Finally, the Identity "If it wasn't for him, I'd be dead." holds no sway on Sullivan anymore. While he may still feel partial



to his former sidekick, Sullivan understands that it's time to move out of the Sánchez safe zone, a realization he has backed up with actions.

BUILD-UP

The cycle of losing and gaining themes in your character's life is a never-ending one. New themes sprout, grow, mature, and eventually die, suddenly or gradually. However, this cycle is far from being meaningless. Every time your character loses a theme and goes through this experience, something stays with her: some sort of insight or understanding that builds up gradually and could eventually lead to her evolution.

Build-Up represents your character's gradual progression towards a dramatic and significant change, represented by a Moment of Evolution (see page 303). When you reach five points of Build-Up, your character experiences a Moment of Evolution, and the track resets to zero.

When you replace a theme, you gain Build-Up points based on how evolved your lost theme was. You gain:

- one Build-Up point for every tag in the lost theme beyond the third (including both power and weakness tags)
- one Build-Up point for every theme improvement chosen for that theme

Mark the Build-Up points you gained on the Build-Up track found on your character card. If this brings you at any point to a full Build-Up track, reset the track and continue to mark the remaining points you received. You gain a Moment of Evolution every time you reset the track.

When Sullivan loses his theme My Sancho Panza, his character card already has four Build-Up points marked. Hav-

ing just let go of a theme with four tags (as enumerated in the example above), Lamar gets to mark one more point of Build-Up, for having one tag above three in this theme. That brings him up to five Build-Up points, so he gains a Moment of Evolution and resets the Build-Up track. Since his theme also had an improvement marked, **Back-To-Back**, he gets to mark an additional Build-Up point. Sullivan now has a Moment of Evolution and one Build-Up point on his character card.

MAKING A NEMESIS

The things that make up your character and her life don't just evaporate into thin air without repercussions. Old lovers, once scorned, can become vengeful enemies. The spirits of nature who once were your allies now turn the elements against you. Those who trained you may still be hunting you, even if you turned from that path. Real closure is hard to come by.

When you lose a theme, it turns into a Nemesis – a problem related to the theme which then haunts you. A Nemesis can be anything: an obsessed ex-boss, a chronic disease, a growing overdraft, a contract on your head, etc.

Your Nemesis doesn't enter the game until the next session, or later. You and the MC decide together what your new Nemesis will be (you can choose to leave it to the MC and be surprised). Write your Nemesis down on your character card under NEMESES. If a Nemesis is one of your former allies or something that was once in your possession, the MC now controls this character or object. The MC then incorporates it in the series as either a Danger you'll encounter periodically or a custom move that represents your affliction.

After the session, Alice the MC and Lamar discuss the loss of Sullivan's My Sancho Panza theme. They both agree it would be cool to keep Sánchez in the series as a Nemesis. Alice suggests that Sánchez is now obsessed with Sullivan and his new ally, Margo Falls, and tries to expose their operation, maybe even involving the cops. Lamar approves.

A nemesis cannot be resolved or overcome permanently. It always finds a way to come back, even if sometimes it may leave you alone for a long period of time. If it's a person and you kill them, they may come back from the dead, haunt you as a ghost, or their successors may come after you. The only way to permanently remove a Nemesis is through a Moment of Evolution.

OPTIONAL RULE: ROLL FOR NEMESES

Normally, the MC decides when to introduce a Nemesis into the story. However, you can choose to introduce an element of luck so that the appearances of Nemeses will come by surprise – even to the MC.

At the end of a session, when you **Geek Out During Credits**, have all the players roll the following move:

FORESHADOWING

At the end of a session, if one of your Nemeses is still out there, roll+(the number of sessions since one of your Nemeses last appeared).

- On a 10+, one of your Nemeses will overwhelm you or get the drop on you in the next session. When the MC introduces your Nemesis, she also gets to make a move as if you missed a player move.
- On a 7-9, you can sense your Nemesis is coming but you're not sure. The MC can choose whether to include your Nemesis in the next session or not. If she does, she does not get to make a surprise MC move.
- On a miss, you're safe for now. Your Nemesis will not take part in the next session.



REPLACING CREW THEMES

When you replace a crew theme, you discard its card. Your crew is no longer bound together by this theme; if it was your last crew theme, you may not even be a crew anymore. You can no longer invoke any of the power and weakness tags on the theme, nor are you bound by its Mystery or Identity. Any improvements you had on the crew theme are also lost.

If you don't have another crew theme, you can choose a new nascent crew theme when you find a new reason to work together. At the MC's option, your lost crew theme spawns a Nemesis shared by the crew members.

In addition, when a crew is disbanded, the emotional and psychological backlash is reflected in the individual relationships of the (possibly former) crew members. Depending on the circumstances, they may feel angry, rejected, relieved, loved, or any other emotion; they may feel indebted to one another or even enraged to the point of becoming enemies. To represent this emotional charge, each crew member receives a pool of Help & Hurt points that she can distribute among her crew relationship. The number of Help & Hurt points that each crew member receives for this purpose is:

- one Help & Hurt point for every tag in the lost theme beyond the third (including both power and weakness tags)
- one Help & Hurt point for every theme improvement chosen for that theme

Each Help & Hurt point can be added as either a Help point or a Hurt point to your character's relationship with one other crew member. You can distribute the points as you wish.

The crew of Lakeside Drive — Sullivan, Goodfellow, and Enkidu — are falling apart. Sullivan is obsessed with a new lead called Margo Falls; Goodfellow is busy with his illegal shenanigans; and Enkidu is busy waging war with the gods. Each in their own way has betrayed their crew Identity "Get to the bottom of the pond." When the third Crack is marked on the theme, it is lost, and the crew is disbanded. Since the theme had a total of five tags (power and weakness) and two theme improvements, each crew member receives three Help & Hurt points.

Det. Enkidu thinks highly of Goodfellow, so Jerry (who plays Enkidu) adds a Help point next to Sullivan's name on his character card. However, both her former crew members have resorted to assisting criminals, if not becoming criminals themselves, which makes the detective think she will have to arrest them soon. Jerry adds a Hurt point next to each of them. The players of Sullivan and Goodfellow also each distribute their Help & Hurt points as they see fit.

NASCENT THEMES

A nascent theme represents a new aspect in your character's life that is now emerging. A nascent theme always appears when there is a space in your character's life: either in the wake of a lost theme or during character creation, if you chose to play an awakening character.

A nascent theme has only one power tag (unlike a standard theme which has three or more power tags). In all other aspects it is identical to a standard theme: it has one weakness tag and a Mystery or an Identity, as well as a specific theme type, an Attention track, and a Fade or Crack track. A nascent theme can be replaced or lost just like a standard theme.



CAN I USE A NEW THEME TO RECREATE AN OLDER THEME I LOST?

Technically speaking: yes, you could. But why would you? Imagine a comic book or a TV series where the hero, after many tribulations and efforts, ends up exactly where he started. This would only be interesting if the series found a way to give the hero's original point a new twist or an interesting re-interpretation. Therefore, it is recommended to think about trying out a new aspect for your character or coming up with a new interpretation for her old themes.

Note that this refers to themes of the same side, Mythos or Logos. Since you always gain a new theme from the opposite side to the one you lost, you can never recreate the same theme immediately after losing it.

GAINING A NEW NASCENT THEME

When you gain a new nascent theme, you do not have to introduce the theme immediately. You can take your time to consider what this new theme represents and review the different theme types available. If you gained this nascent theme by replacing another theme, check the FLIPSIDE section of the theme you replaced for ideas on what to introduce in its stead. You can hold off revealing the new nascent theme for dramatic purposes and uncover it only when the time is right.

> In the wake of his friendship with Sánchez (Logos theme), Sullivan is gaining a new Mythos theme — a new aspect for his powers. Not sure how this will play out yet, Lamar postpones the decision on the specific theme type, and continues the game with his three other themes.

When you're ready, choose a themebook for your new nascent theme and use it to fill out a new theme card as described under Themebooks (see page 112). However, since you only have a single power tag, you only answer the first power tag question in the themebook, without answering two more as usual.

> As it turns out, the super-criminal Margo Falls plans to hire Sullivan and his crew to bring down the people who are behind the Lakeside Drive neighborhood catastrophe. There seem to be some high-flying officials and powerful figureheads involved, so Lamar wants to take a theme that will help him tackle that. In his Mythos, Don Quixote charges at windmills, thinking they are giants. Lamar wants to use that, naming his new theme "Giant Slayer". He chooses the Expression themebook and uses it to choose a single power tag, *giant-slaying tilt*, which he defines as his ability to use his spectral lance on a massive scale, as well as a weakness tag, *tunnel vision*, and a Mystery: "Who is at the top of the windmill?"

When you have your new nascent theme, describe the rise of the new aspect in your life to everyone at the table. It can be dramatic and surprising or casual and offhanded.

> Lamar plans to wait until the first time Sullivan and his crew encounter one of those "great men" or their agents and then dramatically reveal Sullivan's newfound powers with a powerful blast of his lance.

EVOLVING A NASCENT THEME

Just like standard themes, nascent themes have Attention tracks. You can mark Attention on a nascent theme just as you would on a standard theme (when invoking its weakness tag, during downtime, by finding answers to its Mystery or sacrificing something for its Identity, etc.).

However, nascent themes evolve differently than standard themes. The following rules apply to nascent themes:

- When you first mark Attention on a nascent theme, you gain a new power tag. Follow the directions under Choose a New Power Tag, on page 280. This does not "cost" you the Attention; instead, you keep it marked.
- As you continue to mark Attention and complete the Attention track for the first time on a nascent theme, you gain another new power tag. Follow the directions under Choose a New Power Tag.

You cannot choose a different improvement instead. Then reset the theme's Attention track.

Once you completed the Attention track on a nascent theme for the first time and picked out its third power tag, it becomes a standard theme. The next time you complete its Attention track, you can choose any improvement as normal.

When Lamar marks Attention for the first time on his nascent Giant Slayer theme, he gets a new power tag. He wants it to represent a general superiority over giants, so he chooses question E on the Expression themebook, "Against what targets are your expression powers more effective?" and names the tag *bring them down*. Later, when he gains two more Attention points, he will choose another question from the themebook and create another power tag, and then reset the Attention track. The theme will then become a standard theme.

MOMENTS OF EVOLUTION

Your character evolves in different ways throughout the series. Her themes grow and expand as they are given more and more Attention, while at the same time always being at risk of being replaced in a flash due to a dramatic turn of events. Throughout this journey of ups-and-downs, something changes about your character. She gains wisdom, insight, and experience; she becomes more worldly and savvy to the way things are. She is growing and the benefits of that development stay with her regardless of the roller-coaster of her life.

When your Build-Up track is full (all five circles are marked) a Moment of Evolution takes place. You then reset the Build-Up track and pick one of the options from the list on your character card and mark it. Once marked, you cannot choose the same item of Moment of Evolution again; Moments of Evolution that can be chosen multiple times appear as separate items on the list.

When you have a Moment of Evolution, translate the rules into the story and decide what exactly happens to your character. Since a Moment of Evolution always comes in conjunction with replacing a theme, your evolution could be a result of the events that transpired when you replaced the theme. Alternatively, it could be something that changed in the character over a long period of time and is now coming to fruition: a powerful undercurrent in the character's psyche that has been getting momentum or a master plan laid down months in advance. Like with your new themes, you don't have to apply the changes of the Moment of Evolution immediately; you can wait for the best time to introduce them into the story.

- ☐ Choose another broad power tag
- ☐ Gain an extra theme: Ally
- ☐ Gain an extra theme: Base of Operations
- ☐ Gain an extra theme: Ride
- ☐ Get closure from your Nemeses
- ☐ Go through a transformation
- ☐ Leave the City
- ☐ Make one Core Move permanently *Dynamite!*
- ☐ Make one Core Move permanently *Dynamite!*
- ☐ Make one Core Move permanently *Dynamite!*
- ☐ See through the Mist

CHOOSE ANOTHER BROAD POWER TAG

Choose a single new power tag for any one of your themes, following the instructions under Choose a New Power Tag (see page 280). However, you are able to choose a broad tag, even if you already have one broad tag among your power tags. You still cannot choose a tag that is too broad.

From this point on, you are allowed to have two broad tags at most, instead of just one. If you ever lose one of your broad tags, you may choose a broad tag in its stead when you choose new power tags.

The sorceress Morgana experiences a Moment of Evolution when she defeats her long-time enemy, Merlin. Lizzy, who plays Morgana, feels like her Moment of Evolution should represent a dramatic

increase in her magical power. Morgana already has the broad tag *book of shadows* which allows her to create different spells using **Change the Game.** Lizzy wants to use her Moment of Evolution to choose an additional tag, *surge of magical power*. Since the MC deems this tag too broad (it will boost any magical spell Morgana casts), Lizzy rewrites it into *stronger spells of darkness*, which will boost only dark spells. The MC approves this as her new broad power tag. If Morgana ever loses *book of shadows* or *stronger spells of darkness*, Morgana still retains the right to have two broad power tags. When she chooses new power tags for a new theme or as an improvement, she could pick a broad tag as long as she doesn't go over two broad tags in total.

GAIN AN EXTRA THEME

You gain an extra theme, in addition to your four character themes and any existing crew or extra themes. Depending on the improvement you chose, turn over to the Ally, Base of Operation, or Ride themebooks and answer the questions to create your new extra theme. Read more about extra themes at the end of this chapter.

Matt, who plays Kitsune, decides to use Kit's next Moment of Evolution to give him a new sidekick: a great fox spirit called Gon-Gon. He starts to drop hints about what Kitsune's crewmates see: big fox footprints in the snow or a fluffy big tail disappearing down the alley. Between sessions, he uses the Ally themebook to create Gon-Gon. In the next session, when Kitsune gets into trouble and summons his furry friend, Matt reveals the extra theme and puts Gon-Gon to work as it leaps from the shadows to the rescue.

GET CLOSURE FROM YOUR NEMESES

You learn how to solve problems permanently and put things to rest. You now have the means to permanently overcome or resolve both your existing Nemeses and any Nemeses you may gain in the future. The MC will usually require that you take action to permanently solve or vanquish a Nemesis but she must provide you with the opportunity to do so. Remove any Nemesis you successfully solve or vanquish from the list of Nemeses on your character card. It will stay solved or vanquished and will not return in any form (unless it is recreated when another theme is lost).

Det. Enkidu now has Gilgamesh as her Nemesis. When she acquires a Moment of Evolution, Jerry, who plays Enkidu, decides to find closure. The MC provides the detective with an ancient text that leads her to the Spear of Destiny, a weapon that can destroy demigods like Gilgamesh. She now must find Gilgamesh and strike him down with the spear (or threaten to do so). If she does, Gilgamesh leaves the game, at least as a Nemesis, and does not return.

Alternatively, Jerry could decide that the detective finds an old picture of the two from the days they were partners. Showing it to Gilgamesh, she reminds him of the good old days and they agree to part ways amicably.

Enkidu now knows how to find closure so she can permanently resolve all of her other Nemeses and any Nemeses she will get in the future.

GO THROUGH A TRANSFORMATION

Your character goes through a transformation that changes her to the core. It may be a complete physical transformation, a pivotal lifestyle change, a re-invention of her identity, or even a mystical change that leaves her with a new Mythos. You can alter any single detail in your character or rewrite the character completely. Do not take this lightly – you can only reinvent yourself *once*.

- **Concept:** Change your character concept, Mythos, or Logos
- **Themes:** Discard any of your themes. You do not get Build-Up, a Nemesis, or a new nascent theme. Instead, for each theme you discard, create a new theme that has the same number of power tags, weakness tags, and improvements as the theme you discarded. You may trade improvements for power tags and vice versa. Create a new Mystery or Identity for the new theme. The new theme has no Attention and no Fade or Crack; however, for every three Attention you had in all your discarded themes in total, you may take a Build-Up point (any remainder is discarded with no

effect). You may choose to transfer a power tag or improvement allocation from a new theme to any of your themes, old or new.

- **Tags:** You may rewrite any of your power or weakness tags. You may also discard a tag and choose a tag of the same type (power or weakness) in another theme, old or new.
- **Mystery or Identity:** You may rewrite any of your Mysteries or Identities.
- **Theme Improvements:** You may discard any of your theme improvements and instead choose a new theme improvement, from any theme, old or new. You may also choose a new power tag on any theme instead of the theme improvement you discarded.
- **Moments of Evolution:** You can discard any of the Moments of Evolution you chose and choose others instead. You lose any benefits you received from them, such as extra themes or the ability to make a move *Dynamite!*

Your Build-Up points stay the same (unless you trade Attention for more Build-Up when you change some themes). Nemeses and Moments of Evolution you previously gained, if you have any, also do not change.

Lamar decides that meeting Margo Falls, his dangerous "Dulcinea", has changed Sullivan through and through. When he gets a Moment of Evolution, he chooses the transformation. Sullivan is no longer a retro-loving poor reporter; he is the suave and elegant right hand, bodyguard, and lover of a super-criminal. Lamar discards the themes Searching for The Lost (Routine) and Retro Renegade (Possessions) and instead builds two new themes: Pay For Your Sins (Mission), which describes his plan to bring down the people behind the pond incident, and Dulcinea (Defining Relationship), focusing on Margo Falls. Since he had two Attention marked on each of the themes he discarded, he has a total of four discarded Attention. He converts three into another Build-Up point and discards the remaining last point.

LEAVE THE CITY

For whatever odd reason, your character is able to cross the City boundaries and leave the City – and come back. It could be that she finds a way or a means to leave or that this aspect of the Mist simply doesn't work on her anymore. This Moment of Evolution is a story development that has no bearing on the rules but can have an enormous effect on your series. What your character finds beyond the City is up to you and the MC. Does she find the rest of the world? Is it as she expected or in a different state than she thought? Does she discover the dimension of the Mythoi, where pure legendary forces clash? Or is it just miles and miles of driving on a road through the fog? Anything could be out there, beyond the City. In the words of a great man: I envy your finding out.

MAKE ONE CORE MOVE PERMANENTLY *DYNAMITE!*

Choose one of the Core Moves. Whenever you make this move, it's *Dynamite!* You can choose this option up to three times, choosing a different Core Move every time.

After sacrificing his car and gear (Logos theme) in a dramatic showdown by the pond, Sullivan has a Moment of Evolution. Lamar, who plays Sullivan, thinks it's time his character got some answers about the origin of the pond. He decides to make **Investigate** permanently *Dynamite!* so that he can get more out of his inquiries and get to the bottom of the pond.

SEE THROUGH THE MIST

Your character awakens to the reality of the Mist and is able to peer through it. Choose one: either your character has a one-time monumental discovery or your character can permanently see a single type of thing of your choice through the Mist, such as the Mythos behind Rifts, traces of the influence of a specific Mythos, evidence of City-wide conspiracy, or the machinations of those who control the Mist. Like "Leave the City", this Moment of Evolution is a major story development that can significantly alter your series. How this plays out and what game effects should be used to reflect it is up to you and the MC.

THE ROLE OF THE MC: WHAT'S BEYOND THE CITY AND THE MIST?

As the MC, the players depend on you to create details for your series which are exciting to uncover. When you design the series, or when a lead character is first about to have a Moment of Evolution, ask yourself what would happen if a player chose "Leave the City" or "See Through the Mist".

Plant some valuable information about the big questions of the series just outside of the City or behind the Mist so that the lead characters will have something substantial to discover. You can find some ideas under What The Characters Don't Know Yet (page 341) or come up with your own ideas. Leaving the City or Seeing Through the Mist doesn't have to reveal *everything*, but it should reveal something amazing.

BECOMING AN AVATAR

Your Mythos' ultimate goal is to turn you, its Rift, into an Avatar: a living embodiment of its story. An Avatar is a living god in the City. She is a portal to nearly unlimited power, playing out her Mythos' drama on a massive scale. Her own persona is all but gone; she is now a vessel existing purely to serve the narrative of her Mythos and its agenda in the City.

To become an Avatar, a Rift must give up the last thing that makes her human. In game terms, this is reflected by your last Logos theme. **When you lose your last Logos theme, you become an Avatar**, scintillating with pure legendary power. You do not get a new nascent Mythos theme instead of your lost Logos theme as normal, so you are left with three Mythos themes. However, you do receive the Build-Up points from losing your theme as well as a Nemesis.

When you become an Avatar, your character immediately knows how she can make your Mythos' legend come true on the grandest scale. As a player, you must define what your Mythos wants from the City. First, establish what your Mythos is about in its purest form and what the nature of its story is:

? WHAT DOES MY MYTHOS ULTIMATELY WANT?

The answer may be related to:

- **a lesson** your Mythos teaches, e.g., Zeus punished Prometheus for stealing
- **a desire** it represents, e.g., the Big Bad Wolf can embody the desire to devour
- **a goal** it has in the legend, e.g., the Monkey King wanted freedom from confinement
- **an emotion** it evokes, e.g., the Snow Queen was able to spread hate and make others see the worst in everything

Next, think of how your Mythos plans to apply its goal to the City on the grandest scale possible. Think in terms of practical goals:

? WHAT IS THE ENDGAME OF MY MYTHOS?

The answer could be:

- **a dramatic revolution** that your Mythos wants to enact, e.g., Prometheus wants to teach humans how to use fire to grow, so he aspires to clear the City from any violent use of fire (including firearms, explosives, etc.) or he's angry and he wants to take away fire (including electricity, combustion engines, etc.) from the undeserving humans and bring about total darkness.
- **a rampage through the City** where it reenacts its story, e.g., the Big Bad Wolf wants to roam the City and devour anything it wishes to, starting with the accursed Third Little Piggy who thwarted him before.
- **a specific achievement** that encapsulates what it wants, e.g., the Monkey King wants to ascertain the necessary means to kill the Buddha and then do it, freeing himself from the only one who could ever capture him.
- **an insidious scheme** to spread its emotions, ideas, etc. throughout the City, e.g., the Snow

Queen wants to spread shards of hatred-inducing glass in the hearts of all the City residents.

Do not take your Logos themes or your crew into consideration when deciding on an endgame. Your Mythos doesn't care about that; everything in your mortal life is either a pawn that serves its agenda, an obstacle, or nonexistent. To clarify this point, even Mythoi that seek to help others ultimately see those in need as tools with which they can materialize their story.

AVATARS IN THE GAME

Becoming an Avatar makes your character extremely powerful while binding her to the aggressive agenda of her Mythos. While her Avatarhood lasts, you will be playing a force to be reckoned with, someone who has the power to change the fate of the City and the series.

Responding to the unbridled desires of your Mythos, the other player characters may try and stop your character or at least bring her back to a more human state, or they could join her cause.

While you can achieve a lot in the name of your Mythos, challenges from within (your ordinary persona) and from without (the crew and other forces in the CIty) will make it increasingly harder to maintain your Avatarhood. It's okay, because Avatarhood is designed to be a climactic yet short-lived moment in the series. Make the most out of it and enjoy the ride.

Once you know the endgame of your Mythos, it becomes your permanent **Agenda**. From this point on, this is the only thing that matters to you as an Avatar.

As Sullivan's story evolves, the investigative reporter continues his search after the people responsible for the catastrophe in his neighborhood. However, as his Mythos powers grow, he begins channelling more and more of Don Quixote, a rather insane Spanish nobleman who fought windmills thinking they were giants. Repeatedly choosing his Mythos over his investigations, he eventually loses his final Logos theme, Searching For The Lost, and becomes an Avatar.

To create Sullivan's Agenda as an Avatar, Lamar thinks about the nature of the Don Quixote story. He sees the story as revolving around foolhardy chivalry. Then, working that into the City, he thinks Sullivan will take the most stupidly chivalrous action he can think of as an Agenda, most likely tackling someone way out of his league. He decides that Sullivan targets a villainous character in the series that seems to be behind it all: the Rift of the Giant (from Jack and the Beanstalk), the CEO of a corrupt mega-corporation and possibly an Avatar himself (neither Sullivan nor Lamar know for certain). Once Don Quixote has his eyes set on this windmill, there is no turning back. He must pursue his Agenda to the very end, his or his enemy's.

YOUR SECRET IDENTITY

In the deepest recesses of an Avatar's heart, there is still one last fragment of humanity. In order to remain a Rift and not dissipate into pure Mythos, an Avatar must still have this mote of humanity in her. This final grain of ordinary life is based on your character's last Identity, the Identity of the last Logos theme you lost. Even though you sacrificed or lost this part of you when you became an Avatar, this last Identity represents the thing dearest to you in your mortal life, the thing that was the last to go.

When you become an Avatar, keep your last Identity in mind. It is the tiny part in you that is still somehow human and may make you human once more.

Avatars usually keep their last Identity a secret (along with who they were before their Avatarhood) because this last shred of humanity could also be their undoing: anyone who learns about it can use it to make them veer away from their Agenda, as explained below under Ending Your Avatarhood. For this reason, an Avatar's last Identity is also referred to as her **Secret Identity**. Your crewmates and other people who know about this weakness become potential threats.

Sullivan'ts last Identity was "The people of this neighborhood deserve to know." Lamar therefore notes that

Sullivan still cares about the victims who were lost in the catastrophe and their families (even though he lost that Identity). If Sullivan believes at any point that his pursuit of the Giant would somehow bury the evidence of the catastrophe for good, eliminating the chance to find those who were lost, his conviction in his Agenda might waver.

PLAYING AN AVATAR

When you play an Avatar, you play your character as normal. However, **as long as you are an Avatar, you recover burnt tags instantly**. In other words, you are able to burn a tag for a hit with every action you take, which often means you garner an automatic 10+ with a Power of 3 (see Burning for a Hit, page 222). You are also completely impervious to any attempt to burn your tags, since you recover them instantly. You even recover permanently burnt tags when you have downtime.

One of the most impactful aspects of playing an Avatar is that it's very hard to impose a status on you because with even one relevant defensive tag to burn on your **Face Danger** move, you automatically shrug it off (assuming no other statuses reduce your score below 10 and assuming you can **Face Danger**).

While this grants you incredible power and allows you enormous freedom, you are still limited by all other rules, including the following:

- Your actions are still limited by your tags. You cannot take actions that exceed your tags (unless they are related to your Mythos powers and you **Stop. Holding. Back**).
- Statuses still affect you normally: they can reduce or increase your Power and they may incapacitate you (tier 5) or even kill you (tier 6).
- You cannot invoke weakness tags (and therefore, mark Attention) when you burn a tag for a hit.
- You cannot **Face Danger** against temporary statuses imposed by your crewmates using Juice, unless the MC says otherwise.
- You cannot burn a tag for moves that do not use roll+Power, such as **Montage (Downtime)**, **Look Beyond the Mist**, and **Stop.Holding. Back.** For the sake of such moves, your Mythos is 3 and your Logos is 0.

In addition, **as an Avatar, you do not mark Fade when you Make a Hard Choice against your Mysteries**. Your Mysteries have taken you thus far, they brought you to the discovery of what you are. Now, they no longer limit you as you have your Mythos' Agenda set before you. You may still mark Fade for other reasons, such as the **Stop. Holding. Back.** move and other rules.

CHALLENGES OF AN AVATAR

Your main challenge as an Avatar is to accomplish what is on your Agenda. Veering away from your Agenda immediately ends your Avatarhood, as explained below.

Secondly, when you become an Avatar, the MC will consider how your Avatarhood affects the other major powers in the City and introduce complications accordingly. By definition, your Agenda does not sit well with some of the strongest forces in the City. When an Avatar is born, all the other Avatars in the City soon learn about it and may very well seek to recruit the new Avatar and form a pact or destroy it before it destroys them. Some of the Avatars in the City have been around for a very long time, gaining power and influence in preparation for exactly this kind of situation and have outlived many new Avatars. An Avatar's Mythos may also be somehow connected to your Mythos, so they may wish to clash or cooperate with you in order to reenact their Mythos' story.

Furthermore, an Avatar is a gaping Rift in the Mist. When an Avatar is born, the Mist is never late to try and repair itself. Sealing the rogue Rift becomes a top priority and all of the Mist's resources and powers of forgetfulness and illusion soon come crashing down on the Avatar and anyone who may have contacted him. The MC may introduce new Dangers into the game related to this effect.

Finally, your crewmates may present a challenge in and of themselves. If they disagree with your Agenda or even feel that you have lost your sanity to your Mythos, they might try to shut you down.



THE ROLE OF THE MC: WHEN AN AVATAR ENTERS THE GAME

When a lead character becomes an Avatar, the balance of focus in the story changes a little. For the duration of the character's Avatarhood, some of the focus in the game shifts from the main plot to the transformed character. A new major player entered the City, and the future is now less clear. Think about all the story arcs and major arch-villains you planned for the series. How do they take in this new threat? How do their Mythoi react to the Avatar? How does she play into their worldly aspirations and schemes?

Naturally, the Avatar character receives more focus because this is the moment she is shining in all her glory (other characters will have their moment too). However, the series does not become completely centered on the Avatar: the rest of the characters may still continue their investigation with or without the Avatar. Furthermore, they must respond to this new situation, whether by joining the Avatar or trying to stop her. They may think they can stay indifferent, but an Avatar is a very aggressive force; eventually, they will either be in the Avatar's path or following behind her. This state of affairs can divert some of the airtime in the game to dealing with the crew's internal issues, possibly leaving less time for the case at hand.

As an MC, your job is to roll with this new development and make it interesting by (a) giving it the airtime it requires, even if it changes or temporarily sidelines the case you had in mind, (b) continue to give the other characters enough airtime to promote their stories, and (c) using the Avatarhood to make everyone's life interesting by introducing City-scale threats and complications like other Avatars and the Mist.

THE END OF YOUR AVATARHOOD

Your Avatarhood can end in several ways, listed below. In the end, however, Avatarhood is a chance to bring the Mythos side of your character to a dramatic climax. Because of the huge variety in Avatars, Agendas, and circumstances, you will need to interpret these rules on a case-by-case basis.

YOUR CHOICE

You can end your character's Avatarhood at any point. Perhaps you feel your Avatar has accomplished her Agenda or that someone touched her enough to make her feel human again and jolt her out of the Avatar state; the decision is up to you.

```
Sullivan defeats the Rift of the Gi-
ant and wins the heart of his newfound
Dulcinea, Margo Falls. Lamar feels the
story is complete and was played out in
the most dramatic way possible, so he
decides to end the Avatarhood.
```

VEERING AWAY FROM THE AGENDA

When you take an action that does not promote your Agenda, your Avatarhood ends. In other words, you must always be striving to promote your Agenda, directly or indirectly, to remain an Avatar. When you make even a single move for any reason or cause other than promoting your Agenda, your Avatarhood ends. The ways in which you choose to promote your Agenda are up to you and may be overt, subtle, friendly, insidious, etc. – but they must always strive to bring your plan closer to your endgame, or secure the necessary means to do so (first of which is your survival, of course). For example, if your endgame is to become the mayor, you can attack the mayor openly and take his place by force or you can slowly and insidiously infiltrate local politics and sway the residents to elect you in the next election.

An Avatar is a force of nature. It is a tidal wave of legendary force, just barely human. If you stray from your Agenda to take other actions, you indicate that your character's human side still rules her, even if only for a brief moment. When this happens, you are no longer an Avatar. Perhaps the Mist uses this fragment of humanity to take over and seal your Rift or it is actually this fragment of humanity that elevates you beyond space and

time into the heart of your Mythos, ending your existence in the City. Perhaps your Mythos loses interest in you. The choice of how to interpret this event is yours.

Other characters, and especially your crewmates, can try to make you veer away from your Agenda by appealing to your Secret Identity, which, while it does not bind you, may still have a place in your heart.

In the final showdown between Sullivan and the Giant, the Giant knocks down a part of a building, and a child is buried in the debris. One might say that if Sullivan stops the battle to help the child, he is veering away from his Agenda to take down the Giant. However, since saving a child is an act of chivalry, and Sullivan's agenda is about chivalry, Lamar deems this action as not veering from the Agenda.

If, instead of a helpless child, the debris would bury a folder full of evidence about the cause for the catastrophe in Lakeside Drive, that would be a different story altogether. Taking an action to secure the folder would definitely be going against Sullivan's Agenda of chivalrously defeating the Giant and would therefore end his Avatarhood. Sullivan is not bound by his Secret Identity but it's still an interesting choice because something inside him still wants to know. Lamar must choose between the truth about Lakeside Drive and the Don Quixote Mythos.

LOSING A THEME

When you lose a theme as an Avatar, your Avatarhood ends. This could happen if you **Stop. Holding. Back.** and lose a theme as a sacrifice or if you mark three Fade on one of your themes. You do not get a new theme to replace the one you lost; instead, follow the instructions under The Aftermath of Avatarhood below.

Losing a theme ends your Avatarhood because there are no half-measures in Avatarhood; either you are a fully open gateway for your Mythos or you're no longer an Avatar. Losing a Mythos theme represents a failure of your Mythos powers which, even if partial, leads to the collapse of your Avatarhood.

During the battle with the Giant, Lamar uses **Stop. Holding. Back** to conjure a massive imaginary lance, a hundred feet long. He uses it to slay the Giant but the cost is dear: he loses a theme, which also ends his Avatarhood.

OTHER APPROPRIATE REASONS

You or the MC may define a reasonable set of means by which your Avatarhood can be ended, such as feeding you the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge or getting your Mythos to transfer to another Rift. This solution should be related to your Mythos, the Mist, etc. If anyone succeeds in applying the solution, your Avatarhood ends.

Your crewmates or non-player characters can try to discover what this method is (using **Investigate**) and obtain what is needed to end your Avatarhood. However, applying the solution should not be an easy task and may require a great deal of effort from those who desire to terminate your Avatarhood.

Based on the Mythos of Don Quixote, Lamar and Alice the MC agree that if anyone makes Sullivan believe that the Giant was actually a windmill, it would end his Avatarhood. Later, Goodfellow and Det. Enkidu, who want to save their crewmate from a certain death, discover this loophole in his Avatarhood. They plan to use Goodfelllow's trickery to convince Sullivan that the Giant is not real and that he's just a distraction from the people who are truly behind Lakeside Drive. To make things a little more interesting, the MC adds that to create a believable illusion the size of the Giant, the two need to acquire a special artifact or something that belongs to the Giant. Furthermore, Goodfellow will have to **Stop. Holding. Back.**, and the sacrifice would be dear. If the duo succeeds and Sullivan is convinced, Sullivan's Avatarhood ends.

THE AFTERMATH OF AVATARHOOD

When your Avatarhood ends, you may choose one of the following:

Your character transcends into her Mythos or dissipates into the Mist, never to be seen again. She leaves the story permanently.

Your character transcends into her Mythos or dissipates into the Mist and returns, now or later, as a new Touched character (one Mythos theme, which may be nascent, and three full Logos themes). You create your character as a brand new character, retaining none of her previous themes, crew relationships, Build-Up points, or Moments of Evolution. This represents your character's meteoric fall from grace or her rebirth as a flesh-and-blood mortal.

OPTIONAL RULE: REBUILD AN AVATAR

The fall from Avatarhood is not one easily survived. By any imaginable standards, opening up to a Mythos so wholly and then losing this connection should leave you as a pile of ashes. If you do come back from that, you are so deeply transformed that you might as well be a different person. For this reason, the core rules of *City of Mist* state you should build your character from scratch.

As an alternative to building a brand new character, your group can decide to opt for rebuilding characters that fall from Avatarhood. Your character still changes to a Touched character, losing two of her three Mythos themes, but she keeps everything else. To represent that, rebuild the character as in the Moment of Evolution "Go Through a Transformation" (page 304), with the exception that your transformed character must have one Mythos theme and three Logos themes.

FALLING ASLEEP

The Mist is always around you. Like a fish that cannot perceive the aquarium, you too cannot grasp its power over you. It is only in those rare moments when you *remember that you have forgotten* that you can get a taste of the Mist's work. But, what if you would never remember? What if you had never awakened again? What if you fell back to an oblivious daydream, as so many do? You would never know the Mist existed and you would never have any reason to believe there is anything beyond ordinary life.

To become a Sleeper again, a Rift must give up her last connection to her Mythos. In game terms, this is reflected by your last Mythos theme. **When you lose your last Mythos theme, you become a Sleeper again**, forgetting anything legendary you have ever seen or excusing it in the most creative ways. Life is again ordinary for you, in the sense that it lacks the magic of Mythos, although you may still lead an unorthodox or unusual lifestyle.

When you become a Sleeper, you do not get a nascent Logos theme as normal. Therefore, you are left with three Logos themes. You still receive the Build-Up points from losing your last Mythos theme, but you cannot choose Moments of Evolution with a Mythos nature (such as an Ally that is a Familiar) or choose the options Leave the City or See Through the Mist. Finally, you make a Nemesis as usual, but you are unable to perceive its legendary manifestations, if any. For example, if a household gnome haunts you, you deny it like everything else, thinking it's some strange prank.

SLEEPERS IN THE GAME

Becoming a Sleeper allows you to play as an ordinary resident of the City, for a while. It creates a Mythos-free bubble around your character and puts a strong emphasis on your character's ordinary life and, if you so wish, on existential questions, such as:

- Who would my character be without her Mythos?
- What is the nature of the Mist?
- Is ignorance really bliss?
- Can ordinary life also be magical, in its own way?

Becoming a Sleeper can give you a great opportunity for role-playing your character and building up her backstory.

You can continue to play the game as a Sleeper for a while. However, the world of *City of Mist* does have Mythoi and your character's crew needs her, so various forces in the game will strive to wake your character up, from within and from without. That's fine, because being a Sleeper is a temporary state by design, meant to provide opportunities for granularity and depth against the grand backdrop of the Mythoi. Make the most out of it and enjoy the ride.

YOUR SECRET MYSTERY

Nobody is truly and utterly asleep. Your Sleeper has a last Mystery, the Mystery of the last Mythos theme you lost. It represents the last echoes of a question within her, which may one day reawaken, even though she has forsaken it. It is a tiny doubt in the back of her head about her life and her existence in the City, like a thread that is waiting to be pulled and unravelled but, for the most part, never is.

When you become a Sleeper, keep your last Mystery in mind. There is something of your Mythos still alive inside your character, a flame that may be rekindled by the events in the story.

Sleepers are apprehensive about revealing their last Mystery to others or even contemplating it themselves because, in a way, all Sleepers are afraid of waking up, and this final speck of the legendary can explode into a full awakening, as explained below under Waking Up Again. For this reason, a Sleeper's last Mystery is also referred to as her **Secret Mystery**. Your crewmates and other people who know about this weakness then become potential threats, even if unconsciously so.

```
Det. Enkidu finally gives up on her war
with the gods, what with angel assas-
sins, Gilgamesh, and a wilting disease
she was cursed with. She loses her last
Mythos theme, and becomes a Sleeper
again. However, her last Mystery, "How
can the gods themselves be defeated?"
is still there, somewhere, and may be
used to reawaken her.
```

PLAYING A SLEEPER

When you play a Sleeper, you play your character as normal. However, your character becomes entirely blinded by the Mist, unable to see anything legendary for what it is. You take a permanent status of *mistbound-5*. This status cannot be removed or changed, except by very unusual circumstances, such as abilities that affect the Mist itself. While you have this status, you cannot take any actions that involve Mythos powers, nor can you make any moves related to Mythos like **Look Beyond the Mist** and **Stop. Holding. Back.** Other legendary effects around your character still affect her normally.

```
As a Sleeper, Det. Enkidu is mist-
bound-5. The wilting-disease-3 she was
cursed with still continues to plague
her, but she cannot recognize its leg-
endary nature. To the detective, her
illness seems like an ordinary, albeit
horrible, condition.
```

DENYING THE BEYOND

Sometimes, when awakened Rifts fall asleep, a terrible reversal takes place and the power of their Mythos is harnessed to augment the Mist around them. Why this happens and through what mechanism is up to you and the MC and could be the subject of an entire investigation. Rifts in this state are **Denying the Beyond**: they reject the thought of anything beyond the ordinary so powerfully that they actually suppress the powers of the Mythoi around them, creating a thicker blanket of Mist, as it were. No Rift in the City can resist this influence

and while Rifts present near a Sleeper who is Denying the Beyond can still remember having their powers, they are completely unable to manifest them. Sometimes the denial is so powerful that such Sleepers leave a trail of fortified Mist behind them, protecting not only themselves but also anything associated with them (family, friends, workplace, etc.) from Mythos powers. Rifts who are a part of these Sleepers' lives do not become a part of that trail, but they are affected by anyone else who is.

There is no telling what happens when a Sleeper Denying the Beyond encounters an Avatar. In such extreme cases, the MC decides how everyone is affected. Things might get weird.

When you become a Sleeper, you have the option to also be Denying the Beyond. You choose this when you lose your last Mythos theme and you cannot change this decision later (unless you reawaken and fall asleep again). If you choose to Deny the Beyond, the following move applies:

DENYING THE BEYOND

When you are a Sleeper Denying the Beyond:

- **Anyone and anything around you takes an immediate ongoing *suppressed-Mythos-powers-5* status. They can only Face Danger if they have the ability to resist Mist effects.**
- **Any existing Mythos-based story tags, statuses, and effects around you are either removed, temporarily suppressed, or revised to reflect a mundane version of themselves (MC's choice)**
- **The MC cannot use any Mythos-based moves.**

When affected targets leave your vicinity, all of the above effects expire. Removed statuses stay removed, suppressed statuses are restored, and revised statuses regain their original version.

Trail: You can make anyone or anything in your life who is not a Rift into a source of the same effect described above, as long as you regularly interact with them.

While under the full effect of the status, player and non-player characters cannot take any action that involves Mythos powers. Even Mythos powers activated from afar lose their effectiveness as they come near any source of a Denying the Beyond.

Note that even if someone is able to resist the effects of your Denying the Beyond and activate Mythos powers around you, you are still *mist-bound-5* and therefore cannot acknowledge their powers.

> Jerry, who plays Det. Enkidu, decides that she is Denying the Beyond. First, her status of *wilting-disease-3*, given by the gods, is removed (as ruled by the MC).
>
> Whenever the detective is around, her crewmates, Sullivan and Goodfellow, each take the status *suppressed-Mythos-powers-5* and cannot use Mythos powers or make Mythos-related moves. Furthermore, when the detective steps into a scene with any Mythos-based story tags, such as *witching glyphs*, the MC removes these tags. Finally, the MC can't use any Mythos-based moves on her, for example, the moves belonging to Gilgamesh, a non-player Rift character.
>
> Jerry wants to use the trail option to extend this effect to everyone on Enkidu's precinct. From this point on, all the Lakeside PD cops become sources of the same effect and Mythos-powers cannot be used when a Lakeside PD cop is present. Jerry can't make Rifts like Sullivan, Goodfellow, or Gilgamesh into sources of this effect, but their powers are suppressed whenever Det. Enkidu or a Lakeside PD cop is nearby.

Groups are encouraged to experiment with Denying the Beyond and use it to create interesting mystical situations. For example, a Sleeper Denying the Beyond could be a very reliable insurance policy against other Rifts. The specific nature of the effect (for example, its range, who exactly is affected, etc.) should be decided by the MC based on the particularities of your series.

CHALLENGES OF A SLEEPER

A Sleeper wants to sleep (in a way everybody does, some just can't). Her first and foremost challenge are the powers that wish to awaken her. Her ultimate goal, even if completely unconscious, is to keep her life stable and avoid anything that could reawaken the Mythos inside her.

This sleep can be challenged by various characters in the story. First, there are the other player characters who may wish to reawaken their crewmate. Then there are other non-player Rifts or even other Sleepers who destabilize her life. Old enemies from her days as a Rift could come looking for a payback, especially now that she is without her powers. If she is Denying the Beyond, maybe some Rifts are suffering from it and want to end it.

WAKING UP AGAIN

Your sleep can come to an end in several ways, listed below. However, playing a Sleeper is a chance to bring the Logos side of your character as well as the effects of the Mist to the forefront of your story. You should interpret these rules on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific story of each Sleeper.

YOUR CHOICE

You can end your character's sleep at any point. Perhaps you feel that she has finally accepted the reality of something beyond the Mist or that events around her have somehow jolted her memory; the decision is up to you.

> After months as a Sleeper, Det. Enkidu bumps into a feral child involved in an investigation who reminds her of her own past and Mythos. As an emotional scene ensues, Jerry thinks it's a good place for Enkidu's Sleeper stint to end; the detective awakens.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE LEGENDARY

When you take an action to look for answers beyond your ordinary life, your sleep ends. In other words, to remain asleep you must always be denying the existence of something beyond the ordinary. Other characters, and especially your crewmates, can try to make you acknowledge the world beyond the Mist by appealing to your Secret Mystery.

> As a Sleeper detective, Enkidu continues her work with the crew, but she never believes that the oddities they encounter have a truly supernatural origin. For her, the Rifts they meet are just psychos and weirdos, and she's happy to arrest them all. However, she does notice that there are greater players involved, people of immense influence and power. The evidence accumulates and eventually her crewmates confront her with the reality that these powerful movers-and-shakers actually possess legendary powers. If Enkidu takes any action to investigate this avenue, even once, she awakens.

LOSING A THEME

When you lose a theme as a Sleeper, your sleep ends. This could happen if you mark three Crack on one of your themes. You do not get a new theme to replace the one you lost; instead, follow the instructions under The Aftermath of Sleep below.

A Sleeper's sleep depends on the stability and comfort of the known. The moment a major element of your ordinary life shatters and you are left broken, doubting, or confused, your Mythos will come raining down on your consciousness and you will awaken. Losing a Logos theme represents a rattling loss of stability in one of the areas of your life which, even if partial, leads to an abrupt end to your sleep.

> Det. Enkidu's wild nature (Personality Logos theme) haunts her even when her Mythos is buried deep inside. Getting into a few fights with suspects and cops alike, she incurs the wrath of her chief, marking Crack once and then twice on her police detective Routine Logos theme. Meanwhile, avoiding fights makes her mark Crack on her Personality theme. The detective is walking on thin ice; if she gets into one more fight, she will lose her job and her Routine Logos theme. If she gets called out but doesn't respond, she will have controlled her temper, losing her Personality Logos theme. Either way, a change of this magnitude involving a lost Logos theme will wake her up and rekindle her forgotten Mythos.

OTHER APPROPRIATE REASONS

You or the MC may define a reasonable set of means by which your Sleeper character can be awoken, such as finding and performing an ancient ritual or obtaining a dragon's heart to reignite your inner fire. This solution may be related to your Mythos, the Mist, etc. If anyone succeeds in applying the solution, your sleep ends.

Your crewmates or non-player characters can try to discover what this method is (using **Investigate**) and obtain what is needed to end your sleep. However, applying the solution to wake up your Sleeper should not be an easy task and may require a great deal of effort from those who desire your awakening.

> Sullivan and Goodfellow are finding the situation with Det. Enkidu unbearable, especially since her player, Jerry, chose to have her Deny the Beyond, suppressing their powers when she's around. Together, they conspire to reawaken the wild detective. Their research reveals that only an Annunaki god can do so. The problem is, the Annunaki gods want Enkidu dead and the only one who can talk to them is Gilgamesh, an old nemesis of Enkidu. The pair note, however, that the Annunaki gods can't use their divine means to kill Enkidu while she is Denying the Beyond, so they plan on tricking the Annunaki gods to awaken her but save her from the gods' clutches before the gods can enact their fatal verdict. This better work.

THE AFTERMATH OF YOUR SLEEP

When your sleep ends, you may choose one of the following:

- Your character wakes up to the reality of the Mythoi and the Mist and, having acknowledged what she is, decides (consciously or unconsciously) to forego her Mythos forever and become an entirely ordinary resident of the City, for better or worse. She leaves the story permanently.
- Your character wakes up to the reality of the Mythoi and the Mist and, having acknowledged what she is, decides to make the impossible leap back to awareness. She returns, now or later, as a new Legendary character (three Mythos themes and one Logos theme). However, this conscious leap demands everything she has. You create your character as a brand new character, retaining none of her previous themes, crew relationships, Build-Up points, or Moments of Evolution. This represents the total transformation required of your character in order to escape the gravitational pull of the Mist once more.

OPTIONAL RULE: REBUILD A SLEEPER

The power of the Mist is absolute. Waking up is impossible. Try to imagine the leap from a total state of obliviousness to awareness; it is like the difference between zero and infinity. Even if it were somehow possible for your character, she is no longer the person she once was. For this reason, the core rules of *City of Mist* state you should build your character from scratch.

As an alternative to building a brand new character, your group can decide to opt for rebuilding characters that wake up again. Your character still changes to a Legendary character, losing two of her three Logos themes, but she keeps everything else. To represent that, rebuild the character as in the Moment of Evolution "Go Through a Transformation" (page 304), with the exception that your transformed character must have three Mythos themes and one Logos theme.



THE LIFE CYCLE OF THEMES

The dramatic moments in your character's life tell the story of her personal and mythical ups and downs, but also her evolution and possible rise to greatness or fall to slumber. In conclusion of this section, here is a summary of the life cycle of your character's themes.

Throughout the series, themes grow and deteriorate:

- **When a theme gains Attention**, it becomes stronger and more useful: power tags produce more Power, weakness tags produce more Attention, and improvements give you more possibilities. All of them also contribute to the amount of Build-Up you get when you finally let go of the theme.
- **When a theme gains Fade and Crack**, it's "cooking": it's getting ready to release all the narrative energy that it has been storing in the form of power tags, weakness tags, and improvements and transform it into Build-Up (much like a battery or a capacitor).

When a theme is finally replaced:

- **The theme converts all its power tags, weakness tags, and improvements into Build-Up**. As a result, sooner or later, you receive a Moment of Evolution, an improvement that is on another scale and more permanent than the improvements in your themes
- **You get a nascent theme of the other side**:
  - The life cycle of the theme begins again and continues as described above.
  - The balance of Mythos and Logos is changed. If it goes too far to either side, you become an Avatar or a Sleeper, and your character changes forever.





Extra themes represent additional resources or allies available to your character. You can gain extra themes through a Moment of Evolution (page 304). The extra themes you can choose from are:

- **Ally**, someone who has pledged to either follow you, lead you, or help you on your path. An Ally can be a mundane one, such as a rich benefactor who sponsors you, or a Rift, such as a newly-awakened teenager who tails you and gets into trouble. It can also be an animal, whether mundane or a Familiar (an animal Rift), or even a sentient Relic (an object Rift).
- **Base of Operations**, a location that you have obtained and dedicated to your activities. This location may be a mundane one or an Enclave (a Rift attached to a place).
- **Ride**, a means of transportation adapted to your needs in the field. A ride can be a vehicle, a Relic such as a flying carpet, or a riding beast, whether a mundane one or a Familiar such as a sea dragon.

When you gain a new extra theme, pick up a theme card and follow your chosen themebook to fill it out. As with all Moments of Evolution, you may choose to create and unveil this new theme at a later stage in the game to avoid interrupting the flow of the session.

CONVERTING STORY ELEMENTS INTO EXTRA THEMES

You can choose to create an extra theme around a character, resource, or possession that already exists in the series. If this story element is reflected in your themes or power tags, follow these guidelines when converting it to an extra theme.

CONVERTING THEMES

While your character's themes represent major aspects of your character, extra themes represent secondary aspects. Therefore, you should not convert allies and items that are represented by existing themes – such as Relic, Defining Relationship, or Possessions – into extra themes.

You can, however, use extra themes to expand on your existing themes and to represent a new role assumed by one of your allies or items, e.g., if your Defining Relationship also becomes your sidekick (Ally extra theme). However, the themes remain independent of each other. For example, if you lose your Defining Relationship it may mean this Ally is still your sidekick or that you replace them with a new sidekick; if you lose your Ally theme, it may mean that your Defining Relationship no longer acts as your sidekick but continues to be a major part of your life, and so on.

CONVERTING POWER TAGS

When you choose a new extra theme, you can choose to create it based on one or more of your existing power tags. If you do, you have the option of keeping or replacing each of the relevant power tags. If you choose to replace a power tag, remove it from your character's theme card and choose a different power tag for that theme by answering a question from the themebook (you can answer the question that generated the tag you removed again).

> Sullivan has a Moment of Evolution and his player, Lamar, chooses to use it to get a Ride extra theme, representing his old beat-up Mustang. Since Sullivan already has a power tag for his Mustang under his Retro Renegade (Possessions) theme, he can replace it with another power tag (using a power tag question from the Possessions themebook). However, Lamar opts to keep the power tag so he can pack more punch with his Mustang.

USING EXTRA THEMES

EXTRA THEMES TAGS

The rules for invoking power and weakness tags in extra themes, as well as for recovering burnt power tags in extra themes, are given in Tags in Crew and Extra Themes, page 227.

EXTRA THEMES ATTENTION & IMPROVEMENTS

Extra themes gain Attention in the same ways regular character themes do (see Character and Crew Growth, see page 280): invoking weakness tags, choosing to give the theme attention or explore its Mythos when making the **Montage (Downtime)** move, finding answers to the theme's Mystery (**Finally, Some Answers**), or sacrificing something for its Identity (**Make a Hard Choice**).

When all three Attention boxes on an extra theme are checked, reset the track to zero (erase all check marks) and choose an improvement for the theme. You may choose any of the improvements available for player themes.

FADE AND CRACK ON EXTRA THEMES

The Mysteries and Identities of extra themes follow the same rules as Mysteries and Identities of regular themes and are governed by the same rules and moves (**Finally, Some Answers**; **End of the Road**; and **Make a Hard Choice**), given under The Balance Of Mythos And Logos (page 286) and Making a Hard Choice (page 290)

SHELVING AN EXTRA THEME

Unlike regular character themes, extra themes are never lost, only shelved. When the third box on the Fade or Crack track of an extra theme is checked, the theme is shelved: its tags (power or weakness) cannot be invoked by anyone and you cannot mark any additional Fade or Crack on it. This could mean you and your Ally got into a fight or that your Ally was kidnapped; that your Base of Operations is shut-down or overrun; that your Ride is busted and in repairs, etc.

To reinstate a shelved theme, you must use an improvement to reset your Fade or Crack track. You can still gain Attention normally on a shelved extra theme, but since you cannot invoke weakness tags, this Attention must come from the **Montage (Downtime)** move or from acting in favor of the theme's Mystery or Identity. When you reach three Attention, you must use the improvement to reset your Fade or Crack track (although you can hold off the return of your extra theme into the story for the right moment). You cannot use Attention on a shelved extra theme for any other purpose.



EXTRA THEMEBOOK

ALLY

A SIDEKICK · A FAMILIAR · A SCIENTIST WHO BUILDS YOUR GADGETS · A MENTOR OR GURU · AN IMPORTANT OFFICIAL BACKING YOU · A MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURE FROM YOUR MYTHOS · AN INFORMER · A FILTHY-RICH SPONSOR · A MYSTERIOUS GUIDE · A REFORMED ENEMY

Reliable allies are hard to come by. Everyone in the City has their own agenda – Rifts more so than the rest – so coming across someone who believes in you and wants to help you do your job is a lucky opportunity. But not all allies are equal. Some follow you because they admire you, or even love you. Others share your objectives and want to see them through. For some allies, you are a pawn on their chessboard or a soldier in their war. And there are those who always stay in the shadows, whose true motives you may never really know – not until it's too late.

Allies come in all shapes and colors. Perhaps you are followed around by a wiccan teenager with a talent for getting into trouble. Maybe the red-eyed crow from your Mythos can be summoned at times of need. Or an unidentified contact in the mayor's office who calls himself Salem is tipping you off on some big backstage shenanigans. Your ally could even be a group, such as a band of ghostly samurais or creepy crawlers and insects that come out of the woodworks whenever you need them.

When you make an Ally, decide with the MC whether the Ally is your Secondary Character (see Secondary Characters, page 248).

CONCEPT

Think about your character's agenda and what she is trying to accomplish. What sort of help could she use the most? What individuals would be best at giving her support, guidance, and backing? Does she need more firepower, a different skillset, social representation, or more information? Is there anyone she already met who would become her ally?

Alternately, think of your character's Mythos. In the legend, did your Mythos have a companion? Or a supernatural being that guided her path and protected her from greater threats? Was there an animal, mundane or legendary, who befriended your Mythos?

Based on the above, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHO IS HELPING ME?

- _____, who feels _____ towards me.
- _____, who, like me, wants to _____.
- _____, who plans to use me to _____.
- _____, my animal companion(s).
- _____, whose motives are mysterious to me.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details about your ally: What is their name? What do they look like? How did you meet? Why are they helping you?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT DOES YOUR ALLY HELP YOU WITH?

basic thaumaturgy, *scout ahead*, *inside information*, *follow my heart*, *mobbing*

B WHAT IS YOUR ALLY'S PROFESSION, TRAINING, SOCIAL POSITION, OR SPECIAL NATURE?

schoolgirl, *totem spirit*, *bureaucrat*, *fairy godmother*, *notorious gang*

C WHAT OTHER ABILITIES DOES YOUR ALLY POSSESS?

running away, *share senses*, *embezzlement*, *protection from creatures of darkness*, *knife-fighting*

D WHAT DRIVES YOUR ALLY TO HELP YOU?

she admires me, *I am the chosen one*, *masterplan*, *endless compassion*, *ratpack loyalty*

E HOW DOES YOUR ALLY FIGHT OFF OPPOSITION?

banishing spell, *iron beak*, *legal mumbo-jumbo*, *blind with bright light*, *aggressive swagger*

F WHAT CAN YOUR ALLY DO TO PROTECT YOU OR THEMSELVES?

hide, *flock the enemy*, *counter-surveillance tactics*, *"You cannot pass this sigil"*, *blend in with the locals*

G WHAT SPECIAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION CAN YOUR ALLY TAP INTO?

hit the books, *spirits of the ancestors*, *shady government deals*, *the Compass of Conscience*, *word on the street*

H WHAT RESOURCES, ARTIFACTS, OR GEAR DOES YOUR ALLY POSSESS?

magical ingredients, *a shiny object*, *off-the-books extraction team*, *fairy dust*, *illegal firearms*

I WHO DOES YOUR ALLY KNOW?

fellow wiccans, *the dead walk with me*, *call the mayor*, *the Pleiades*, *owner of a criminal haven*

J WHY DO YOU TRUST YOUR ALLY?

she's no match for me, *telepathic link*, *aligned agendas*, *good intentions*, *we've been through a lot together*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A HOW DOES YOUR ALLY GET YOU IN TROUBLE?

conspicuous in a crowd, *eerie atmosphere*, *secret agenda*, *overprotective*, *easily provoked*

B WHAT ARE THE SHORTCOMINGS OF YOUR ALLY'S ABILITIES, METHODS, GEAR, OR ATTITUDE?

novice spellcaster, *limited grasp of technology*, *"There's no need to get physical"*, *requires a fairy's wand to focus*, *zero tactical coordination*

C WHAT CHARACTERISTIC OF YOUR ALLY IS MOST BOTHERSOME TO YOU?

stubborn, *immortal aloofness*, *conniving*, *naive*, *chatterbox*, *survival mentality*

D WHO OR WHAT IS MOST LIKELY TO HURT YOUR ALLY?

easy target, *archers & gunmen*, *"I think they're on to me"*, *creatures of darkness*, *police brutality*

MYSTERY OR IDENTITY

Choose a Mystery or an Identity for this theme. For example:

- (Teenage wiccan) "Who among my teachers uses black magic?"
- (Mayor's office informer) "Do exactly as I say or we're all screwed."
- (Fairy godmother) "What does destiny have in store for you?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- A statement that they often make and affects your relationship (Identity)
- A personal question (Mystery) or goal (Identity) that they expect your help with, such as a case they are working on or an enemy they swore to fight
- A general curiosity or an interest that holds their attention (Mystery)

Write your Mystery or Identity on your extra theme card.

TITLE

Name your Ally theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write it on your extra theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Teenage wiccan) Giggles & Witchcraft
- (Mayor's office informer) Our Inside Man
- (Fairy godmother) Someone Watching Over Me



ALLY THEME IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

☐ **Sharing is Caring**
Choose one of your ally's power tags which describes an ability or an item. Your ally can pass it on to you. You can use this power tag yourself even when your ally is not around. You do not need to **Change the Game** to do so.

☐ **Gets Around**
Once per session, you can have your ally show up at a scene anywhere in the City, even if you're not there, if it's even remotely possible that they can get there.

☐ **Back-to-back**
Once per session, when you make a move with your ally by your side, you can trade a miss result for a 7-9.

☐ **Tag Team**
Once a session, you can choose an opponent to tag team with your ally (it may be a collective). While one of you is fighting that opponent, the other teammate cannot be harmed by that opponent, but can only take action to recover, prepare for the fight, or defend from other threats.

☐ **Serious Firepower**
Choose any improvement from any of the Mythos or Logos themebooks. You can use this improvement only when taking actions as your ally and using your ally's tags.





EXTRA THEMEBOOK

BASE OF OPERATIONS

A PRIVATE OFFICE · AN UNDERWATER LAIR · A SECRET LAB · A FAIRY-TALE CASTLE · AN ANCIENT LIBRARY · THE MOUTH OF A VOLCANO · A TREE HOUSE · A SAFE HOUSE · A HOVEL UNDER A BRIDGE · HEADQUARTERS

The more your operation grows, the more it can use a base. Whether you're a vigilante, an investigator, a conspiracy theory madman, or a cultist, your activity needs resources, storage, and most importantly, a safe place to conduct your business away from prying eyes. Perhaps your base is the basement of a large apartment building where you tie up the crooks you capture. Maybe it is a cave full of treasures blocked by a stone wall that only slides open when the password is spoken. You could have a luxurious apartment inside the looking-glass hanging in your crummy tenement single bedroom.

Your base of operations can be any mundane facility or location in the City. It can have any sort of gear or personnel; you can also incorporate Mythos-infused items and characters in it, if it fits your story. Your base may be an Enclave, a Rift in the Mist attached to a specific location, in which case it may exist in the City or in some kind of parallel dimension, accessible only via gateways. In any case, whatever special features you want to add to your base must be backed by appropriate power tags.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's goals and how she plans to achieve them. What kind of resources does she need? Where would be a good place for her to hunker down when the going gets tough or to privately work on her projects? Alternatively, think of your character's Mythos. In the legend, was there a specific place your Mythos is associated with? Was your Mythos in possession of a homestead or a secret lair?

Based on the above, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT KIND OF PLACE WOULD BEST SERVE MY CHARACTER'S ACTIVITIES?

- It's a rather regular _____.
- It's the home / workshop / place of worship / source of power / burial place of my Mythos.
- It's a secret / public _____ in the City.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details: How did you find or acquire this place? Where is it located in the City? How can it be accessed? Who knows about this place?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT IS THE MOST USEFUL FEATURE OF YOUR BASE?

private office, *no-one can hear you*, *cave full of treasures, through the looking-glass, impregnable security*

B WHAT DEFENSES OR DEVICES PROTECT YOUR BASE FROM INTRUDERS?

silent alarm, cutting wire trap, the password stone, playing card soldiers, private SWAT team

C WHAT ADVANTAGE DO YOU GAIN WHEN WORKING IN YOUR BASE?

a good place for contemplation, interrogation light, know the cave better than anyone, seat of my power, good for business

D WHAT KIND OF SPECIAL FACILITIES DOES YOUR BASE INCLUDE?

file cabinet, torture room, forgery workshop, expansive gardens, hi-tech laboratories

E WHAT SPECIAL GEAR DO YOU STORE IN YOUR BASE?

forensics briefcase, firearms and explosives, genie lamp, size-altering mushrooms, stolen artifacts

F WHO WORKS OR LIVES IN YOUR BASE?

Adam – my secretary, a vicious hound, forty thieves, the king of hearts, "Control"

G WHAT KIND OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS DOES YOUR BASE POSSESS?

so normal it weakens magic, the walls echo lies with truth, generate gold, I can decapitate anyone by saying "off with her head!", weird science

H WHAT IS USEFUL ABOUT THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR BASE?

half-way decent, outwardly inconspicuous, threatening entrance, guests get lost for hours, seems like an ordinary skyscraper

I WHAT IS UNDER YOUR BASE, OR BEYOND IT?

Luigi's Ristorante, secret burial ground, the subway tunnels, wonderland, the corporate safe

J WHAT SPECIAL MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION OR ACCESS DOES YOUR BASE OFFER?

fire escape stairs, truck in the garage, the "other" entrance, transport to any mirror in the City, private helicopter

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT CONDITION OR NEGATIVE ASPECT OF YOUR BASE MAKES IT HARDER TO USE?

damn termites!, watched by the police, attracts greed, overgrown, corporate regulations

B WHAT IS THE MOST SUBSTANTIAL WEAKNESS IN THE SECURITY OF YOUR BASE?

cheap locks, traces of blood, well-known location, unreliable guards, vulnerable to hacking

C WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SPEND TOO MUCH TIME IN YOUR BASE?

worked through the night, the aggressiveness rubs off you, the forty thieves, my evil reflections, expenses audit

D WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THE MYTHOS ASPECTS OF YOUR BASE?

misplaced items disappear, lose control, locked outside, laws of physics don't apply, dangerous artifacts

MYSTERY OR IDENTITY

Choose a Mystery or an Identity for this theme. For example:

- (Private investigations office) "I'll take any case that comes through this door."
- (Cave of Ali Baba) "What other treasures can I add to my collection?"
- (Castle of the Queen of Hearts) "OFF WITH HER HEAD!"

You can try exploring the following options:

- An attitude or commitment that befits your operation (Identity)
- A question related to the Mythos in this location (Mystery)
- Fears (Identity) or doubts (Mystery) about your base

Write your Mystery or Identity on your extra theme card.

TITLE

Name your Base of Operations theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write it on your extra theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Private investigations office) Eclipse Investigations
- (Cave of Ali Baba) My Own Fort Knox
- (Castle of the Queen of Hearts) The Castle In The Looking-Glass



BASE OF OPERATIONS THEME IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

☐ **Storage Space**
Once per session, you can reach into a storage space in your base of operations and pull out a useful object. You gain an appropriate temporary story tag.

☐ **Boobytraps**
Decide on a status that can be inflicted by the security measures in your base. Its tier is equal to two plus your Power (based on any relevant tags you or your base have). Every time someone tries to enter your base uninvited, they take that status once, unless they found a way to circumvent those security measures. They can **Face Danger**.

☐ **Away From Prying Eyes**
When you **Sneak Around** with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **An Ancient Place**
When you make the moves **Look Beyond the Mist** or **Stop. Holding. Back.** in your base, increase your final score by one.

☐ **Peace of Mind**
Whenever you **Investigate** in your base and score 7-9, pick one of the MC's options in the **Investigate** move. The MC can't choose this option this time.





EXTRA THEMEBOOK

RIDE

A MOTORBIKE FROM HELL · A BLACK VAN · A FEATHERED SERPENT · A SUBMARINE · A PEGASUS · A VESPA WITH A SIDECAR · A SEMI-TRAILER · A PRIVATE JET · A WITCH'S BROOM

It's not about where you go; it's how you get there that matters. When you show up at the scene, it's your ride that sets the tone for your entrance. When you navigate the intricacies of a tenuous encounter, it's your ride that will get you through, whether elegantly or with brute force. And when it's time to leave the party, it's your ride that will get you the hell outta Dodge. A hot ride is always a handy thing to have. Whether you are a federal agent sporting an old-school Ford, a ninja assassin crawling your way through the City on a giant spider, or a curious kid paddling energetically on your trusty bicycle, you depend on your ride.

Your ride can be any modern-day vehicle or a legendary one, such as a peddler's wagon or Elijah's chariot of fire. It can also be a riding beast, mundane or legendary (in which case it is a Familiar, an animal Rift). It may be associated with your Mythos or have its own Mythos.

CONCEPT

Think about your character's activities and the City locations she needs to visit, as well as the threats she normally faces. What kind of transportation would best serve her? What would suit her style? Alternatively, think of your character's Mythos. In the legend, was there a specific beast or vehicle your Mythos used in order to get around? Was there a device that helped your Mythos get from place to place?

Based on the above, think about the answer to the question below:

? WHAT VEHICLE OR RIDING BEAST DOES MY CHARACTER USE FOR TRAVEL?

- It's a car / motorbike / bicycle / skateboard / boat / jetski / plane / helicopter / glider / etc.
- It's my Mythos' steed.
- It's a legendary beast or item, the _____.
- It's a modern vehicle imbued with the Mythos of _____.

Next, flesh out your idea with some details about your ride: How fast can it go? Where do you keep it? How did you obtain it? What does it use for fuel?

POWER TAG QUESTIONS

Answer the first question; then choose two more questions to answer. Answer each question with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will be useful to your character during the game. Each answer becomes a power tag. Write it on your theme card under POWER TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A HOW DOES YOUR RIDE ENABLE YOU TO TRAVEL?

old-school federal Ford car, *wall climbing*, *paddle harder*, *flying mortar & pestle*, *fast swimmer*, *semi-trailer*

B WHAT MAKES YOUR RIDE FAST OR ALLOWS IT TO GO EVEN FASTER?

100 HP, *long legs*, *fastest downhill*, *in pursuit of my victim*, *the lighter the load the faster I go*, *fuel-injection system*

C WHAT ALLOWS YOUR RIDE TO CARRY MORE?

a spacious trunk, *giant spider*, *bicycle basket*, *strangely deep*, *hold onto my fin*, *trailer container*

D WHAT MANEUVERS CAN YOU DO WITH YOUR RIDE?

block the road, *squeeze into small spaces*, *bike stunts*, *swoop down*, *evasive swimming*, *ram*

E WHAT IMPRESSION DOES YOUR RIDE MAKE ON ONLOOKERS?

here on formal business, *hair-raising monstrosity*, *innocuous*, *terror-inspiring screech*, *friendly critter*, *blue-collar camaraderie*

F WHAT WEAPONS ARE STORED IN, MOUNTED ON, OR ARE A PART OF YOUR RIDE?

machine-gun hidden in grill, *shoots a sticky web*, *watergun*, *pestle made of stone*, *tailfin smack*, *two giant bullhorns*

G WHAT SPECIAL FEATURE DOES YOUR RIDE HAVE THANKS TO ITS MYTHOS?

dashboard lights warn me of danger, *vanish into shadow*, *impossible jump*, *summon at will*, *communicate with other oceanic life*, *incredible strength*

H WHAT HELPS YOUR RIDE AVOID OR SURVIVE PUNISHMENT?

sturdy chassis, *uncanny reflexes*, *easily fixed*, *made of stone*, *persevering little creature*, *impenetrable hide*

I WHAT SURVEILLANCE OR RECONNAISSANCE ABILITIES DOES YOUR RIDE HAVE?

listen to police frequencies, *sense movement on surface*, *dynamo flashlight*, *bird's eye view*, *sonar*, *trailer full of surveillance equipment*

J HOW DOES YOUR RIDE AVOID DETECTION?

drive with lights out, *the color of darkness*, *makes no sound*, *invisibility spell*, *can dive for one hour*, *fake license plates*

WEAKNESS TAG QUESTIONS

Choose one question to answer. Answer it with a single description no more than a few words long. In your answer, you should describe something that will impede your character's actions during the game. Your answer becomes a weakness tag. Write it on your theme card under WEAKNESS TAGS along with the letter of the question.

A WHAT COULD SLOW DOWN OR IMPEDE YOUR RIDE?

flat tire, exposed in open spaces, no traction, flight path obstructions, water-dependent, guzzler

B WHAT IS YOUR RIDE'S MOST PROMINENT VULNERABILITY?

body of tin, soft underbelly, broken chain, hallowed ground, gullible, weak trailer connector

C UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS DOES YOUR RIDE BECOME UNRESPONSIVE?

locked steering wheel, fear of bright light, bad brakes, poor maneuverability, blood in the water, takes long to slow down

D HOW DOES YOUR RIDE'S MYTHOS OR BACKSTORY GETS YOU INTO TROUBLE?

bureaucracy, hungry for blood, stolen bike, reluctant to swoop on hard-working victims, poachers, stuck in a labyrinth

MYSTERY OR IDENTITY

Choose a Mystery or an Identity for this theme. For example:

- (Old-school federal agent car) "I'll be asking the questions today."
- (Ninja spider riding beast) "Shadows are my armor."
- (Baba Yaga's flying mortar) "Who is brave enough to face me?"

You can try exploring the following options:

- A style or approach that you adopt while on your Ride (Identity)
- Musings about what you can accomplish with your Ride (Mystery)
- Inhibitions and limitations that you or your Ride have about what it can do (Identity)

Write your Mystery or Identity on your extra theme card.

TITLE

Name your Ride theme in a way that encapsulates its nature and style. Write it on your extra theme card under TITLE. For example:

- (Old-school federal agent car) This Is How We Roll
- (Ninja spider riding beast) Jorōgumo Spawn
- (Baba Yaga's flying mortar) Flying Mortar

RIDE THEME IMPROVEMENTS

Whenever you gain an improvement for this theme, you can choose one of the following:

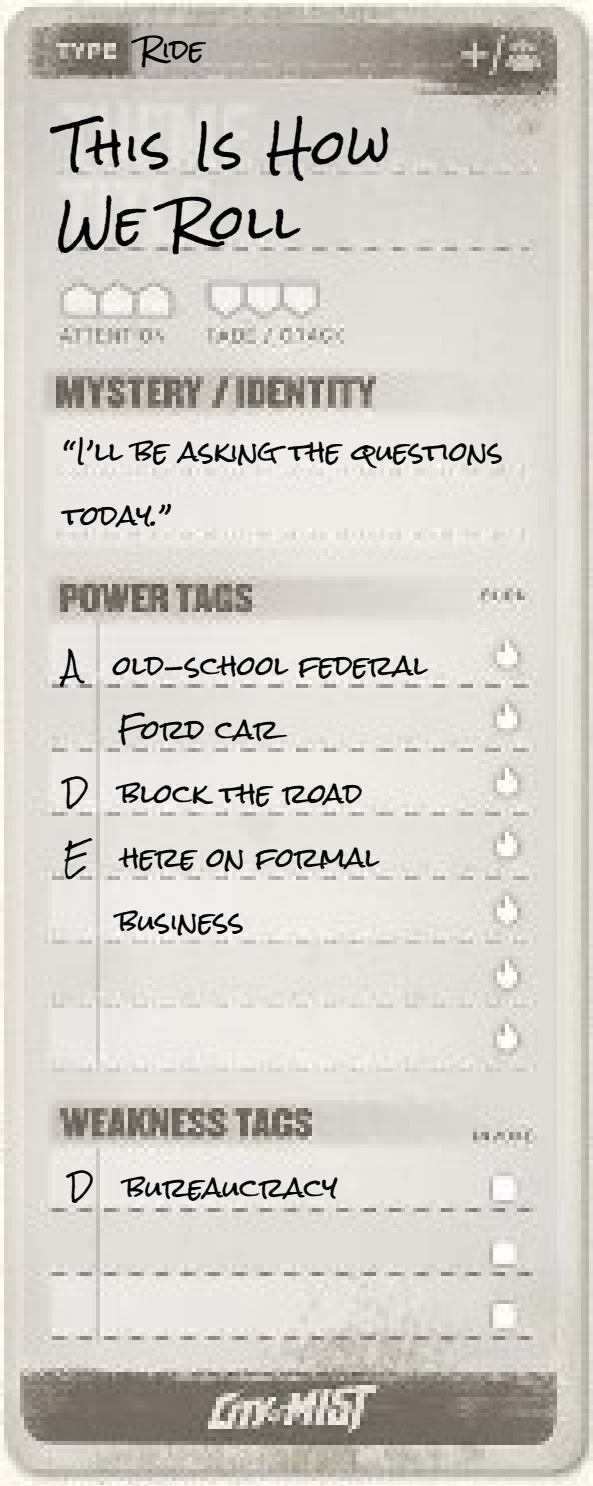
☐ **Showoff**
When you **Take a Risk** with tags from this theme, it's *Dynamite!*

☐ **Rev Up**
Once per session, if you can ready yourself for an action involving your ride, you can choose to receive an appropriate tier-2 status.

☐ **Protective**
Once per session, when you're in or on your ride, you can choose to transfer a status you take to your ride (if it can reasonably protect you). You do not **Face Danger** using your own tags; you can **Face Danger** for your ride instead, if possible, with its relevant tags.

☐ **Loyal Steed**
When anyone tries to mount, drive, or pilot your ride without your permission, your Ride takes an instant ongoing tier-5 status of your choice, such as *stubborn-beast-5* or *lockdown-5*. You can remove this status at will.

☐ **Getaway**
Once per session, you can have your ride waiting for you conveniently where you need it (if it can reasonably get there or if you could have left it there in advance).




FORTUNE - TELLER
ANTIQUES
LET IT GO! ARE U DESTRAMOR?
IF YOU TRULY WISH TO UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY INSIDE YOU, YOU MUST ABANDON YOUR ORDINARY SELF.
LET THE HOAX FALL AWAY...
"I WON'T"
HA!
PEOPLE IN THIS CITY WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING!
GOT ME HOOKED.


ACHHHHH!!!!
I PREFER THE TERM UNDEAD
YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE RAISED HIM OUT OF THE TRANCE
THEY'RE TOO SCARED TO DIE.


-- THEY'VE JUST FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.
AND BY THE TIME I'M DONE HERE, NOT WILL YOU.



HOW TO CREATE AND RUN CASES

BEHIND THE SCENES

CHAPTER 5



The Master of Ceremonies is the most important role in the game. The MC is the host, the referee, and the narrator of the game. She also writes most of the locations, characters, and situations that the lead characters will encounter. Just like in a TV show, while it's possible (even if undesired) to have an episode without one of the lead characters, it is much harder to have one without the 'showrunner'. The role of the MC can be switched around the group, with different members of your group taking it up for a session or a case, or you could have a single player as a recurring MC.

As the MC, you carry the game for everyone. You don't know how things will turn out and you don't have absolute control over the narrative. Instead, you create open-ended situations that will allow the lead characters to shine, crash, and evolve; riveting strange cases for the lead characters to investigative; and cinematic challenges that will entertain everyone in the group, including yourself. It's a role that combines writing, managing, decision-making, and improvising. It's easy to learn, but hard to master; anyone can do it, but it is also an art that can be refined over many years.

Most importantly, the role of the MC is fun. You get to create and play a variety of characters and watch the faces of your players as they unravel a mystery you wrote or face off with a villain you designed. You create most of the materials for your group's story. And yet, you will be just as amazed as everyone around the table when the players and their characters interact with your materials in entirely unexpected ways (as is bound to happen!). In other words, you are also a spectator in this show.

THE ROLES OF THE MC

YOU AS THE WRITER

Before you start playing with your group, you prepare the **case** your group will investigate. A case contains all the main details of the investigation, such as what clues can be found on a specific murder scene and where they lead, or what kind of challenges, called **Dangers**, the lead characters might face. If you're playing a series, you will need to know how this case connects to other cases to form a story arc.

Since *City of Mist* investigations can involve many details, you are encouraged to put some thought and time into creating and writing down your cases. The process of creating cases and story arcs for *City of Mist* is explained in detail below (see Writing a Case, page 366).

As an alternative to writing your own cases, you can use existing cases, such as the free cases provided with the *City of Mist Starter Set* (available at **cityofmist.co/download**) or any other *City of Mist* products. It is even possible to improvise an entire case from scratch, as the rules allow you to create materials on the fly. However, be advised that clues that don't add up or holes in a Danger's backstory can ruin the investigation or break the ever-necessary suspension of disbelief. Unless you are very skilled at improvising investigations, you should probably make at least some preliminary preparations.

YOU AS THE REFEREE

You are also the referee of the game. Between and during sessions, you have the final say on how to interpret and apply the rules of the game. This requires you to be at least familiar with the rules described throughout this book and have a good grasp of the game's basics. *City of Mist* is a relatively rules-light game as most Core Moves are intuitive and self-explanatory, so playing a session or two should bring you up to speed with the rules. As an alternative, you can delegate the role of the referee to someone else in your group who knows the rules better.

When you make decisions regarding the rules, your guiding principle should be ensuring the enjoyment of everyone at the table. If a certain rule gets in the way of fun, make an exemption. If it repeats, consider changing or ignoring that rule. However, note that enjoyment is a complicated thing; some rules exist to maintain a certain level of challenge in the game, or to counterbalance other rules, so consider well what you keep or discard and be ready to retrace your steps if you find that the play experience isn't matching your expectations. Throughout the book, you will find text boxes with optional rules which allow you to tweak the level of challenge and complexity of your game without breaking its balance.

YOU AS THE HOST

During a game session, you are the host of the conversation. You manage the judicial distribution of airtime between the players by deciding who gets the **spotlight** and can take actions. The role of the MC as a host is explained in Chapter 3, under The Conversation (page 202).

YOU AS THE NARRATOR

During a game session, the players will turn to you to manage the storyline. You do so by initiating and concluding scenes. You will narrate the details of a scene and portray any non-player characters. Based on your case, you will decide how the characters and objects in a scene respond to the actions of the characters and describe it to your players. You will use the **MC Intrusions** and **MC Moves** to introduce complications, describe cinematic moments, and make the atmosphere more creepy, suspenseful, or emotional as you see fit. Your role as the narrator is explained under Running a Session (page 344).



THE MC PRINCIPLES

The following principles are recommended for *City of Mist* games. These are overarching guidelines that outline the spirit of the game. While technically you don't need to remember them to run the game, it's useful to keep them in mind in order to run a *good* game. The second and the third are variations made on the principles first introduced by Vincent Baker in *Apocalypse World*.

COMMUNICATE WITH THE GROUP

In the end, everyone in your group is there to have a blast together. While you all probably enjoy different things, there is plenty of common ground upon which you can create your story together. It's easiest to find that common ground when you communicate your preferences to each other. Sometimes players don't know how to do that, or even that they *can* do that, so your role as an MC is to ask, listen, and engage. Ask the players in your group how they feel about the game flow, what optional rules to use, and what they think about your last case. Perhaps one of them wants more mystical characters or another wants the action to be less challenging and more heroic. Hear them out, express your own opinions, give alternative suggestions and compare with examples from your favorite shows. Find a way to make it all work together. Sometimes one of you will have to make concessions about things you want, but that's okay, as long as there are other things in the game that they find enjoyable – one game can't have it all, but it can have a lot.

PLAY TO FIND OUT

City of Mist produces the most exciting tales when you and the players collaborate to create the story. A collaboration can only happen when you as the MC give the players the freedom to drive the story *wherever they want* (while still using the rules to get there), just as you have the freedom to drive it where you want, when the rules say so.

Try to avoid having pre-existing expectations about how the case should unravel, which scenes should take place, and even what decisions the players should take. Any preconceived plans about the game can only diminish the enjoyment of your collaboration with your players. At best, they allow the players to be willing actors in a play written by you (which sometimes can be fun, but that's not why you're playing *City of Mist*). Most of the time, however, having a rigid plan in mind constricts the players' creativity and ability to develop the story in ways you had not thought about, ways which can be incredibly fun and inspiring. The worst part is that this robs you of the excitement of being a part of the audience, being surprised by what happens to the lead characters when they interact with the case you wrote.

"Play to find out (what happens)" means you do not actively try to control (aka "railroad") the story to evolve in the avenues you anticipated. This starts from the writing phase; instead of writing scripted scenarios, write stand-alone locations, characters who have plans (and not predetermined destinies), and open-ended situations. During the game, when a player wants to try something different than what you had in mind, allow it without manipulating them back to your planned trajectory. This changes your plans, so you adapt them or discard them altogether. Your plans are only worthwhile insofar as they make the game enjoyable for everyone; if you truly designed something cool that you want to keep, you can simply find a way to introduce it later.

You don't need to be prepared for any possible scenario. *City of Mist* makes it very easy for you to improvise new characters and situations, when necessary. For example, creating a new Danger can take moments once you know how to do it (see Dangers, page 398). Learn to adopt a love for being surprised by your players. It's easy when you think about the game like a TV series or a comic book, where you don't really know what's going to happen next. Running a game whose end you *don't*

know is an exhilarating experience which might just become your favorite way to play.

Megan (playing Goodfellow): So Goodfellow just set free this Big Bad Wolf, and now the Wolf wants to devour the whole City and there is nothing I can do to stop him?!

MC: Yeah, pretty much.

Megan: Great. So Goodfellow would like to make a deal with her.

MC: Seriously?

Megan: Yeah, that's Goodfellow for you. Always trying to spin things to make a profit. I think I'll offer her my help with devouring the City, for a price. I'm **Convincing.**

MC: That's insane. (But it gives me an idea how to develop this further...). Make the move and let's find out what happens!

BE THE CHARACTERS' BIGGEST FAN; MAKE THEIR LIVES INTERESTING

While you have the role of playing the lead characters' worst adversaries, and while you're expected and required to plague their lives with all kinds of complications, you are by no means playing *against* the players or their characters. The opposite is true: your job is to help the player characters shine. You do so by putting them through trials and challenging situations, such that allow your group as an audience to learn something new about each character and see her do cool things.

To do so, you need to be the characters' biggest fan. Learn everything you can about them. Speculate about what could happen to them, what they would fight for, what they can endure, and what are they willing to sacrifice – just like you do with your favorite movie, TV, and comic book characters. When you present a new threat or complication, be at the edge of your seat, waiting to see how they cope with it and what hard choices they make.

Once you become the characters' biggest fan, use this information to make their lives interesting. Aspire to introduce investigative, dramatic, and action challenges that will force them to be awesome – or crash.

Try to create story developments that build on the lead characters' backstory and details; use their themes, their Mysteries, and their Identities whenever possible. Knowing their most intimate fears and hopes, you can tailor events in the story to hit exactly where it hurts and give the players opportunities to **Make a Hard Choice**, **Stop. Holding. Back.**, or otherwise dramatically develop their characters.

This approach makes for a great game because you focus your attention on the lead characters and make the series about *them,* instead of a generic one-size-fits-all narrative.

THINK CINEMATIC

The combined imagination of everyone at the table has limitless potential. While the players are responsible for the cinematic actions of their individual characters, it's up to you to stimulate their imaginations and get the creative juices flowing by setting up the right atmosphere, style, and pace for your story. Since *City of Mist* draws heavily on the comic-book neo-noir genre, you'll want to make your games look and feel like a movie, TV show, or comic book in the genre. You do so by thinking about your game as a similar work of fiction in the genre, or in other words, you think cinematically.

Thinking cinematically has an impact on everything you do as an MC. The shared imagination of your group becomes your group's canvas or screen. When you write cases, create dramatic locations and design memorable villains that would look good "on screen". When you act as a referee and the rules leave room for interpretation, make decisions based on the "rule of cool", favoring what would be more entertaining "to watch". As a host, you control the spotlight like a movie director, switching between "cameras" or "panels" to produce specific cinematic effects. Most importantly, as a narrator, you choose the story developments and the actions of non-player characters, as well as their timing, based on what you think would be the most compelling in terms of aesthetics and content.

In practice, thinking cinematically means asking yourself questions from a cinematic perspective and using the answers to guide your decision-making as an MC. Some examples include:

- **? WHAT WOULD BE THE COOLEST WAY TO START A SESSION? HOW DO EPISODES OR ISSUES USUALLY START IN THIS GENRE?**

  Choose the first scene or cutscene based on that.

- **? WHAT IS THE FIRST SHOT THE AUDIENCE (YOUR GROUP) SEES IN A SCENE?**

  Describe that to your players.

- **? WHAT MUSIC PLAYS IN THE BACKGROUND?**

  Play it on your phone or computer.

- **? WHAT IS THE ATMOSPHERE I WANT TO CREATE IN THIS SCENE?**

  Use the right tone of voice and choose the right words that instill this feeling.

- **? WHAT KIND OF MOTIFS APPEAR IN A STORY LIKE THIS?**

  Weave them into your case when you write it, and into your descriptions when you narrate.

- **? WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST SHOCKING / ENTERTAINING / MENACING / AGGRESSIVE / ETC. ACTION THIS CHARACTER CAN TAKE NOW?**

  Choose an MC Move to reflect that action.

- **? WHAT MORAL DILEMMAS ARE TYPICAL IN THIS GENRE?**

  Write a case around such a dilemma.

THINKING CINEMATIC WHILE PLAYING TO FIND OUT

Note that cinematic considerations should not conflict with playing to find out. They do not give you a mandate to direct events in the way you want them to happen, only to temper the different components of a story in a way that is aesthetically pleasing for everyone. In other words, you should not use 'cinematic considerations' as an excuse to railroad the game.

Thinking cinematically should guide you only when the next development is in your hands - when you *already* have the spotlight or when the rules say you can intrude and add details. For example, if the crew is investigating a crime scene and one character misses a move, you can use an MC move to say the police are alerted to the crew's presence or that the place has been scrubbed clean and there is nothing more to find here, basing your choice on cinematic thinking. However, if none of the players miss a move, you will have to hold off with such story developments and let the players' moves drive the story, even if cinematically it would be cool to have the police show up.

A CINEMATIC GAME

In *City of Mist,* some of the cinematic elements of comic book neo-noir have been integrated into the rules. For example, stories in this genre often start with a voiceover monologue given by an investigator; the move **Voiceover Monologue (Session Start)** imitates this opening. Flashbacks are also common in this genre, which is why the move **Flashback** allows players to take actions retroactively and narrate a flashback. The Core Moves represent typical actions taken by protagonists in the genre, and so on.

Additional cinematic considerations and suggestions for the MC are given throughout this chapter in the **Think Cinematic** sections.

WHAT THE CHARACTERS DON'T KNOW YET

It's time to bring you up to speed on what is really happening in the City. In Chapter 1: The Lowdown, the City is described from the perspective of the lead characters, relatively new Rifts who are only beginning to discover the secret world around them. At least some of the characters know that there are other Rifts in the City, people like them who have legendary powers. And like the lead character's own powers, those legendary powers are hidden from the larger population by the mystical veil of the Mist.What the characters don't know is that the City is the playground, or warzone, of two types of arcane and timeless forces: the Mythoi and the Mist.

THE MYTHOI, THEIR AVATARS, AND THEIR OPERATIONS

The Mythoi have been using the City as their sandbox for as long as anyone can remember. For as long as the Mist has existed, the Mythoi sought after those precious mystical gateways which allowed them to manifest their stories in the City: the Rifts in the Mist. The Mythoi cultivated their Rifts, calling them to abandon the distraction of ordinary life and open up to the legendary reality beyond the Mist. Every Mythos aspires and conspires (whether consciously or figuratively, no-one knows) to elevate its Rift to become its Avatar, its living manifestation in the City. But all this is nothing new. What may be news to you is that some Mythoi have reached their goal a long time ago.

Rifts are not just individuals living in the City; they run the City. A small number of Mythoi have succeeded in cultivating Avatars so strong, that they are practically immortal. These Avatars are dedicated to the mission of manifesting the story of their Mythos in the City over and over again, on every level of existence. The Avatar of Hades holds power of the City underworld and bargains with the dead, or soon to be dead; the Avatar of Ywain fosters true love and brings ruin to false lovers; the Avatar of Peter Pan aspires to set the City free of laws and rules; and so on.

Avatars are not gods. Every Rift, even Avatars, must still conform to the reality of the Mist, so Avatars are always real flesh-and-blood people. The Avatar of Hades, for example, is a renowned mobster, while the Avatar of Peter Pan is a spoiled rich brat. Having said that, the powers of these Avatars extend a great deal beyond the powers of other Rifts, so for all intents and purposes they are indestructible. Some are even able to come back from the dead. The longer an Avatar exists in the City, the deeper his or her power grows and the more ingrained his or her influence is in the tapestry of the City.

Avatars don't do all the work themselves – they have an operation. Over the years, Avatars build organizations that help them promote the agenda of their Mythos. These operations can take any form: a drug cartel, a chain of fast food joints, or a mysterious social movement whose name is whispered on the street. The longer they are around, the deeper these organizations infiltrate the social, economical, and political fabric of the City.

Avatars mostly rule from afar, leaving the dirty work to their minions. Hidden deep in the Mist, Avatars rarely come in contact with Rifts outside their operation; even when they do, they are unlikely to be recognized simply because no-one knows what they look like or that they even exist. For the regular Rift on the street, an Avatar is a story, an urban legend about someone powerful behind the scenes. Rifts like the lead characters have no way of ascertaining information about Avatars, not unless they start digging into the Avatar's operation in an investigation that could be the subject of a season or even an entire series. Unless their operation is at risk, Avatars stay focused on the grand scheme of things and their power struggles with the other Avatars and the Gatekeepers (see below).

This leaves the street-level "free" of their direct influence, and therefore available for the more personal and local cases that the lead characters are involved in, at least at first. This way, the lead characters can make a real impact on the City without necessarily bumping into Avatars, perhaps even without knowing that they interfered with the work of a greater power or organization. Avatars are far too busy in their politics to be bothered with such small incidents; they have an entire operation that can respond *for* them, including other Riffs with varying levels of awareness and power (Legendaries, Borderliners, and Touched) as well as hordes of Sleepers who don't even know who they work for.

Chapter 6: This is MY City! reveals more about the Avatars and their operations, including some sample Avatars, and explains how to create them and use them in a series. The Avatar council known as *the Truth* is described in *Don't Believe The Truth*, a chapter in the *City of Mist Campaign Book*.

THE MIST AND THE GATEKEEPERS

Strong as the Mythoi and their Avatars may be, they are still bound by the Mist. Had it not been so, they would have probably turned the City into their canvas and painted a reality as bloody as their ancient tales. According to legend, that's what it was like before the Mist. The Mist prevents this catastrophe by making the larger population oblivious to the Mythoi, averting an awakening on a massive scale. This can in fact help existing Avatars, since as a side effect, the stronger an Avatar is, the more his or her true identity is kept from public knowledge and the deeper the cover the Mist provides to his or her shadow operation. The Mist tolerates this because its top priority is to ward off the Mythoi for the sake of the survival of the City; everything else is secondary.

The agents of the Mist are called the Gatekeepers. No-one but the oldest and strongest of Rifts knows of their existence. For those Rifts who have an inkling about the Gatekeepers' purpose, they pose the most terrifying adversary imaginable: one who can make you forget what you are, and with the blink of an eye, doom you to an existence without meaning. Whispered rumors and deranged accounts from centuries past portray them as masters of some ancient form of hermetic magic, but that could all be noise introduced by the Gatekeepers themselves to fool and snare anyone investigating into their origin.

It is unclear whether the Gatekeepers serve the Mist or if they are its makers; their organization, its workings, and its motives are by far the most obscure secrets in the City, given the fact that they can simply make people forget them. If the Mythoi are the underground organizations of the City, the Gatekeepers are its secret government agency. They are the Men in Black (grey, actually), suits working to maintain the status quo using the powers of the Mist: distraction, cover-up, and induced obliviousness. They track down Rifts that draw too much attention or who pose too big a threat to the Mist and seal them, permanently.

The Gatekeepers have a tenuous relationship with Avatars, clamping down with all their might on those who challenge the current order but only gently curtailing the operations of those older and more insidious Avatars. They are planners; they know all too well that some Avatars are even beyond their ability to seal, at least not without risking an open war which will tear the City and the Mist apart. And so, a brittle equilibrium and an intricate political system have formed between the Gatekeepers and the Avatars; this serves as the background of the entire *City of Mist* setting. It's a conspiracy on a metaphysical scale. Needless to say, this state of affairs breeds countless forms of corruption, from the Gatekeeper agent on the street overlooking dangerous Rifts for money to the Gatekeeper leaders and their dealings with the Avatars.

The field units of the Gatekeepers are detailed in Chapter 6: This is MY City! The Gatekeepers organization and the Mist are further detailed in *Suits Unveiled*, a chapter in the *City of Mist Campaign Book*.





RUNNING A SESSION

Your group's session is where it all happens: the cameras start rolling and the lives of the lead characters become real, for a while. They walk the dark rainy streets of the City and follow a trail of evidence to the answers they seek: the truth about crime, corruption, and the wrongdoing of men and gods, ordinary people and legendary powers. They protect a vulnerable witness, exchange words and blows with people of influence and their henchmen, and then discover they were betrayed when the witness turns out to be the Rift behind it all. And by the time the magic of Rifts is finally exposed, it is usually too late for anything but the most desperate of measures.

While the players portray the lead characters, you as the MC are the world around them: you set the scene with descriptions of dramatic locations; you describe the actions of all other characters (villains, witnesses, allies, and bystanders); you provide the clues that drive the case forward; and you use all of the above to deliver shocking story developments. This section explains the role of the MC during a session, focusing mainly on the MC's role as a narrator and related rules. For more information on the other MC roles, see page 337.

PREP & GEAR

To run a session of *City of Mist*, you will need a **case** for the crew to investigate (you can either write your own case or use a published one). A single case could take one or more sessions to complete, depending on how involved it is and on the pace of your game.

You will also need a copy of this book as reference, at least two six-sided dice, some *City of Mist Tracking Cards*, your copy of the *MC Tracking Sheet* for this series, and markers, pens, or pencils. The players will need their character and theme cards (crew, extra, etc.) as well as a copy of the *Player Moves Sheet* each.

Some scrap paper can be good for taking notes and doodling location maps. Alternatively, you can use the illustrated *City of Mist Location Maps* with some tokens.

THE CASE

A **case** is a playable investigation. It contains the story elements and details you need to run a session or several sessions of the game. Think of a case as a narrator's toolbox: it has compelling dramatic **locations** where you can set your scenes, **characters** with different agendas and motives that you can populate your scenes with, a detailed **backstory** that connects all these characters and locations, and lists of individual **clues** that can lead the crew to a cinematic climax: a shocking discovery, a gut-wrenching dilemma, or a clash of mythical forces.

Your role as the narrator is to use the different components of the case to create the scenes the lead characters star in:

- set the scenes based on the case's **locations**
- portray the **characters** present at those scenes, describing what they do and say and how they respond to the lead characters' actions
- when the players **Investigate** and spend Clues, answer their questions with the **clues** given in the case

After the lead characters exhaust one location, they move to the next, playing through different scenes (that you narrate). With every scene, they start putting together the clues and crack the case, until eventually they reveal the sordid truth, confront the villain, etc. If you're running a series, the aftermath of one case could have clues that lead to the next case, and so on.

IMPROVISING

A good case covers most of the locations, characters, and clues needed to complete the investigation. However, since *City of Mist* is an open-ended game, sometimes the players want their characters to go to places that are not given in the case, meet characters who are not described in the case, or investigate avenues that do not have specified clues in the case. When this happens, you refer to the **backstory**, which describes the events that took place before the investigation (e.g., a heinous crime committed by a Rift). Based on the backstory, you can come up with new locations, characters, and clues that will complete the missing parts and connect it back to the core of the case. Sometimes you will need to improvise small details, like the name of an unimportant character, and sometimes you will need to improvise entire locations and scenes. This can be done with the help of the players.

DANGERS IN THE CASE

Non-player characters, objects, places, and forces which pose a threat to the crew or their investigation are called **Dangers**. As part of their investigation of the case, the lead characters may get into trouble and face different Dangers. The case describes these challenges in game terms, including what sort of statuses they cause, what special moves they have, etc. The rules for using Dangers in the game are explained in Chapter 6: This is MY City!

CONSIDERING THE SERIES

Some story elements, like characters and locations, recur throughout the series. This includes Defining Relationships, Allies, Bases, Nemeses, and characters appearing in tags; it may also include recurring enemies of the crew, characters from the crew members' private lives, the crew's regular meeting places or haunts, an employer or mentor, Rifts the crew has encountered before, Enclaves controlled by powerful players in the City, shady organizations, familiar faces in the neighborhood, and more.

In addition to all this, the lead characters have ongoing investigations that may span an entire season or series: their personal Mysteries, their crew and extra theme Mysteries (if any), and any other residual questions from previous cases, or questions related to a major story arc. Some of these investigations may receive little airtime in each session – perhaps just a short scene or a reference during downtime – but they build up in the background of the series until they are ready to pop.

While the crew is working on cracking a case, elements from the series may become involved. You can use such elements in the scenes you initiate and in the story developments you choose, just as you would use elements from the case. Whenever the text below refers to decisions based on the information in the case, it refers also to materials belonging to the series as a whole. In other words, even if series elements are not specifically written into the case you are playing now, you can still introduce them in your sessions. This allows you to adapt the case to the series. You can, for example:

- Make a Nemesis show up in an unrelated scene and attack a lead character at the least convenient time.
- Have a recurring character of a police inspector show up in every session, slowly beginning to suspect the crew's true nature.
- Bring back a petty crook that the crew acquitted from murder in a previous session to help them in this session.
- Weave an organization central to a player character's Mystery into the case, as a third party with limited involvement.

When you design a series, you collect all the necessary materials and list them in your Series Resources Sheet. During the session, you can refer to your Series Resources Sheet for ideas on what story elements and plot twists to introduce. Read more about collecting materials for a series under Designing a Series (page 386).

CONSIDERING THE LEAD CHARACTERS' DEVELOPMENT

City of Mist's character development system allows players to put their characters through trying decisions and dramatic life events (see Dramatic Moments, page 285). However, the players depend on you to provide them with interesting opportunities to do so within the story. On your part, this mostly boils down to creating the conditions that will allow them to trigger the move **Make a Hard Choice** (page 290). Sometimes, you also take part in creating the details of the answers they find to their Mysteries with **Finally, Some Answers** (page 287).

Make a Hard Choice happens when a character has to choose between any one of her Mysteries or Identities (including crew and extra themes) and something else (which may also be a Mystery or an Identity).

To incorporate **Make a Hard Choice** in your game, follow these guidelines:

- **Plan it:** Before a session begins, choose one player character to focus on this session and plan how she *might* be forced to **Make a Hard Choice**. Decide which Mysteries or Identities you are going to try to trigger and what situations you will use to do so. Pick a new character in every session so you keep cycling through everyone in the crew.
- **Seize it:** During the session, check the *MC Tracking Sheet* (which lists all the PC's Mysteries and Identities) whenever you think a situation may evolve into a hard choice for one of the player characters. If you spot an opportunity, take advantage of it and change your narration decisions to steer the situation there.
- **Discuss it:** At the end of the session, when you **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)**, listen

to the players describe how they see the evolution of their characters and ask them what's most interesting to them to explore next time.

Remember that you cannot trigger **Make a Hard Choice** nor can you create a situation that would compel a player to do so. This aspect of the game's rules is entirely in the hand of the players. Players will probably act differently than what you expected (players always do). Instead of trying to force the players into dramatic moments, allow them to choose if they want to take it or leave it and continue with the game. Instead of planning the outcome of a character's dramatic moment, plan a dilemma with several possible outcomes without knowing what the player will choose. Allow yourself to be surprised.

You can only help the players make **Make a Hard Choice** by creating interesting dramatic moments and dilemmas in which they can use the move. Such moments can include:

- Occurrences in the character's **personal life competing with her legendary life**
- **A deadlock situation** where two or more of the character's commitments or liabilities conflict
- **A dark or indecent proposal** by a non-player character offering to promote one theme of the character at the cost of betraying another or offering an appealing reward in exchange for betraying one of her themes
- **A forced choice**, whether orchestrated by someone who wants to hurt the character or make her grow, or completely accidental, the result of an unlucky (or lucky) turn of events

Alice the MC is preparing to start a session with the pond crew. She picks Sullivan as the character she will focus on this session and reviews his Mysteries and Identities. She comes up with a possible conflict between his Identity "The people of this neighborhood deserve to know" and the crew Identity "Get to the bottom of the pond." She plans to introduce an informant who can give the crew some valuable information about the pond only if they promise never to go public with it. Accepting the offer would go against Sullivan's reporter Identity, while rejecting it would go against the crew Identity.

During the session, Lamar, who plays Sullivan, may or may not bite on this scenario. He could make use of the dilemma to advance his character's story or, conversely, say that Sullivan doesn't mind promising not to go public because he plans to do it despite his promise to the informant (in which case he is lying and may be **Sneaking Around**). Alice is open to whatever comes; she only plans to put Sullivan in an interesting situation and let Lamar take it from there.

THE SESSION STRUCTURE

A game session of *City of Mist* is played as follows:

- **The session begins** with the **Voiceover Monologue (Session Start)** move.
- **Play through scenes, downtime, and cutscenes** according to what the lead characters do, according to the case, and according to cinematic considerations.
  - **When you play a scene**, follow the scene flow below.
  - **During downtime**, have everyone make the **Montage (Downtime)** move. Then move to the next scene or cutscene.
  - **In a cutscene,** use dramatic flair to foreshadow, to set the mood, or to reveal to your group information yet unknown to the characters. Then move to the next scene or downtime.
- **The session ends** when you're almost out of time, when it's a good place to stop, or when the case is concluded. Have everyone make the **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)** move.

INITIATING SCENES

As the narrator of the game, you declare when scenes, cutscenes, and downtime start and end.

At the beginning of the session or **whenever a scene concludes** and everyone is looking at you to drive the story forward, you can (a) ask the players where their characters would like to go next or where they are likely to be, (b) suggest a few scenes and let them pick, or (c) initiate a scene you already had in mind, telling the players where their characters are at the start of the scene. Alternatively, you can start describing a cutscene or declare some downtime.

Many times the decision of what comes next is in the hands of the players: if they go after the crooks, an action scene starts; if they go home to rest, it's downtime; if they prefer to ask around the crime scene, it's an investigation scene, and so forth. Sometimes, though, it's not up to the players. If a character was taken captive, you can initiate a scene where she's being held, etc.

THINK CINEMATIC: COLD OPEN

A "cold open" is a dramatic opening in a TV show, movie, or comic book, designed to set the tone for the rest of the story and to entice the audience to continue watching or reading. You can use a cold open in your sessions in two ways, either as a scene or a cutscene, depending on the mood you're aiming for.

When you start a session with a **cold open scene**, your narration joins the characters as they are already in the middle of an action or drama scene: a fight, a predicament, a dilemma. This situation should be a plausible result of events that happened in the last session or a flash forward to the future of the characters. It could also be a dream or a vision that you play out as a normal scene. Ask yourself:

? **WHAT SITUATION WOULD MAKE FOR THE MOST DRAMATIC OPENING?**

? **WHAT MOMENT IS THE BEST MOMENT TO COME IN?**

A cold open scene naturally makes assumptions about actions the characters have taken to put themselves in this situation. Try to minimize these assumptions, work them out with your players, or get them to give you a *carte blanche* to do whatever is coolest. At the end of the cold open scene continue the story as usual, or, if it was a flash forward, return to the point in the story where you left off.

When you start with a **cold open cutscene**, you describe a short scene in which the lead characters are not present. Ask yourself:

? **WHAT CAN I REVEAL TO THE PLAYERS THAT WILL PIQUE THEIR INTEREST WITHOUT SPOILING THE INVESTIGATION?**

While a cold open scene opens the episode with a bang, a cold open cutscene can be used to create suspense or evoke a specific emotion.

> Alice the MC wants to give the episode a creepy opening. Knowing that the case includes the murder of a young woman by something that came out of the pond, she decides to start with a cold open cutscene that will set the tone for the session and provide a bit of foreshadowing. Without revealing too many details, she describes a young woman being followed by something or someone as she walks by the pond park after dark. The woman looks over her shoulders nervously, but she can see nothing; all she can hear are occasional squishy footsteps, as if someone was walking in shoes full of water. Alice plays a suspenseful tune in the background as she describes this. When the cutscene ends, she cuts over to the characters sitting in Louis' diner, hearing the murder called out on Det. Enkidu's radio.

Note that while players mostly have control over where their characters go, you have control over *what they find there.* For example, the lead characters could be going to the house of a witness to get information, but you can decide that the witness is already dead, revealing a new threat and branching off to a side investigation.

The decision on what scenes to introduce or what to introduce into a scene is based on the actions of the lead characters, the information in your case (e.g. what is found at a specific location or a character following the crew), **and your cinematic considerations.**

Once a scene started, it can go in any direction. Both you and the players can take actions that change the nature of a scene: a wild car chase can turn into an investigation if the fleeing vehicle crashes into a lamppost and a conversation can easily become a fight if someone gets aggressive. However, a scene can never turn into a downtime or a cutscene.

PLAYING THROUGH SCENES

Once you have the location and the time of the scene established, play the scene out as follows:

- **Set the scene:** narrate the opening shot. What do we see? What does the location look like? What is the atmosphere? Who is there and what are they doing?
- **Give the spotlight to the players** by asking "What do you do?"
- **When the players have the spotlight**, listen and **intrude** when the rules require you to.
- **When one of the players misses a move**, make a **hard MC move** and narrate it.
- **After each player move**, or **when everyone is looking at you, waiting**, narrate how the scene responds to what just happened or what happens next. At your option, and given cinematic considerations, make a **soft MC move**.
- **After each MC move or narration**, pass the spotlight back to the same player, forward to the next player, or generally to the group and ask again "What do you do?"
- **When the scene is exhausted**, cut to the next scene, downtime, or cutscene.



THINK CINEMATIC: WHAT SHOULD COME NEXT?

Deciding on the contents of the next scene is a cinematic decision that you'll make several times every session. Even if you don't decide where the characters go next, you can decide what they find there, keeping it plausible within the story and without taking away from the experience of the players. For example:

> Jerry, Megan, and Lamar decide their characters are going to the apartment of a suspect in their case, a dangerous Rift. While Alice the MC doesn't know what the characters will do, she can speculate that if the suspect is at home, the scene would quickly escalate into a fight or a chase. However, if he's not at home, the scene could involve a tense and stealthy investigation.
>
> Since the characters don't know whether the suspect is at home, either option is plausible. Alice the MC can choose between the two based on cinematic considerations, because nothing else is forcing her hand. Had the players chosen to stake out the apartment until the suspect arrives, Alice would have had to work with that.

When you think about the next scene you want to initiate, consider the entire session as an episode of your TV show or an issue of your comic book, and ask:

? WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR? WHAT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO WATCH NEXT?

Use your answers to choose the next scene. For example:

> We just concluded a long fight scene. Another clash could be boring.
>
> We spent the last two hours of the session investigating. It's time for an action scene!
>
> We haven't touched base with the character's private lives. The next scene should include one of their supporting characters.
>
> No Mythos powers have been activated in this session yet. Better introduce a Rift into the next scene.
>
> Things have been developing quite linearly. It's time for a shocking turn of events.
>
> The last hour has been an emotional rollercoaster. It's time for some downtime where the characters and the players can digest recent developments.

Next, decide how to implement your choice. Ask yourself:

? WHAT ELEMENTS CAN I USE TO SET UP THE NEXT SCENE?

To carry out the next scene based on your cinematic considerations, you can use locations, characters, and Dangers from the case; you can conjure up recurring characters from the series like Defining Relationships and Nemeses (or any supporting characters); or you can improvise, as long as your improvisation is consistent and plausible considering all that happened so far in the story.

THINK CINEMATIC: AAAND... CUT!

To CUT means to switch between two occurrences happening in parallel or one after the other. It's a cinematic device you can use to build suspense and create that specific cinematic (and especially *noir)* aesthetic in your story.

CUT OUT OF A SCENE

You can declare the end of a scene abruptly, switching sharply to the next scene for dramatic effect. This can be appropriate after an emotional, comic, or shocking moment takes place, narrated either by your or one of the players.

> **Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu):** … and I say to Gilgamesh, "I'm sorry friend… but the next time I see you, I am going to kill you." And I walk out of his office into the dark, rainy night.
>
> **Alice the MC:** Aaand… Cut!

The scene ends when you say CUT. Any player who wants to take further actions should do so in the next scene or downtime. For this reason, this technique should be used elegantly, and with care. If you

keep cutting out of scenes before players take all the actions they want to take in the scene, you'll only frustrate them. As a soft alternative to CUT, you can also choose to FADE OUT of a scene. FADE OUT is played out like a CUT, but makes for a more mellow transition, which evokes a sentimental effect.

CUT INTO A SCENE

When you cut out of a scene, aim to describe the next scene in a way that creates contrast or a relation between the two scenes, producing a dramatic effect. For example, you can cut between a violent scene to a peaceful scene, between one crew member to the other crew members who are elsewhere, or between two related scenes whose connection you want to emphasize.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): … and I say to Gilgamesh, "I'm sorry friend… but the next time I see you, I am going to kill you." And I walk out of his office into the dark, rainy night.

Alice the MC (cutting to a cutscene): Aaand… Cut. We cut to a glimmering white corporate conference room, its walls covered with engravings of winged lions with human faces. Seated in silvery executive chairs are the council of the Annunaki. An elderly woman in a white sari speaks out, "it's time to put an end to Enkidu and her companions. She should have died when we commanded so. Now, they must all bear the consequences of defying the gods."

CUTTING BETWEEN PARALLEL SCENES OR DIFFERENT ACTIONS IN THE SAME SCENE

When the crew splits up, you can cut back and forth between the different scenes they are involved in. This keeps the tensions high and prevents players whose characters are not in the scene from waiting too long between actions.

Before leaving a scene, make sure the players of the current scene got enough spotlight to advance their scene. Then, consider the right moment to cut over to the next scene. One recommended option is to cut in the middle of a player move, after Power was calculated but before the dice are rolled. It leaves players on edge in anticipation to the result – but don't wait too long before returning the spotlight to them. Another good option is to cut away from a player right after you narrate a dramatic development, e.g., after an MC move.

This technique also works when implemented within a single scene. If the lead characters are dealing with different threats or challenges, you can go back and forth between the characters to create a more dynamic sequence, and keep the spotlight moving. This produces the effect of cutting between different shots.

Post-Mortem and Kitsune are fighting off a monstrous shark-like Rift on the deck of a rusty docked ship, while Flicker is searching the cargo hold for an important crate. The beast has Kitsune pinned, so Post-Mortem drops into a firing position and takes aim with her sniper rifle.

Grace (playing Post-Mortem): I want to take out sharky. Putting all my tags and statuses together, I have a Power of 4!

Matt (playing Kitsune): This better work, or he'll snap my neck like a matchstick.

Grace: I say on the radio, "I have the target in my sight. Going to take the shot." I squeeze the trigger.

MC: Aaaand…. Cut. Let's see how Flicker is doing in the belly of the ship. Flicker, you hear a shot from above, but you don't have the time to concentrate on that now — despite what you thought, it looks like you're not alone down there...

Players: !!!

WRAPPING UP SESSIONS AND CASES

A session ends when you're almost out of time, when it's a good place to stop, or when the case is concluded. The end of a session is like the end of an issue of a comic book or an episode of a TV show. It may or may not be the end of the case, and it can end with any sort of final moment: a discovery that sheds a new light on the investigation, a solemn moment where the heroes contemplate the meaning or meaninglessness of life, or a cliffhanger waiting for the next session to be resolved. In addition, it may or may not be the end of the case. Finish off with a CUT or a FADE to the credits, and let the players know the session ended. Then have all the players make the **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)** move.

When a case concludes, play through some resolution scenes or downtime, showing how the characters emerge from recent events. Perhaps they return to their loved ones, happy to be back but with a heavy heart over what they saw. Maybe they continue to investigate, driven to discover the truth even more than before, etc. Narrate the aftermath of the investigation and the events that followed: the conclusion of the threads that were tied up, the state of those involved, the implications for the City. Highlight the threads that were not solved, and maybe finish with a cutscene building on those loose ends and foreshadowing things to come later in the series.

MC ACTIONS DURING A SCENE

There are three types of actions you can take during a scene, each with its own timing and rules:

MC intrusions are actions you take when a player has the spotlight.

Soft MC moves are actions you take when you have the spotlight, at the beginning or end of a scene and between player spotlights.

Hard MC moves are actions you take when a player misses a player move, or when other rules allow you to do so.

MC INTRUSIONS

The rules require that you intrude into a player's spotlight in a number of situations:

TRANSLATING STORY INTO RULES

At any point in the game, when something happens in the story but is still not reflected in the rules, you can introduce new story tags to reflect it (remember to set their duration, as explained under Story Tags, page 226). For example:

> When the MC describes a scene in a collapsing underground temple, she introduces the temporary story tags *falling debris* and *unstable ground*.

> When the lead characters finally persuade Old Yarna to give them a charm, the MC grants them an ongoing story tag *charm of protection*.

You can also give a willing player a status, Clues, or Juice to reflect a development in the story, although these should usually only be generated as a result of a player move, a hard MC move, or the other specific rules.

TRIGGERING MOVES

- When a player names a move without describing an action, get him to describe his action by asking "Okay, but what do we see?"
- When a player takes action that triggers a player move, but doesn't name the move, ask if he's making a move, e.g., "Are you **Investigating**?" "Are you **Making a Hard Choice**?"
- When a player takes action that triggers a **custom move** or when a custom move is triggered by circumstances in the story, tell the players what move was triggered and read the move out loud. (Read more about custom moves in Chapter 6: This is MY City!)

DETERMINING POWER

When a player makes a Core Move and is determining his Power:

- If necessary, rule which tags can or cannot be invoked.
- At your option, invoke weakness tags.
- If necessary, rule which statutes apply to the action.

DETERMINING THE OUTCOME OF MOVES

- **MC choice**
  When the outcome of a player move requires the MC to choose from a list or give the player a choice, you do so and narrate the outcome. See examples under the player moves **Investigate**, **Sneak Around,** and **Take The Risk**. This applies also when you control the character making the choice, for example under the move **Convince**.
- **A player foregoes a move option**
  When a player makes the moves **Go Toe to Toe** or **Hits With All You've Got**, after they choose, you narrate what happens based on the options *they didn't choose* and give them a status if appropriate (they have the option to **Face Danger**, if they can).
- **A player asks a question**
  When a player asks a question about the scene, describe what is easily perceptible or knowable to them or ask them to **Investigate** and spend a Clue. When a player spends a Clue to ask a question, you answer his question according to the rules (which determine what kind of answer you must give), according to the case, and according to what you wish to reveal at this point, as explained under Clues (page 240).

MC MOVES

Your moves represent story developments that you can introduce at specific points. Each move describes a different type of development or a different application of the rules (e.g., give a player character a status or burn one of her tags). The exact nature of a story development represented by a move is up to you: you choose it based on the current situation in the scene, the information given in the case, and your cinematic considerations.

Hard MC moves are dire complications and predicaments; you can only make hard moves when a player scores a miss (six or less) on a player move, or elsewhere where the rules say so specifically. Note that this does not apply to the player move **Face Danger**, which, when missed, does not trigger a hard MC move.

You can make **soft MC moves** casually as you are narrating, e.g., when there is a pause in the conversation or in between player moves. There is really only one soft move: **Complicate Things**. The other soft moves allow you to make a hard move when you would normally only be able to make a soft move, that is, without waiting for a player to miss a player move.

THE SOFT MOVES

- Complicate Things
- Hit Them After A Fair Warning
- Optional: Activate Their Weakness Tags as Flaws

THE HARD MOVES

- Complicate Things, Bigtime
- Deny Them Something They Want
- Make Something Horrible Happen
- Turn Their Move Against Them
- Give a Status
- Reduce or Remove a Status
- Burn a Tag
- Force Them to Choose

THE SOFT MC MOVES

COMPLICATE THINGS

You introduce a new problem into the story. As of now, this problem is not a burning one, but it's an opening for trouble: if mishandled or neglected, it can evolve into a significant threat. Such complications are always an obstacle or a threat on the way to the lead characters' goals: information, friendship, victory, survival, moral integrity, obtaining an item, keeping their Identities intact, etc. Overcoming this new obstacle usually requires at least one successful player move.

Obstacle in the investigation: Kitsune and Post-Mortem sneak into the morgue to take a look at the body of a high-profile businessman who was murdered. As they slip by the guards and into the refrigerated room, the MC lets them know the specific fridge they want is locked with a padlock.

Obstacle to secure an item: Flicker and Mitosis are in the office of a renowned art collector, trying to convince him to lend them a specific Polynesian Tiki mask they need to fight an insane Rift.

The MC, playing the collector, says "The mask is a unique artifact, my friends. It will cost you a great deal, in cash or in services."

Threat to survival: Declan L'Estrange and Excalibur are in the sewers, standing over the carcass of a monstrous creepy crawler they have just slain, with great effort. The MC lets them know that they hear the sound of many more crustacean legs tapping on the walls of the sewer tunnel. Soon the place will be overrun.

Threat to Identity: Salamander, the friendly neighborhood plumber, has the Identity "I need my job to survive." As he's been out all day fighting crime with his crew, the MC says his boss called him and left a message: "Hey, where are you? We have a burst pipe on Fifth street. I need you here."

HIT THEM AFTER A FAIR WARNING

If the characters ignore or neglect an approaching threat for long enough, you can make a hard move against them instead of a soft move to reflect the threat becoming a reality. This assumes that you let the characters know about this threat using **Complicate Things**. When you play **Hit Them After a Fair Warning**, you don't have to wait for the players to miss a move; you can play it whenever you have the spotlight.

Threat to survival: When Declan L'Estrange and Excalibur continue to investigate the carcass of the creature they slew, ignoring repeating signs of its approaching kin, the MC narrates how the creatures pour from every direction and **Gives Them a Status** *overrun-2*.

Threat to Identity: If Salamander neglects to talk to his boss and continues to ignore his messages, the MC can narrate another message where his boss makes an ultimatum, **Forcing Him to Choose.**

The number of warnings you give the players with **Complicate Things** before **Hitting Them After a Fair Warning** can vary. Depending on your cinematic considerations and the pace of the game, you can go for shock and hit your players with a hard move after even a single warning, or spread it over several warnings, allowing the players time to handle other threats or creating a suspenseful atmosphere of something approaching. However, if you plan to hit them with a hard move, make sure your narration of **Complicate Things** divulges the severity of the situation. In other words, this move requires a fair warning, as the name denotes.

The use of this move does not have to be limited to a single scene; it can spread over several scenes or even sessions. For example:

Alice the MC has been warning the Lakeside Drive crew about a series for arsons around the neighborhood. Every session, someone from the crew hears of another place going up in flames. However, having their hands full, the characters never get around to investigating the arsons. After a few sessions, the MC starts the session by **Hitting**



Them After a Fair Warning: she makes the hard move **Give a Status**, imposing an *in-flames-5* status on the crew's meeting place: Louis' diner!

OPTIONAL: ACTIVATE THEIR WEAKNESS TAGS AS FLAWS

If your group is using the optional rule Weakness Tags as Flaws (see page 221), you can use a soft move to invoke a character's weakness tag as a flaw. This allows you to then make a hard move against her without waiting for a missed roll. The player marks Attention on the theme to which the weakness tag belongs.

The crew is investigating a public crime scene in a plaza, surrounded by thousands of bystanders, several police squads, and floodlights. Mitosis, the growth-covered giant freak, walks onto the crime scene together with the rest of the crew, wearing a great yellow rain cape. However, Mitosis has the weakness tag *monstrous* and the MC seizes the opportunity and makes a soft move, invoking it as a flaw. The player marks Attention and the MC makes the hard move **Complicate Things, Bigtime:** "It's the killer, he's a freak!" someone shouts, and the plaza descends into mayhem as many of the bystanders are fleeing, others are attacking Mitosis with cups of coffee and water bottles, and the police edge closer to detain the suspicious hulk.

THE HARD MC MOVES

When a player misses a move, things go south for the crew: you make one or more of the MC hard moves. The consequences can affect the character that missed the move, one or more of her crewmates, the entire crew, or other characters and objects in the scene. While most of the time a single hard move is quite enough, you are not limited to just one hard move per missed player move. The more hard moves you make, however, the more extreme the consequences; make sure you do not frustrate your players with consequences too grave for every missed move.

COMPLICATE THINGS, BIGTIME

You introduce a new crisis into the story or escalate an existing problem into a crisis. The crisis is a real and immediate threat to the lead characters; it can cost the characters a great deal in the very near future. This crisis can affect the wellbeing of the lead characters, their lives, characters around them, the course of their investigation, the state of things in the City, etc. Mitigating the crisis usually requires several successful player



moves and/or forces the players to sacrifice game resources (e.g., mark Fade or Crack, burn tags, spend Juice, etc.).

Kitsune and Post-Mortem sneak into the morgue to take a look at the body of a high-profile businessman who was murdered. As they sneak by the guards, Kitsune slips (missing his move) and the guards spot them. The MC tells the players the guards set off the alarm, calling for reinforcement from the nearby station. Soon the police will barricade and then storm the morgue.

Declan L'Estrange and Excalibur are in the sewers, standing over the carcass of a monstrous creepy crawler they have just slain, with great effort. Declan tries to **Investigate** the dead monster and misses the move. The MC tells them the creature thrashes one more time, hitting the floor of the tunnel with immense force and collapsing it beneath them. The two crash into a cistern beneath the tunnel. As the pair dust themselves up, they find themselves in a nest swarming with the creature's spawn!

Sullivan and his lover Margo Falls are being held at gunpoint in the metalworks factory by his ex-partner, Ale Sánchez. Sullivan tries to disarm Sánchez by **Going Toe to Toe** but misses. The MC says that while Sullivan gets the gun, Sánchez knocks Margo out of balance and holds her over the railing, above a giant glowing pot of molten steel. "One more step, Sully, and she's fried!"

DENY THEM SOMETHING THEY WANT

You declare that something that the characters want is no longer within their reach, at least not within the scope of the current scene. For example, a witness could get away, an item could be stolen, or a course of action could be revealed as dead-ended or impossible.

Denying an item: Flicker and Mitosis are in the office of a renowned art collector, trying to **Convince** him to lend them a specific Polynesian Tiki mask they need to fight an insane Rift. When Flicker misses the roll, the MC, playing the collector, says "I already sold the mask. To your enemy!"

Denying information: Hitting the Ambrosia club for information about a murder case, Det. Enkidu asks around for anyone who knew the victim. Missing her **Investigate** move, the MC tells her that the lips of everyone in the club are sealed and that the detective understands the clubbers are fearful of something far worse than getting in trouble with the police. Two bouncers close in on her on the dancefloor and, upon discovering she has no warrant, escort her to the back door.

MAKE SOMETHING HORRIBLE HAPPEN

Describe a shocking development for emotional effect. This could be the tragic loss, gruesome injury, or even sudden death of a non-player character, a personal loss of a lead character, a tragedy or catastrophe in the City, etc.

Sullivan and his lover Margo Falls are being held at gunpoint in the metalworks factory by his ex-partner, Ale Sánchez. Sullivan tries to disarm Sánchez by **Going Toe to Toe** but misses. The MC says Sánchez fires, but Margo protects Sullivan with her body and takes a bullet to the heart. Lamar, who plays Sullivan, gets to play out the tragic final moments.

As the Big Bad Wolf is about to unveil his evil scheme at the dog pound, Goodfellow leaps at her and tries to pin her down, missing the move. The Big Bad Wolf slams the retired man against a wall and laughs madly as she remotely unlocks all the doors in the kennels. Instead of cute puppies, a horde of grizzly werewolves breaks out of the kennels and pours out into the City, hungry and violent.

TURN THEIR MOVE AGAINST THEM

Describe an outcome that is similar to what the character was trying to achieve in her action, but has negative implications instead.

During a charity gala, the glamorous Excalibur tries to beguile a dashing middle-aged oil tycoon in order to glean information about his business, which the crew suspects is connected to criminal activity. When she misses her **Investigate** move, the MC decides that the tycoon is not just beguiled by Excalibur — he's enamored! From now on, this powerful man tries to spend as much time as possible with Excalibur... which might be a problem, seeing as she spends a lot of it taking part in clandestine activities against him and his business associates.

TRIGGER ALERT?

Before introducing developments that can shock, disgust, or disturb your players, make sure you know what your players are comfortable with. Different players enjoy different stories, and it's up to you to adjust your storytelling to your group, or find other players to play with. Without getting into the specifics of the case, you can warn your group about any potentially triggering content that might be included and get their approval or make adjustments as necessary.

GIVE A STATUS

Give a status with a tag and a tier of your choice to a player character, an ally or an object belonging to player, or a non-player character or object. You can affect a single target, multiple targets, anyone within an area or who meet specific conditions, etc.

Narrate the development that inflicts the status and describe it. Name the **tag** and the **tier** of the status; they should describe the nature and severity of the condition the target would suffer if hit by the *full power* of the effect.

The nature of the effect defines how difficult it would be to defend from the status: whether a **Face Danger** move can be attempted and which tags, if any, may be relevant. For example, defending from a punch that causes a *bruised-2* status would require different abilities from those required to defend from an ancient curse that causes *turned-to-stone-5*.

If the recipient of the status is a player character or one of its allies or objects, the player of that character may **Face Danger** to reduce or ignore the status, assuming the character is able to do so. You may also rule that the character is in a situation so deadly, hopeless, or dead-ended that she cannot **Face Danger**.

If the recipient is a non-player character or object, they take the status in full. If they have relevant Danger moves that modify the status, they apply. You can also use this move to give a Danger which is competing with the lead characters a positive status, such as *cover-2*. Read more statuses and Dangers in Chapter 6: This is My City!

Read more about Statuses on page 230.

Sullivan gets into a knife-fight with a Red Cap hooligan on the docks. He misses his **Go Toe to Toe move**, so the MC describes the Red Cap swinging swiftly on his heels and cutting Sullivan under his ribs, noting that the full effect of the stab would be *bleeding-gash-3* status. Since Sullivan still has his *spectral armor* and *worn-out leather jacket*, the MC rules he can **Face Danger.**

Not far from there, Post-Mortem is not so lucky. She is sneaking through a labyrinth of shipping containers to try and get the drop on Stanislaw the Vile and his smugglers. Unfortunately for her, she misses her **Sneak Around** move. The MC determines she is *surrounded-3* and that she cannot **Face Danger**, because by the time she discovers her predicament, the smugglers are already in position, aiming their SMGs at her.

REMOVE OR REDUCE A STATUS

Reduce the tier of any status in the game by any number of tiers or completely remove it, if appropriate. This could affect positive statuses that the crew members possess or negative statuses on Dangers.

Goodfellow is hiding from the Rift of the Ogre who is looking for him in a storage unit. He successfully **Changes the Game** to get some *hidden-2* and hides inside a cardboard box. He then **Sneaks Around** and exits the storage unit while the box is still on him — and fails. As the Ogre's fingers tear through the cardboard, the MC takes away Goodfellow's *hidden-2* status.

You can also use this move to remove any number of Juice points a player has banked. This is appropriate when the advantage won by the player is no longer relevant.

> Declan L'Estrange is caught in a gun-slinging fight to the death with the Rift of Artemis, the goddess of hunting. At the beginning of the fight, he uses his *mysterious reality bending*, *premonitions*, and *subconscious reaction speed* to **Change the Game** and gain 3 Juice, which he banks. Later, he fails to **Hit With All He's Got.** The MC rules that he takes an insignificant flesh wound, but that the hit throws him off so his advantage on Artemis is not as significant as before; his banked Juice is reduced from 3 to 1.

THINK CINEMATIC: WHICH MC MOVE TO USE?

A central part of narrating *City of Mist* is choosing how to use MC moves and intrusions to shape the narrative, and a big part of that is choosing an MC move that creates the effect you want. Just like the decision of which scene to play next and what to include in the scene, the use of MC moves and intrusions should be guided by cinematic considerations. As before, the guiding question you should keep in mind is:

? WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR? WHAT WOULD BE INTERESTING TO WATCH NEXT?

Use your answer to decide how to develop the scene, for example:

> The suspense is building up, but it's not there yet. Let them investigate some more…

> The suspense is crazy and they are wired; it's time to roll out the horrifying truth.

> This conflict is a little dry. Let's raise the stakes by creating a hostage situation.

> This character is making them laugh when it should be making them scared; I'll make the character do something violent so they know she means business.

You can use MC moves and intrusions to dramatically start or conclude a scene, control its pace, change its nature (e.g., from action to investigation), control its challenge level, etc. Here are a few suggestions on how to do so:

First and foremost, not every hard MC move should introduce new story elements and developments into the scene. Most of the time, the scene is unravelling just fine and you don't need to make any adjustments. For example, if a fight scene is already taking place, sometimes there is no need to add further complications. Use **Give a Status** or **Burn a Tag** to challenge the lead characters without adding new story elements. Narrate the move cinematically and then lean back and let the players take the lead.

Complicate Things and **Complicate Things, Bigtime** introduce a threat that increases the tension and/or raises the stakes of a scene, while increasing its challenge level. They should be used to build up suspense in a scene or when a scene is too slow or resolves too easily and you feel your audience – that is, the players and you – wants something exciting to happen (but first try to assess: do they?). The type of complication you introduce can propel the story forward in the current direction or completely pivot it to a new direction.

> While Post-Mortem and Kitsune are fighting the monstrous shark-like Rift on the deck, Flicker is snooping around in the dark cargo hold looking for the crate. Unfortunately for her, she misses her **Investigate** move.
>
> The MC decides to **Complicate Things, Bigtime.** She thinks about several options: (a) unleash another shark-like monster in the cargo hold, revealing that there is more than one of them; (b) say that the ship starts moving, leaving the port; or (c) introduce one of Flicker's Nemeses into the scene, taking it in a new direction.
>
> She eliminates the latter option: the scene is already involved as it is, so there is no need to make it messier with a Nemesis. Between the first two options she chooses to have the ship start moving. It puts a time pressure on the crew and has the potential of separating them if they don't hurry up.

You can choose the complications you introduce out of the details in your case, such as existing features of a location or a Danger, or improvise them based on common sense.

Deny Them Something They Want can be used to create an instant dead-end, which is useful for ending scenes that draw out too much. It should be used only after the characters had a chance to pursue an avenue, but screwed it up; be sure there are still open avenues of investigation elsewhere, as to not to bring the plot to a halt. This move also gives the players a taste of failure, giving the story a grittier mood as opportunities are missed and assets are lost.

Make Something Horrible Happen can be used to shift the session to a darker, more serious tone. If the story feels too breezy or comical, use this move make the lead characters face some truly harsh implications of their actions. This move also gives the players a chance to experiment with some immersive role-playing and reveal a more emotional side of their character, if they want. Don't over do it, though; your audience might build a resistance, making the horrible seem ridiculous.

Force Them To Choose can be used as cliffhanger by making the lead characters and the players sweat as they sacrifice something valuable to get their way. Depending on what you put on the scales, this could be a nice challenge showing the characters' determination or fortitude, or it could be an impossible dilemma which gives your series a pessimistic and gritty outlook. This move can also be used as an opportunity to put a character in the limelight and get her to reveal her true colors, even to herself. Give the stage to the player so he can make the most out of this moment.

Depending on the implications you attach to it, **Turn Their Move Against Them** can either be comical, ironic, or outright depressing. Make it comical to lighten up the mood when it gets too dark or intense. Make it ironic or dark if you want to turn up the grit factor in your series, showing fate to be cynical and cruel.

Burn A Tag can also be used to temporarily kill the airtime supplied to an overused feature of a lead character. If a player keeps invoking his character's revolver, dashing charm, or stealthy sidekick over and over again, taking it away will allow the audience to see how the character deals with challenges in a different way.

BURN A TAG

You burn one of the player characters' power tags or story tags or a crew or extra power tag. Tell the player to mark the burn icon ( ) next to it (or discard it, if it's a temporary or ongoing story tag). The burnt tag can be recovered normally. Burning a tag represent an ability, item, ally, or resource that is rendered temporarily unusable (see Burning Tags, page 221).

> During a fight with Morgana, Excalibur smites her mortal enemy, **Hitting With All She's Got.** Unfortunately, she misses the move. The MC says Morgana blocks the attack with a dark spell that attaches itself to the Excalibur's bracelet (her relic) and prevents it from changing into a weapon. The MC has the tag *can change into any weapon burnt*.

FORCE THEM TO CHOOSE

Describe a development that forces a player to choose between two undesirable outcomes, each a hard MC Move in itself. For example:

> Sullivan is chasing a hitman on the roof of a speeding subway car. He misses the **Go Toe to Toe** move. The MC says a lower tunnel approaches and the hitman slips under it; Sullivan could do it, but he has no time to orient his shotgun. He can choose between dropping his *sawed-off shotgun* (**Burn a Tag**) or jumping off the train and losing the hitman (**Deny Them Something They Want**).

> Det. Enkidu is fighting the Big Bad Wolf's werewolves out on the City streets. She fails to **Take the Risk** to push a man away from a werewolf in time, so the MC gives her a choice: take *gruesome-bite-4* without **Facing Danger** (**Give a Status**) or watch the man being devoured by the werewolf (**Make Something Horrible Happen**).

If the choice given to the player is based on the circumstances alone, they make the choice and suffer the undesirable outcome.

If one or more of the options involves the character's or crew Mysteries or Identities, the player decides whether to invoke **Make a Hard Choice.** Read more about Mystery and Identity dilemmas under **Make a Hard Choice**, page 290.

> Salamander tries to **Convince** his boss to let him off the hook one more time (so he can save the City). When he misses the move, the MC, playing the boss, gives him an ultimatum: "Be here in exactly one hour, or you're fired." Salamander must choose: if he neglects his duty to the City, a City-wide crisis will take place (**Complicate Things, Bigtime**); however, if he doesn't, he will lose his job (**Deny Them Something They Want**). Tyrone, who is playing Salamander, decides that Salamander is **Making a Hard Choice.** In addition to the effects of the MC's hard move, he also marks Attention or Crack on his Routine theme according to his choice.

Note that a hard MC move is not required for the player to **Make a Hard Choice** or for you to orchestrate a dilemma. Sometimes, the soft MC move **Complicate Things** can be enough to put the character in a position where she's facing a difficult choice. However, using this hard MC move allows you introduce more pressure, putting the character on the spot and forcing her to choose.

HOW TO NARRATE CITY OF MIST

City of Mist's tone and atmosphere are inspired by the comic-book neo-noir genre. The following narration guidelines help you capture the essence of *City of Mist* when you narrate your game.

EMPHASIZE THE ATMOSPHERE

When you introduce a scene in City of Mist, give extra attention to the atmosphere.

Instead of simply naming a **location**, start with a dramatic description of the location *as it is now*, even if the characters already know it. A dramatic description doesn't have to be grandiose – it's the words you choose that matter, not the length of your speech. Places like the Royal Plaza Hotel or the Downtown Cabaret should be described with flair. Forsaken or derelict buildings can be creepy

or forlorn. Prosaic places like a bus stop or a diner can be described as plain, everyday, and faded, giving them a touch of melancholy.

If the characters are outside, just coming inside, or standing close to an opening, let the players know what the **weather** is like. Pouring rain is a special favorite of the noir genre. Describe the **air**: fog, steam, and smoke are common ways for the Mist to hide what it doesn't want you to see. Smog and air pollution give your scene an urban feel. **Smells** may not be a part of a movie, TV series, or comic book, but they do wonders to increase immersion in a role-playing game. When entering a new scene, let them know what scents are wafting in the air: the perfume of a woman, wisps of cigar smoke, the overflowing sewers, or the acrid smell of burnt gunpowder.

Lighting is another chief feature of the noir genre; the scenes you describe should be mostly dark, with harsh lights and deep shadows creating high contrast. For example, a character can be seated behind a desk at night, with the neon light illuminating only her eyes and her hand holding out a gun. What you do see makes you wonder about the things you *don't* see, increasing the tension.

Use **sound effects** or describe sounds to immerse your players in the scene. Hurried footsteps, the click of gun safety, or someone trying to break a lock all build up suspense when the characters can't see what is actually happening. Melancholic background music, especially old jazz songs, can really set the mood.

Sometimes even **textures** can contribute to the atmosphere: when a character touches something in the scene, e.g., when she is lying on the asphalt road with her face in a puddle of water or when she dances with the man in the white linen suit, let the player know what it feels like.

MC: You take a short flight of stairs down from the street level, leaving the stormy night behind as you close the small wooden door. Chirpy traditional Celtic music, wafts of cigarette smoke, and roaring laughter overwhelm you from the very first moment. The smell of beer and smoky whiskey fills the air. Looking around the room, it strikes you as a cosy working-class pub, but you don't feel cosy at all. In the corners not lit by the faint ruddy light, you see dockworkers and red-haired thugs eyeing you suspiciously. There's a revolver on the shiny bar, next to a box of bullets, and a vicious looking pocket knife. It looks like you found the Red Caps, alright.

MAKE YOUR CHARACTERS REAL AND HUMAN

When you introduce a character into the story, help the players imagine her by emphasizing her **ordinary persona** over her legendary aspects (if she has any). In other words, describe what sort of person the lead characters see at first glance: Is she a homeless but wise hobo? Is he a slick, but penniless politician? Are these gangsters from the concrete jungle waiting to see how you react to them?

Give your characters emotional layers. Film noir characters are often flawed and vulnerable, even while presenting a strong self-image. While outwardly they can be emotionally impervious, inside they are harboring intense emotions. Alternatively, they could be cold-blooded sociopaths faking emotions to hide their true intentions, so the players never know what to believe. Make your police detective a violent or depressed woman and your drug lord a perfect gentleman; have a witness cry her eyes out but tell the players her outburst feels too *calculated*; sow fear, lust, or cunning in the hearts of the residents of the City and describe it in their eyes, their voices, their fidgety hands – but not so much in their words. Be careful not to divulge any clues this way; consider saving a few details until a player spends a Clue to ask about it.

MC: Officer O'Riely looks like a young man who has already seen too much. The bags under his eyes tell you that he has not been sleeping; maybe there's a new baby at home. He cautiously studies you from behind the sergeant's shoulder, his silver blue eyes sad like the rolling waves.

Player: I'm going to spend a Clue and ask: is he hiding anything?

MC: You take a hard long look at him, and realize: these are not the eyes of

a sleepless father. These are the eyes of someone who has seen something they can't get out of their head. Something horrible.

KEEP IT A MYSTERY

To create a sense of mystery in the game, pay attention to what you reveal and how much you reveal. A good mystery never unveils everything at once: a revelation comes in little drops, hint by hint. This dropping of hints can stretch out for an entire session, or even a season or a series, before the truth is finally exposed. Always give your players the minimum amount of information needed to pique their interest and the maximum amount of time to wonder about it; make them sweat for the rest.

Make it feel like nothing is at it seems. This City of Mist is a veneer, a reality pulled over people's eyes to hide a greater reality. But little things always filter through the Mist: reflections in the storefront windows, murders of crows behaving strangely, the wind howling among the skyscrapers. Rather than emphasizing such details, make a passing comment about them, as if you only mention them offhandedly. By forcing your players to fish for these easter eggs, you repeatedly confront them with the fact that the Mist is masking the truth from them.

Candidly describe the player characters' gut feelings and intuitions. It's not just about what they can perceive with their five senses; it's also about what they *can't* perceive yet still experience with other faculties. Perhaps the hairs on his arms bristle or her gut churns when they enter an office building, even though everything seems normal there. Or maybe they feel inexplicably drawn to someone.

Hint at a Mythos, but never reveal it. When a new Rift enters the game or reveals her powers, do not let the players know right away what her Mythos is. In many cases, a Rift's powers could be the result of any one of several different Mythoi, and players tend to enjoy trying to figure out which one it is. The player characters certainly don't know for sure, so not revealing the Mythos helps in keeping things vague. Even when they decide "this must be the Tin Man", do not confirm or deny it; keep referring to the Rift with the terms you've used so far, or by using "the person you call 'The Tin Man'..", without ever stating it as fact.

Never talk metaphysics in-play. People in the City mostly don't know what the Mist, Mythoi, and Rifts are; even when they do, they don't use game terms to describe these things. For them, it's all one big mysterious phenomenon. Even an all-aware Avatar is more likely to call her Mythos "the god within me" than "my Mythos", and no one at all is going to use the word "Logos" to describe their mundane lives. When you narrate non-player characters, describe their vague feelings and perceptions rather than a technical understanding.

Furthermore, the noir genre does not deal with metaphysics. Keep your stories close to the ground (or gutter) and avoid elaborate discussions about the cosmological nature of the City of Mist. Street-level characters tend to focus on their lives and their problems, not this mystical mumbo-jumbo.

ASK PROVOKING QUESTIONS

Noir is all about the individual, their dilemmas, their journey. When it's apt, ask the players questions about their characters. Each question should reveal a detail that has meaning in the story, so it interests the group as the audience.

- How does your character feel about this?
- What do you think will happen to the neighborhood after this?
- Who takes care of your kid when you're gone?
- Who would your character want dead?

Out-of-character questions build up the suspense by making the players think, "why is the MC asking this now? What is heading our way?"

Build on their answers. Use the details to create a stronger bond between the characters and your case.

MC: Running away from you, the mentally-unstable fire-breathing fugitive barges into Louis' diner, which was just renovated, and grabs one of the waitresses by her arm, making her his hostage. Jerry, who is Det. Enkidu's favorite waitress in Louis' diner? If you don't have one, make one up.

Jerry: Oh uh… I guess that would be Aimy. She always has a smile for me even when I'm frowny.

MC: Great, so Aimy it is. Of course, this fugitive doesn't know that she's your favorite; it's just not his day.

When the rules tell you to ask the players a question, make it count. When a player **Investigates** and scores 7-9, you can choose to ask them a question; in this case, not only the audience knows the answer but also one or more of the characters in the scene, case, or series. The non-player character knows this information as if she had investigated the lead character.

When you ask this question, think of the non-player character (or force) who is investigating and what she would most like to know about the lead character, the crew, their plans, etc. You don't have to name the non-player character who is investigating, but you can, if it serves your dramatic purposes. You can use this information provided by the player to inform your upcoming decisions about the plotline: which scenes to initiate, who to target, what specific developments to narrate with MC moves, etc.

> In the above example, if Det. Enkidu had scored a 7–9 on **Investigate** and the MC had chosen to ask a question, the fugitive himself would know Aimy was the detective's favorite.
>
> **MC:** The fugitive noticed your expression as he drew near Aimy, so he came to the obvious conclusion and chose her as a hostage. To bad for him.
>
> Alternatively, the MC could decide that Det. Enkidu's nemesis, Gilgamesh, is watching the diner from afar through binoculars. Without naming Gilgamesh, the MC asks Jerry which waitress is the detective's favorite, and Jerry answers the same. The scene may continue normally, but the MC notes down that Gilgamesh found a detail about Det. Enkidu. Later, the MC plans to initiate a scene when Gilgamesh abducts the waitress and uses her to lure the detective into a trap.

STAY CONSISTENT

To make your City of Mist feel real, story elements such as characters, locations, and events should remain consistent throughout the series. Repeating characters should feel familiar and predictable (even if eventually you plan to use them to surprise the crew). The things that make up the backdrop for your story, such as the regular haunts, the weather, the City services, social trends, etc. will become a memorable part of the City if they show up in your series as recurring motifs.

Take notes. Keep track of what happens in your City, even down to the little guy. When you improvise a new non-player character or a new location, write down their name and some details about them. When someone tells the crew a rumor, write it down; later, it can evolve into a case. Keep a file with the details of all the recurring characters of the series. Next time you incorporate them into the story, make sure they are consistent with what was seen in the series so far.

Draw maps and diagrams. People visualize spaces differently, so drawings help keep everyone on the same page. When you narrate a scene that emphasizes the crew members' positions, draw a few lines and put together a sketch of the place. It doesn't have to be professional, just enough to clarify who's standing where.

MAKE THE CITY FEEL ALIVE

Think of the City as a living, changing metropolis. Things change in the City, even when the characters are not there. A car could have crashed into a fire hydrant just 10 minutes before the characters arrive at a scene. Someone may have killed the mafia boss the night he was locked up in prison. There could be elections, or a huge sports game, or a natural disaster. Work these little things into your narration to make the City feel like an actual place, that exists independently of the lead characters.

Think offscreen. Baddies and witnesses don't just sit in their locations, waiting for the lead characters to show up. They are living their lives, plotting and promoting their schemes or shopping with their kids. When you consider what development to introduce, think about what the non-player characters in the case (and in the series) have been up to while the crew was off doing something else. The next time the crew sees them, they could be in the midst of executing their plan, or well after.

THINK CINEMATIC: NARRATION

You and your players can employ terms from the world of movies and comic books to give your series a more cinematic flavor. For example:

- "The camera", the point of view from which the described view is seen, e.g., "You punch the goon so hard that bloods spatters the camera lens."
- PAN (moving sideways or up and down without zooming), e.g., "A big parade of cheerful residents progresses down the street around a giant dragon puppet. As the camera pans left, a malignant figure is seen in an alley, drawing a long katana."
- ZOOM, e.g., "As you observe this train conductor, the camera zooms in on his watch. It seemed cracked, and stained with blood."
- SHOT, a single continuous segment between two cuts, e.g. "Imagine one continuous shot of my character using his nunchaku and martial arts to pummel through the entire corridor of security guards."
- PANEL, a single still image in a comic book. "First panel, we both stand with our hands on our pistols. Then there's a "BANG!" in the gutter between the panels. Next panel, I put my pistol back in the holster. Third panel, he falls to the ground, dead."
- EXTREME LONG SHOT, LONG SHOT, MEDIUM SHOT, CLOSE-UP, EXTREME CLOSE-UP, e.g., "You wake up to the sound of cooing pigeons. Extreme long shot: we see an abandoned church, and in the middle of it, you, tied up to a chair." "An extreme close-up on this man reveals his veins are starting to turn green..."
- CUT, FADE OUT / IN / TO BLACK, DISSOLVE, different techniques for switching between shots or scenes. "He's lifting the car above his head, getting ready to throw it at you... CUT to the rooftops, and we're back to you guys, chasing the snake-like creature..."

ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGE LEVEL

The negative statuses you give the player characters greatly affect the level of challenge in the game by balancing their power tags and positive statuses. You can give a status by using the hard MC move **Give a Status**, or if the character does not choose to protect herself when making the moves **Hit With All You've Got**, **Go Toe to Toe**, and sometimes as part of her choice in **Take the Risk**.

If the lead characters make most of their moves with a Power of 3 or more, your challenge level is relatively low. If they mostly make moves with a Power of 0 or less, your challenge level is relatively high.

The game's challenge level is affected by many factors. If you find that your players succeed or fail too much for your liking, you should first try to track the highest negative status every crew member has at the end of every scene and compare the average of those to the following table. If you find the average does not match your planned difficulty level, use the suggestions below to increase or reduce the challenge level.

Average of the crew members' highest negative statuses	Scene challenge level
0	Very easy
1	Fair
2	Challenging
3	Tough
4	Formidable
5	Deadly or fateful

If the scene challenge level is as expected, but the overall challenge level of the game is still too easy or too hard, it may mean your characters are generating too little or too much Power regardless of negative statuses. Consider applying or suspending optional rules like Grit Mode (page 212) and Tag Cap (page 219).

ADJUST THE SEVERITY OF STATUSES

The easiest solution is to increase or decrease the tier of statuses you give. The **tier** you choose determines how debilitating the status is: 1 is a mild nuisance, 2 is a minor limitation, 3 is a significant setback, 4 is a severe debilitation, and 5 is an incapacitating status with the potential of becoming lethal. Giving a tier-6 status (or giving a tier-5 status to a character who has already taken the same tier-5 status) means you are trying to kill or permanently transform the player character; it should be kept for extreme cases only.

Consider the character's current ability to defend from the status. The **tag** of the status defines what the character can use to **Face Danger** (power tags, positive statuses, etc.) In other words, it determines how likely the character is to reduce the tier by one (7-9) or ignore the status completely (10+). Giving a character a status she can easily defend from or easily remove is vastly different from giving her a status she cannot defend from or is susceptible to (e.g. a status that triggers her weakness tags or negative statuses), even if they both have the same tier. Remember that you have the option to deny the character her **Face Danger** move, making a status stick regardless of her potential defenses. However, this choice must be backed with appropriate story explanation.

ADJUST THE RANGE OF ACTIONS AFFECTED BY STATUSES

The tag of the status also defines what aspect of the character is affected. Use tags that affect more actions to increase the challenge level; use tags that affect less actions to decrease the challenge level.

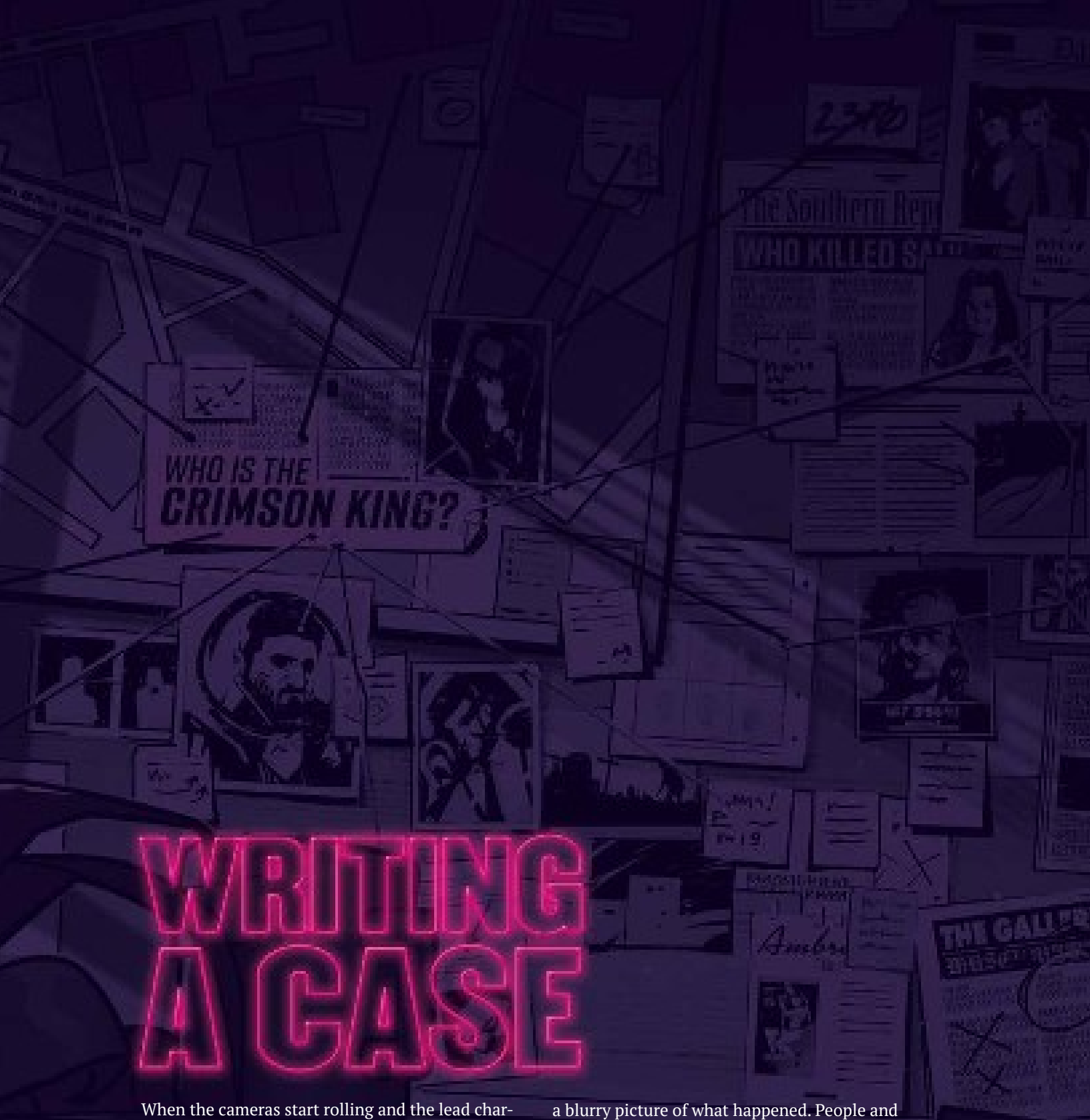
- Injury *(slashed-3)* or consciousness-altering statuses *(groggy-2)* affect almost all actions taken by the character herself, but not so much actions taken by her allies.
- Aspect-specific statuses such as social statuses *(humiliated-4)*, power-related statuses *(drained-of-magic-2)*, or gear- and ally-related statuses (*broken-hilt-3* or *my-partner-is-cross-with-me-1*) limit the character's use of a specific set of abilities or resources, making her favor other alternatives.
- Situational or tactical statuses (*under-fire-2* or *blocked-escape-route-3* or *oblivious-5*) can be harmless in and of themselves, but limit or block certain courses of action or represent the trouble the character is getting into. Eventually, these statuses can contribute to her failing to defend from a more harmful status if these statuses are applied to her future **Face Danger** moves. Many situational statuses also expire at the end of the scene.

ADJUST HOW STATUSES ARE REMOVED

If the characters can easily remove statuses with **Change the Game** and **Montage (Downtime)**, it could mean less negative statuses carry over from one scene to another, resulting in and an easier challenge level. Conversely, if the characters can't shake off enough statuses in and between scenes, their statuses tend to escalate and the game becomes more and more difficult.

You can adjust how statuses are removed by:

- Changing the tags of statuses you give so they are easier or harder to heal, based on the lead characters' abilities and resources.
- Tighten or relax your policy about what statuses can be healed on the go.
- Tighten or relax your policy about which statutes "fight back" and apply to the attempt to heal them (see page 237).
- Allow more partial or more complete healing of statuses during downtime.



WRITING A CASE

When the cameras start rolling and the lead characters hit the streets, it may already be too late for the victim: a crime has been committed or the machination of a mastermind are well underway. The investigation ensues. Clues and evidence are collected and put together like a mosaic to give a blurry picture of what happened. People and situations put the investigation at risk and must be handled. At long last, the lead characters pull on a thread that could unravel the whole case. But nothing can prepare them for the truth that is about to be revealed.

This section explains how to write *City of Mist* cases so that during your sessions, you have everything you need to create drama, mystery, and suspense.

WHAT'S IN A CASE?

A **case** is a *City of Mist* playable investigation. It includes two aspects that often go hand-in-hand:

- **the investigation** of a crime, a wrong, or a problem connected to a Rift
- **follow-up actions** the lead characters take once they discover the truth of what happened (e.g., to prevent that crime or wrong from recurring, to resolve the problem, etc.).

A complete *City of Mist* case is comprised of various materials you can use during the session: a detailed **backstory**, a list of **locations** and **characters** that can be investigated, a collection of ready-made **clues** for your players, and some **Dangers** to challenge them with.

Generally, a single case revolves around a single crime, wrong, or problem. However, in *City of Mist*, cases are interconnected; they often end with discoveries that lead to more questions and to a new investigation, a new case. The lead characters often discover that a specific crime (or wrong, or problem) was a part of a greater, systemized crime. Smaller cases tend to be contained by bigger cases that deal with solving a bigger version of the same problem. With each case, the lead characters reveal deeper and more sordid truths that lead them to the true source of the problem. Connecting cases into a season or a series is explained below, under Designing a Series.

GREY MORALITY, JUSTIFIABLE MOTIVES

Life is complicated in *City of Mist*. In the big city, most people are apathetic to each other's suffering. Good people fall in the cracks while corruption prevails, rewarding those who make self-promotion and wrongdoing their way of life. But crime is not reserved to villains. Everyone, even the kindest soul, has a reason and the capacity to commit a crime or to stoop to immoral acts, and sometimes this reason is a darn good one, one that would make the lead characters wonder if they should intervene at all. Depending on your series concept, the lead characters themselves may be morally ambiguous and engage in criminal activity.

To add fuel to the fire, the lives of City residents are haunted by the Mythoi. Those who have awakened are driven by their Mythoi to do things they may never have done otherwise, but that now burn deep within their soul. Being awakened changes one's perception, sometime skewing it beyond fathom, eroding one's capacity to relate to others. Many Avatars set out to do good (or what they perceive is good) but lose their compassion and humanity to the intense sense of purpose instilled by their Mythoi.

Sleepers, on the other hand, are pawns used by Avatars throughout the City to reenact their legends. What may seem at first as unfortunate circumstances that drove them to do what they did can later be revealed as a result of systemic intervention of the Avatars in the lives of the City residents, through politics, culture, organized crime – you name it.

When you create *City of Mist* cases, remember that no matter how saintly or monstrous, no-one is either good or bad. Everyone is a villain and everyone is a hero; your cases should help make that clear to your audience. Your criminals and wrongdoers should always have a motive that seems relatable and justifiable, if you only see things from their perspective. If your crew consider themselves to be moral, they should often find themselves wondering what exactly that means.

THE ICEBERG

A CASE IS LIKE AN ICEBERG

To understand the structure of a *City of Mist* case, think of it as an iceberg.

At the bottom or deepest part of the iceberg, there lies **the truth** about the entire case: what started it, what really happened. **The truth of a case is always mythical: it always involves a Rift or several Rifts.** The crime, wrong, or problem at the heart of the case were caused because of how a Rift used, abused, or misused her Mythos powers, knowingly or unknowingly, or by a phenomenon or a chain reaction that emanated from a Mythos.

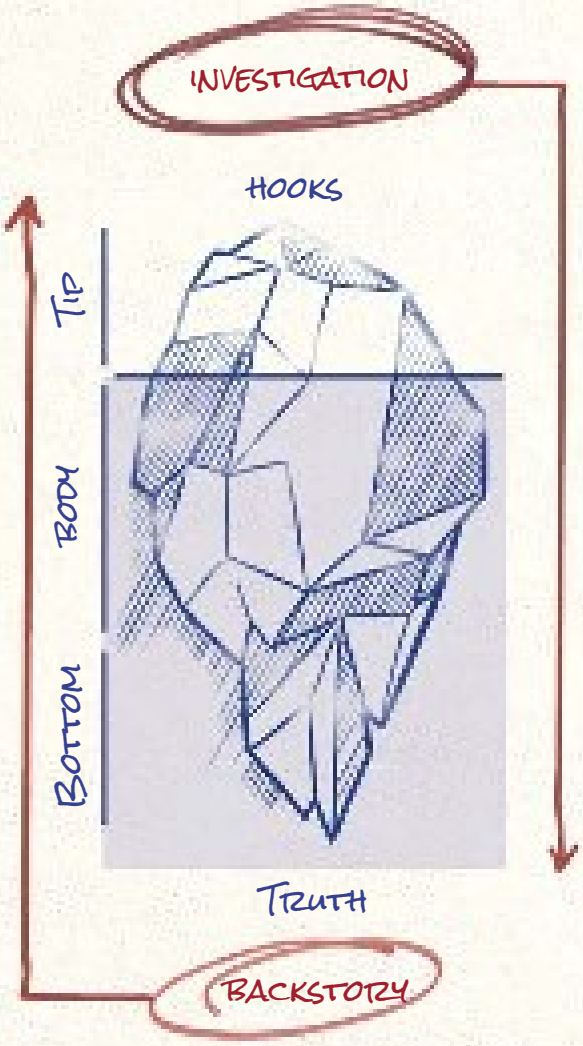
The events originating from the source Rift continue to ripple through the City. Other people and organizations, who may or may not be Rifts, become involved for different reasons and in different ways. More crimes are committed, more people are wronged, more problems arise, whether the same or different than the one directly caused by the source. The plot thickens. This chain of events is represented by **the body of the iceberg**.

Eventually, this trickles down to the street as a seemingly ordinary crime, wrong, or problem, one which may have little to do with the original issue. This is **the tip of the iceberg**: what is visible to Sleepers, what will be reported in the media, what people think happened, etc.

The events instigated by the mythical source, their progression behind the scenes, and their eventual surfacing to the Sleeper level is called **the backstory**. The backstory includes everything that happened before the crew becomes involved in the investigation.

THE INVESTIGATION REVEALS THE ICEBERG

When you play the case, **the investigation starts at the tip of the iceberg**. The lead characters hear about the seemingly ordinary crime, wrong, or problem and start investigating, seeing only the most superficial layer of the story. This visible



problem that catches the attention of the lead characters is called the **hook**. A case may have more than one hook because the original problem could have evolved into multiple problems that can interest the lead characters.

As the lead characters **Investigate**, they penetrate **the body of the iceberg** to increasingly greater depths: they reveal **clues** that connect events, locations, and characters, and lead them closer and closer to the truth.

Eventually, the lead characters arrive at **the bottom of the iceberg**, revealing the **truth** about the crime, wrong, or problem. Knowing the truth, they then take **follow-up action** to solve the problem, prevent it from happening again, benefit from the situation, etc.

HOW DEEP THE ICEBERG GOES

A case can have different degrees of complexity, measured by its **Depths**. The tip of the iceberg (the visible Sleeper level) and the bottom of the iceberg (the truth) are constants – every case has them. The body of the iceberg, however, can vary in volume.

Each Depth is a separate layer of information in the case. It contains an exclusive set of clues that can at most lead to the Depth directly below it, but not to deeper Depths. In other words, the lead characters must first uncover clues at their current Depth before they can progress to the next Depth and get closer to the truth.

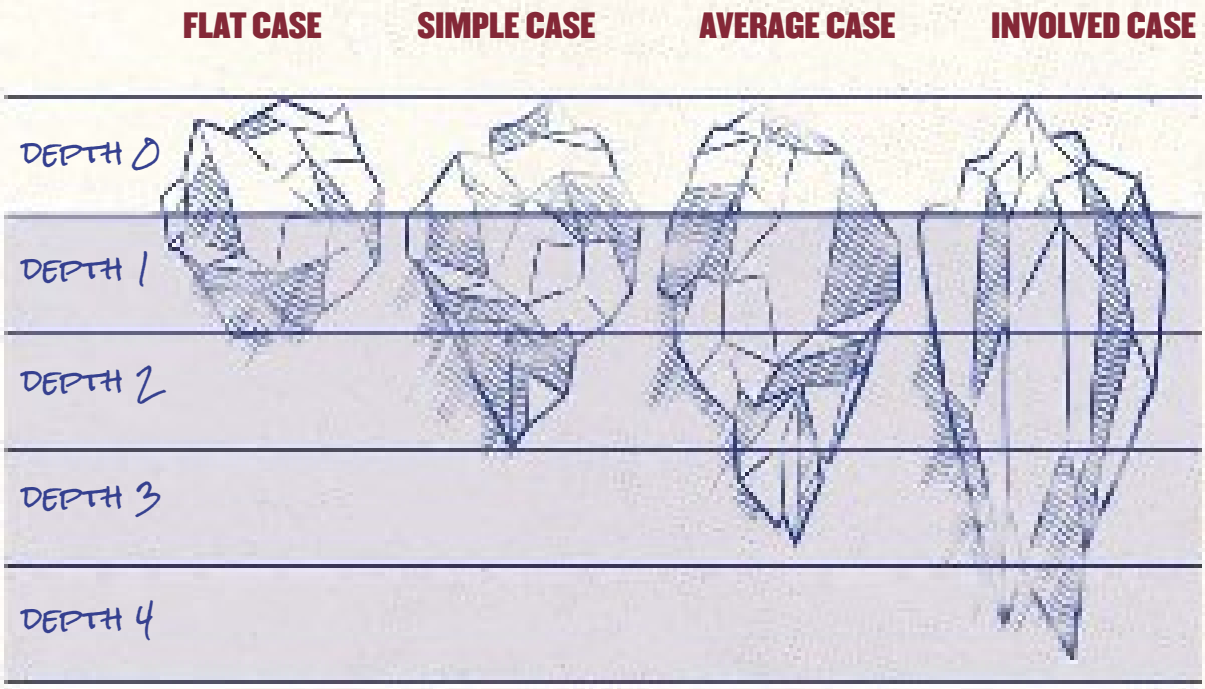
The Depths of a case are numbered. The hooks, or the tip of the iceberg, are always at Depth Zero. Any following exclusive layer of information is given a number starting from one and counting up: Depth 1, Depth 2, Depth 3 and so on. The truth, or the bottom of the iceberg, always has the greatest Depth in the case.

A case with only two Depths, or a flat case, has almost no investigation: the hooks (Depth Zero) lead directly to the truth (Depth 1). A simple case with some investigation, would contain the hooks (Depth Zero), which lead to a set of clues (Depth 1), which, if investigated, lead to the truth (Depth 2, in this case). More complex cases can have multiple exclusive layers of clues that must first be cracked before moving on to the next layer. In such cases, the body of the iceberg, or the investigation, can be broken up to two or more Depths.

CASE DEPTH EXAMPLE

In a flat case, the lead characters get word of someone murdered with a sledgehammer by their employee (Depth 0) and then find the employee and discover he's the Rift of Thor, the Norse storm god, and confront him (Depth 1).

In a simple case, the lead characters could get word of someone murdered with a sledgehammer (Depth 0) and then investigate either the crime scene, the victim's apartment, or the victim's workplace (Depth 1) before they deduce it's the employee, track him down, and discover he's the Rift of Thor (Depth 2). They cannot use the hook (Depth 0) to get to the truth (Depth 2); they must first investigate and uncover the clues leading to the identity of the killer, all of which are in Depth 1.



In an average case, the lead characters could get word of someone murdered with a sledgehammer (Depth 0) and then investigate either the crime scene, the victim's apartment, or the victim's workplace (Depth 1) before they deduce it's the employee. However, they can't find him anywhere and nothing in Depth 1 indicates where they might find him. Clues in Depth 1 only indicate *who* might know where to find him (some of his friends, perhaps); the lead characters investigate these leads, possibly dealing with other threats and Rifts (Depth 2), until they find out the murderer is hiding in the old clock tower. When they go there, they discover he's the Rift of Thor and confront him (Depth 3). The lead characters can't get to the the killer's friends (Depth 2) without first discovering who he is and who his friends are (Depth 1); and they can't find him and confront him (Depth 3) without first talking to his friends who know where he is (Depth 2).

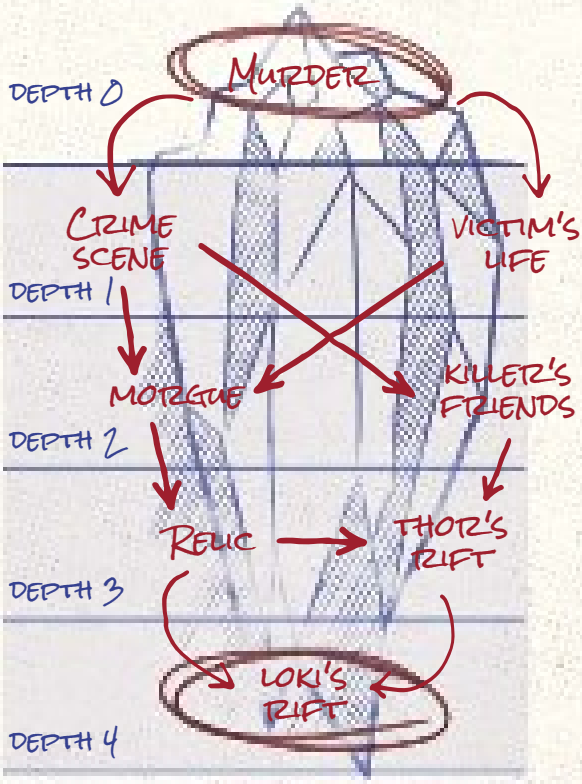
In an involved version of this case, everything could be exactly the same, except the ending: when the investigators find and confront the alleged murderer, the Rift of Thor, he insists that he was framed and that someone stole his sledgehammer, which is a Relic. Depth 3 then becomes about discovering who stole the murder weapon and whether or not the suspect is telling the truth. The crew discovers that a competitor of the victim, who also happens to be the Rift of Loki, stole the sledgehammer Relic and used it to kill the employer. The crew then confronts her and cracks the case (Depth 4). The clues in the case are designed so that without first reaching the Rift of Thor (Depth 3), the characters would never suspect the Rift of Loki. Otherwise, reaching Loki would not be Depth 4.

THE ICEBERG GOES SIDEWAYS, TOO

Sometimes a case contains multiple ways to reach the truth. Different branches of clues permeate the Depths, possibly intertwining. Branches should preferably have the same number of Depths, to avoid one branch becoming a shortcut to the truth, which could make the case easier to solve depending on the avenue taken by the players.

In the involved version of the above case, one way of reaching Loki in Depth 4 is by identifying the alleged killer (Depth 1), finding him (Depth 2), and helping him find the person who framed him (Depth 3). The MC wants to add a second branch of clues, one which relates to the Relic sledgehammer, Mjölnir. When investigating the crime scene in Depth 1, the lead characters can find evidence that the victim was electrocuted. Checking the morgue (Depth 2) they can discover evidence that a Relic is involved. This could lead them to seek out the sledgehammer (Depth 3) and find it in the basement of Loki's Rift's house, or it can connect them to the first branch by somehow allowing them to find Thor's Rift (also Depth 3). Only Thor's Rift or Mjölnir itself could lead them to Loki in Depth 4.

The case is now a Depth-4 case with two branches.



ICEBERGS AND PLAYING TO FIND OUT

Remember that during the game you cannot control the actions of the player characters and therefore the order of scenes, nor should you try. The players should feel as if they are playing a "sandbox" game, their actions unrestricted by some invisible and impassable barriers. For example, even if unlikely, the player characters can decide to go directly to the morgue after hearing about the crime, without even visiting the crime scene or questioning people who knew the victim. If this is the case, just give them the clues available there, even if it means they skipped a Depth. Hey, good for them.

Creating a case in layers allows you to create this sandbox effect and at the same time prevent your case from being cracked too fast (which makes it more entertaining for the group as a whole). It allows the investigation to progress at a desired pace without forcing a specific path. For example, the lead characters need to identify the alleged killer in order to find his friends; they can't reach his friends without first knowing his identity. Similarly, they won't know about the Relic without getting a closer look at the body or the results of the autopsy at the morgue.

When you write a case, try to identify weak spots in your Depths. The morgue, mentioned above, is such a weak spot: if the players choose to go there first, they can skip Depth 1. The solution is to have clues in the morgue that only lead to the Relic Mjölnir (Depth 3) if crossed with evidence from the crime scene (Depth 1). This would compel the detectives to go back to the crime scene before they can move forward.

With that said, remember that Depths are not failproof. Your players can find a loophole in the case that will allow them to cut through Depths. For example, investigating the victim's life (Depth 1), one of the characters could suspect that the victim's competitor, Loki's Rift, is the one behind the murder, even as an intuition or on a whim. They can then break into Loki's Rift house and find Mjölnir, incriminating her and acquitting Thor's Rift.

When your system of Depths fails, just play along with the players and let the story evolve. Look for new ways to add drama, by examining the consequences of the characters' actions: Breaking into Loki's house without the authority to do so could alert the police; otherwise, without any proof, the crew must continue to investigate, even if they are already sure it's her. Loki's Rift could also use her powers to deceive the crew and turn them against Thor's Rift, making things much more interesting… It's all in a day's work! To allow such great creativity to take place and surprise even you as the MC, cases are not written as rigid flow charts; they only describe the given situation with all its facets (locations, characters, clues) at the *beginning* of the investigation. Anything can happen once the cameras start rolling.



STEP 1: THE BACKSTORY

The process of writing a case starts with putting together a detailed backstory. The backstory should answer the question:

? WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE THE CREW GOT INVOLVED IN THE CASE?

and should explain the chain of events that started with the source of the issue and all the developments that eventually led to the tip of the iceberg.

A detailed backstory is essential for a good *City of Mist* case. Knowing exactly what happened before the investigators became involved allows you to adapt your narration to any path the players may choose and to come up with clues on the fly when necessary. Without it, you are much more likely to provide contradicting or irrelevant clues to your players, making your case feel less substantial.

THE STORY SEED

A story seed is an idea or concept for a backstory. Start building your backstory by establishing what or who is the source of the problem in your case, what did they do, and how the crew is involved. Use the following questions to help you put together an idea, which you will later flesh out. You can follow them in order or start from any question and then complete the others as you develop your story. Don't worry about the details at this point; focus on the general concept for the case.

? RIFT(S): WHO IS INVOLVED IN THIS CASE?

? What is the Mythos of the main Rift(s) involved?
Choose a myth, a legend, or a story (see list of suggested Mythos sources under Mythos on page 98 and under Mythos Character Tropes on page 108).

? Who is this Rift in her everyday life in the City?
Create the Rift's ordinary persona: a criminal, a student, a performer, etc. (see list of suggested Logos Character Tropes on page 110).

? How and when did this Rift awaken?
An accident, an experiment, finding a Relic / Familiar / Enclave, on a very ordinary day, being a victim, doing something wrong, doing something right, etc.

? How awakened is this Rift?
Awakening, Touched, Borderliner, Legendary, or Avatar (see page 33).

? What drives this Rift more: her Mythos or her ordinary life?
You can choose either, or create complicated or conflicted Rifts who are driven by both their Mythos and their ordinary life.

? What does her Mythos want from her?
To reenact its story with different people in the major roles, to obtain an item from its legend, to defeat or kill an enemy from its legend, to save someone or protect something from its legend, etc.

? What is / was her mundane motive?
A wish to make something better, hatred, anger, envy, desire for peace and quiet, wanting to help someone, greed, following orders, etc.

? How did she use her Mythos powers to achieve her goal?

? THE TRUTH: WHAT CRIME, WRONG, OR PROBLEM IS AT THE CENTER OF THE CASE?

Describe the crime, wrong, or problem that started everything or that around which everything revolves (see sidebar on the next page for examples of crimes and wrongs):

- This Rift herself committed a crime, has wronged someone, or was used by someone else to do so.
- The presence or activity of this Rift put at risk something important to a resident or residents of the City: their lives, their health, their property, their own (possibly illegal) activity, their lifestyle, their quality of life, etc.
- This Rift clashed with another legendary or mundane individual or group, possibly affecting others in the process.
- The Rift has taken the first steps in a planned crime or a scheme targeting a person of importance, a group, a population, or the lead characters themselves.

? THEME: WHAT TYPE OF STORY WILL THIS BE?

Deciding on the scope, themes, and format of the case in advance helps you decide which ideas to keep and which to discard and overall create a more coherent experience for your group. Figure out how to make your choices work with the series concept and the nature of your crew. Some examples are:

- Scope:
  - » a personal drama or tragedy
  - » big trouble in a little neighborhood
  - » an intra-organizational investigation (e.g. police Internal Affairs)
  - » City-wide catastrophe
- Common themes and tropes:
  - » petty crime
  - » love triangle gone bad
  - » organized crime
  - » a heist
  - » corporate shenanigans
  - » political corruption
  - » police inefficiency, corruption, or brutality
  - » mystical mystery
  - » illegal or unethical experiments
- Format:
  - » **whodunit**: all suspects are present but hiding the truth for their own reasons
  - » **cold case**: digging up and putting together old evidence to solve an old case or stop someone still on the loose
  - » **clock is ticking**: uncover and foil an evil scheme before it's too late

? HOOKS: HOW DOES THE CREW GET INVOLVED?

? How does the crew hear about the case?
The victim(s) of affected party approaches the crew, someone related to them approaches the crew, someone affected by a 2nd or 3rd degree consequence of the crime approaches the crew, the perpetrator(s) or their allies approaches the crew, reports of crime in media, the crew members are witnesses, the evidence crops up during the crew members' investigation of their Mysteries or a crew Mystery.

? At what point in the progression of events does the Crew come in?

- The deed is done; the crew must find the perpetrator.
- The deed is done, but the crew must stop it from happening again.
- A crime has been committed, but it's only a small step on the way to a bigger crime.
- Something is brewing, the crew must find out what and stop it.

STORY SEED EXAMPLES

Starting with the Rift:
Mack the MC wants to create a case around the Mythos of the Mechanical Bird from Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale*. He imagines the Rift as a lost soul, a young woman who is cursed to always be a substitute for the real thing, so she ends up attracting all the wrong people for all the wrong reasons. Thinking of her Mythos powers, Mack decides this Rift has the power to mimic other people's voices and appearances, and that she was entrapped by a con artist (perhaps the Rift of the Emperor from the same story) to help him pull off a heist. Mack wants to make it a personal drama, so he ends up deciding that the Rift is already dead at the beginning of the investigation: she killed herself jumping off the roof of the Royal Plaza Hotel. The crew must find out what happened to her.

Starting with the crime, wrong, or problem:
Christy the MC has an idea for a case revolving around the escape of a deranged Rift from a maximum-security psychiatric ward of a prison. No-one knows how the Rift escaped or where she is now, but considering her psychiatric profile she poses an immediate threat to the citizens of the City. The crew has to penetrate the social hierarchy in the prison (perhaps going undercover), as well as the broken minds of some of the inmates in the psychiatric ward, in order to figure out the case, find the fugitive Rift, and bring her back into custody. MC Christy must decide what kind of Rift escaped, settling at last on the Rift of a Maenad, one of the ecstatic followers of Dionysus.

Starting with the theme of the story:
Drew the MC wants to create a case centered around a gang war in the Blue-Collar Residential. When the crew comes in, hostilities are already threatening to tear the neighborhood apart, with violent killings that are endangering innocent lives. The crew is invited either as a backup team summoned by one of the warring gangs or as a solution to the problem by the mayor or the local citizens. Drew looks for appropriate Mythoi for the gangs. One gang would be a Yakuza-like organization, a host of individual Rifts of evil spirits called Mononoke. The second gang would be led by the Rift of the Wicked Witch of the West (from *The Wizard of Oz*), who could turn gang members into winged monkeys. All gang members are Touched, except for the Witch, who is a Borderliner; however, everyone involved is mainly driven by their mundane motive: a turf war.

Starting with the hook:
Edgar the MC has an idea for a case starting with many small incidents that seem to be unrelated: a break-in at the museum, a ritualistic animal sacrifice, an attack on a pawnshop. He wants all of these to tie into other, more dramatic crimes, eventually leading the crew to discover a plan already in motion: a secretive cult will attempt to summon the Mythos of Kali, the Hindu goddess who destroys all evil. Whether this is good or bad for the City largely depends Kali's interpretation of 'evil'. The crew must find out more about this Mythos and how to stop (or help) her manifestation.

EXAMPLES OF CRIMES

Animal abuse · Arson · Assassination · Assault · Blackmailing · Bombing · Bribe · Burglary · Embezzlement · Espionage · Extortion · Fencing · Fraud · Hacking · Hijacking · Identity Theft · Kidnapping · Larceny · Loansharking · Loitering · Money laundering · Murder · Price fixing · Prison break · Prostitution · Racketeering · Rape · Rioting · Robbery · Sexual abuse · Shooting · Smuggling · Tagging (graffiti) · Trafficking (drugs, arms, art and antiques, human) · Vandalism

Attempted crime · Being an accessory to a crime · Conspiring to commit a crime

EXAMPLES OF WRONGS

Most crimes · Betrayal · Bullying · Infiedality · Lying or hiding the truth · Psychological abuse · Taking something belonging to another, even if lawfully

EXAMPLES OF PROBLEMS

Disagreement · Hazard to health or safety · Natural disaster · Misfortune · Suicide

DEVELOPING THE BACKSTORY

Depending on the complexity of the case you want to write, you may wish to expand your story seed. The more involved your backstory is, the easier it will be for you to create more Depths and branches during the following steps.

Think of **additional major characters** that could be involved in the case and the role they can play (like adding Loki in the example above). These characters can be completely mundane, Rifts unrelated to the main Rift, or Rifts of characters who appear in the legend of the main Rift. Research different legends that could fill the role of a character you have in mind.

Think also of **further complications** that you can add to existing characters and their role in the case (such as having Thor's Rift go into hiding with only his closest friends knowing where he is).

You can complicate the story by re-examining your current assumptions about how things came to be. Try using the following methods:

- **"The truth runs deeper than you know":** the truth you originally chose only *appears* to be the truth; in fact, there is someone else behind the case, another crime, a deeper or darker truth, etc.
- **"There's always a middlemen":** the actions of the Rift didn't affect the Sleeper level as directly as you originally planned; Instead, there were additional steps in the chain reaction that eventually affected the Sleeper level and alerted the crew.
- **"Remember that other incident?":** the main Rift involved is not the only side to the story – there are multiple parties involved and their actions had different consequences that floated up to the Sleeper level separately, perhaps even appearing unrelated. OR: the crimes, wrongs, etc. didn't affect the Sleeper level in just one way, they had multiple consequences that reached the Sleeper level, perhaps even appearing unrelated.

Mack the MC wants to build up the tragic story of the Mechanical Bird. He looks to further complicate the case, so he looks for a middleman. He decides that the heist she was involved in targeted a casino owned by the the Rift of the Emperor, and that the con artist who used her is a Sleeper: he knew she could create incredible costumes but was never sure how she did it.

After some research into the story of *The Nightingale*, Mack figures that the case has something to do with a deal the Emperor has made with Death to let him live. Previously, the Emperor has warded off Death with the song of the real Nightingale (who is also a Rift). However, he has since lost touch with the real Nightingale and needs a replacement to try and cheat Death, which is where the Mechanical Bird came in. The Emperor was trying to use her to ward off Death, which cost her her life.

Now the Rifts at the core of the crime are both the Emperor and Death; the con artist is just a middleman. The truth at the center of the case is that the Emperor sacrificed the Mechanical Bird to save himself from Death.

PUTTING THE DETAILS TOGETHER

Once you are happy with the concept for your case, it's time to work out the finer details. Investigations are based on details, so you will need to be able to produce them quickly during the session. This does not mean you have to think about ALL the miniscule details of the case and write them down in advance. You can improvise and complete some missing details during the session; in fact, if the players go down a path you did not foresee, you will *have* to improvise (which could be even more fun). However, if you want the integrity of your investigation to survive these improvisations, you need to understand the case intimately and know exactly what happened before the crew shows up and what is happening while the investigation is ongoing. This would make any improvisation easier and will give you the confidence to allow the players to try anything they wish, rather than constrain them to a set path of investigation.

Your final backstory should include these details:

- **Character roster**
  Write down a list of characters, their mundane names, physical descriptions, personality, and abilities. Giving the characters their mundane identities completes the veneer of Mist the case needs: even though underneath there is a struggle of mythical forces, the case *appears* to be the story of ordinary people.

- **The whole truth**
  Now is the time to iron out all the holes and vague spots in the plot. Go over the backstory and look for missing areas or unanswered question. Answer the big questions, the one that are fundamental to the case. Leave any peripheral questions unanswered; you can answer them on the fly during the game, if they ever arise.
  - » How exactly was the crime/wrong committed? With what tools? At what time?
  - » How did it go? What went wrong? Who witnessed it or knows about it? What critical evidence was left behind?
  - » Who else was involved? What have they been doing since? Where are they now?
- **Timeline**
  Plot the events that occurred **before** the investigation on a timeline so you can tell what happened before what. You don't need to track every minute (unless the case depends on it), but you should know roughly the time of the day. Have a rough timeline of what happens **after** the investigation begins: if you think some of the non-player characters will take action, for example try to destroy evidence or complete their scheme, define when it might happen.

BACKSTORY EXAMPLE

CHARACTER ROSTER

The Rift of the Mechanical Bird is Ashley Lind (Touched), a slender woman in her late 20s, attractive in a heroin chic sort of way, with a constant lost look in her eyes, as if she doesn't know who she is. Ashley is a hustler, trying to use her ability to mimic people's look and voice to make a buck. She has dabbled in all kinds of professions and illegal activities, but she has never really hurt anyone.

The conman is Martin "Marty" Brooks (Sleeper), a balding middle-aged man often seen in colorful suits and big seventies shades. Marty has been avoiding imprisonment for years thanks to his knack to leave the scene when his heists start going sideways.

The Rift of the Emperor is Kenny Liu (Borderliner), a relatively young (40) hotel and casino magnate.

Death is a little too big for the scope of this case, so Mack decided he will be represented by his emissary, the Rift of Cerebros (Borderliner), known on the street simply as "K9".

WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED

Mack the MC starts going over the details of the case. He decides that it was fate, not premeditation, that brought everyone together into the Royal Plaza Casino that night. Having lost the real Nightingale, Kenny Liu had a meeting set with K9 where he was supposed to pay a stupendous amount of money to spare his life for another month, not a very sustainable business. He was desperately looking for a way out, when an opportunity fell in his lap.

Marty and Ashley had been studying the casino and preparing for a heist for weeks and the showdown was on the same night. Something went wrong, and Kenny Liu's security people seized the Mechanical Bird and brought her to him. Later, during the fateful meeting with K9, Kenny Liu tried to have Ashley Lind masquerade as the real Nightingale, but for some reason K9 didn't fall for it. Instead, K9 demanded Ashley's life as payment for that month. Out of time, Kenny Liu staged Lind's suicide there and then, holding her at gunpoint on the roof of his hotel and forcing her to jump to her death. In his mind, a suicide was easier to cover up than a murder.

Mack still has some open questions that need answering. He must answer these questions to complete the backstory because they are very likely to come up during the investigation.

How did Marty entrap Ashley Lind?
Ashley was using her abilities to get away with small-time fraud and thievery when Marty spotted her. She would pretend to be someone else on the phone to elicit private information from the person on the other side or pretend to look like someone else and pick their personal belongings at a cloakroom. Marty started figuring her out little by little

and collected enough evidence to tie her to all those little crimes; she would only be charged for being an accomplice, but that would be enough to put her away. In exchange for the evidence folder and a cut of the money, Ashley reluctantly agreed to partake in the heist.

What exactly was the plan of the heist? What was Ashley and Marty's part in it?
Marty found out that for winnings above a certain amount, the chief of security, one Carlton Cooper (Rift of the Dragon, Touched), escorts the winner seeking to make a withdrawal to a room where he personally questions the winner to screen for any potential fraud. If the winner checks out, Mr. Cooper opens the vault with his voice and retina signature, as well as visual confirmation from a security guard in an armored booth, and brings out the winnings in a briefcase. Marty planned to knock out Mr. Cooper with a drug and have Ashley take his place. Then Marty would cheat his way to winning the minimum amount required to trigger the procedure. According to his plan, Ashley, appearing to be Cooper, would then follow the procedure and let the security team open the main vault for her, but she would pack a lot more money into the briefcase and hand it to Marty.

Who else was involved?
Mack's explanation of the heist already added the chief of security, Carlton Cooper, to the mix. Mack feels there needs to be another player here: a professional card player, Théo Blanc, who could reasonably win the minimum amount. While he thinks about Blanc, Mack has an epiphany: Blanc was the one who betrayed Marty and Ashley to the casino security.

What went wrong?
This gives Mack an even better idea so he goes back on his first decision: the events that lead to the death of Ashley Lind were not coincidental — it was a setup. Mr. Cooper is no fool. When the trio (Brooks, Lind, Blanc) were scoping the casino as part of their preparation, Cooper spotted Blanc. He followed him home and beat the truth out of him: their heist was built around impersonating Cooper himself, using a woman who could dress up like him and imitate his voice. Thinking about his employer's problem and the real Nightingale, Cooper threatens Blanc to help him snag his colleagues (and get paid for it) or be turned over to the police. On the night of the heist, Cooper and Kenny Liu are already waiting for the team. Cooper abducts Ashley when she transforms to appear like him, but when he tries to pretend he is Ashley transformed, Marty figures it out and flees. Cooper then brings Ashley to Kenny Liu and the drama with K9 ensues.

TIMELINE

Mack finishes his backstory by putting together a timeline:

- 8 months ago: Kenny Liu lost his real Nightingale and started paying a large sum of money to Death, via K9.
- 3 month ago: Marty started following Ashley Lind.
- 1 month ago: Marty approached and entrapped Ashley Lind and they started working on the heist with Théo Blanc, scoping the Royal Plaza Casino.
- 10 day ago: Chief of Security Cooper spotted Blanc and forced him to double-cross his colleagues.
- Last night: The heist took place, Cooper snagged Lind, Kenny Liu unsuccessfully tried to use her to ward off K9 and was eventually driven to make her jump to her death.
- The case starts late at night or the next morning, when word of this suicide reaches the crew.

Since the case focuses on investigating the past, Mack can't think of many fixed future events to put on his timeline. Eventually, he simply adds:

- In the next few days: Marty and Théo Blanc, who are now laying low in their respective hideouts, will try to skip town; knowing they are the loose threads, Cooper may hire a hitman to silence both of them, or do it himself.



STEP 2: THE TRAIL OF BREADCRUMBS

Once you have the backstory down, you have a good grasp of the chain of events that led from the original crime, wrong, or problem to the hooks. In the second step of writing your case, you will be going the other way, from the hooks to the truth, focusing on the crew's investigation path and how they can discover what happened and what is going on.

HOOKS

Start by listing the different ways the crew can become involved in the case. A hook must fit the series concept and the nature of the crew (e.g., a gig for The Pros, signs of possible presence of dark forces for The Order, etc.). **Each hook should lead the crew to one or more related location**, either directly or following some investigation. Hooks could be based on one of the following:

- **The crew can be informed about the case** by the victim(s), by a relative or friend of the victim(s), by person with an interest in the case, by the police, by the media, etc.
- **The crew can bump into the case** as part of their routine or daily life, when investigating their Mysteries, on their way to solve another case.
- **The crew can reach the case as a continuation of a previous investigation.**

Mack the MC lists the possible hooks for his case:

- **Watching for crimes:** If the PCs are involved with the police or seek out unusual crimes, they will learn about Lind's death from participating in or tracking police activity, from a police contact, or from the morning newspapers and news reports. This would lead them to the crime scene.
- **A concerned relative or friend** could recruit the crew to help find out what happened to Ashley Lind, or even pay them to do it. This person may not even know that she had died, so they might lead the crew to Ashley's apartment.
- **Tip-off:** An enemy of Kenny Liu could tip off the crew about a link between the suicide and some shady dealings in the casino. This could lead to the crime scene or the casino.
- **Mystical source:** Visions or omens revealed to a crew member (perhaps someone walking by the hotel) could indicate that dark forces are at work at the Royal Plaza, perhaps hinting to the nature of this Mechanical Bird. This could lead to the crime scene or the hotel reception.

BUILDING THE ICEBERG

Next, break down your backstory into the possible locations involved in the investigation and assign them to Depths and branches as explained in the iceberg example above. This may include locations that were in the backstory, locations related to key characters, 'buffer' location to provide additional layers, and even 'moving' locations, scenes that may occur in different places, depending on how the investigation unravels.

The locations reached through the hooks are in Depth 1. Those are the locations where the crew is most likely to begin their investigation.

The location where the truth is most likely to be revealed or the main Rift is most likely to be confronted has the greatest Depth. This is the location where the crew is most likely to conclude the investigation and any follow-up action they may wish to take.

To build the different branches of investigation, pick up a single Depth 1 location and ask yourself:

? HOW CAN THIS LOCATION BRING THE CREW CLOSER TO THE TRUTH?

Start thinking about clues the crew may find at the scene.

? WHAT FOLLOW-UP LOCATION WOULD THE CLUES LEAD TO?

? IS THIS FOLLOW-UP LOCATION SIGNIFICANTLY CLOSER TO THE TRUTH?

If so, it should be one Depth greater than the current location. If it only reveals different information but does not necessarily bring the crew closer to the truth, it should be on the same Depth.

As you create new follow-up locations, ask the same questions about them. Work down the branch, assigning new Depths, until it connects you to the final location. Now you know the Depth of the final location and can better assess how close every new location is to the final truth. Go back to unfinished branches and work out how they end up tying into the final location. Finally, make adjustments either to the nature or the locations or their Depth to correct any issues in the iceberg.

Mack the MC starts deconstructing his backstory into locations. He starts with the locations indicated by his hooks: the crime scene, the casino, the hotel reception, Ashley's apartment. All of these locations are Depth 1.

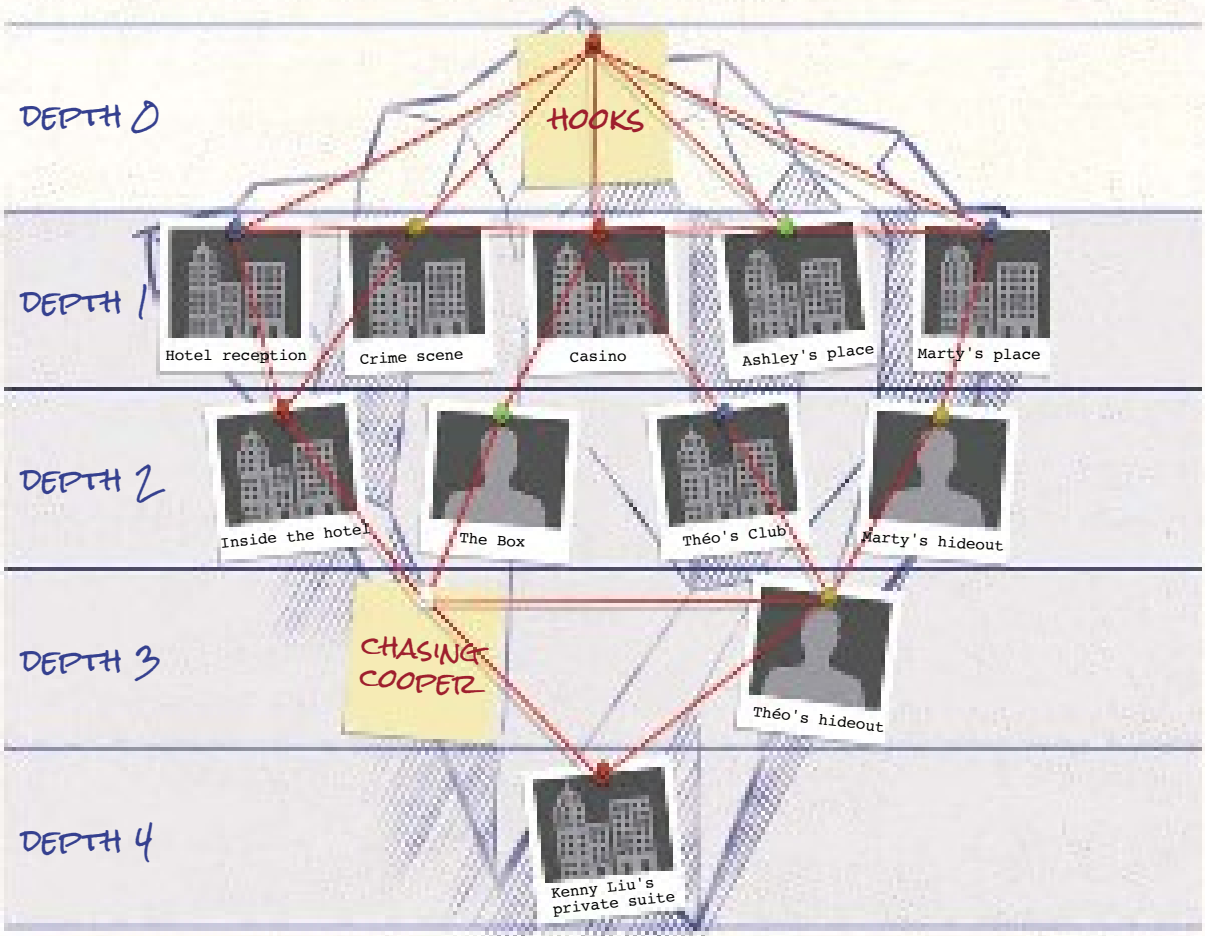
Then he thinks about the final location, where the characters are most likely to confront Kenny Liu. From a dramatic standpoint, he wants it to take place in the same room the meeting with K9 and Ashley took place, or on the roof where Kenny Liu forced Ashley to jump. He decides that Kenny Liu has a private suite in the top floor of the hotel. Kenny Liu's private suite has the deepest Depth because if the crew gets there, they are most likely on to Kenny Liu.

Now Mack asks himself how the crew can reach Kenny Liu. One path, or branch, would be investigating Ashley's life, mostly at her apartment or around her neighborhood, which may lead them to Marty's apartment (Depth 1 as well, because it does not bring them much closer to the truth: Marty is not there). The evidence there could expose the heist, leading them back to the casino (Depth 1) or somehow lead them to Marty's hideout. If they have Marty, he could tell them almost everything that happened up until the heist went south. That's a significant step towards cracking the case, so this location is Depth 2. Most importantly, Marty by then would have figured out Blanc two-timed them, so the characters can look for Théo Blanc's hideout (Depth 3). Interrogating the card expert could expose Cooper's interest in Ashley, tying it all back to that night in Kenny Liu's private suite (Depth 4).

Another path could be investigating the hotel and the casino. People on the floor may have seen Marty (leading to Marty's apartment, Depth 1) or Theo (leading to a gambler's club Théo hangs out in, Depth 2, because it's closer to Théo, who knows more than Marty). Investigating the men's room would reveal a scuffle with security took place there, pointing at the Box, the security center of the casino (Depth 2). If the crew gets in the Box they could learn about Cooper's actions that night from the security guards, camera feeds, etc. leading them to go after Cooper (Depth 3), which Mack wants to stage as a chase in the City streets. Naturally, Cooper will lead them to Kenny Liu's private suite (Depth 4).

Alternatively, the crew can investigate the crime scene (Depth 1) which may lead to the casino or Ashley's apartment (both also Depth 1). They may also wish to investigate inside the hotel (Depth 2): the rooftop, the security feed, the personnel. Kenny Liu and Cooper did their best to hide the evidence, but there is a chance the crew will discover a private elevator going from the Box (Depth 2) to Kenny Liu's private suite (Depth 4) or find out about Cooper's involvement and go after him (Depth 3). To avoid the crew jumping from inside the hotel to Kenny Liu's private suite, Mack decides that it's a moving location: if the crew find it ahead of time and reveals much of the case, Kenny Liu will be in his downtown penthouse instead.

There can be many other constellations of how this investigation goes down, but Mack doesn't need to cover everything. He has the major paths of investigation covered, so he moves forward. The iceberg for the case looks like this:



LOCATIONS

Now that you have a list of locations, go through each location and write down:

- **a description** of the location, emphasizing its dramatic potential in a scene, as well as any special features, e.g., the building is on fire;
- **a short list of characters** present there, a description of their appearance and personality, when they can be found there, etc. Put more emphasis on key characters (such as Marty in the above example); you should already have some description of them from the backstory. Group multiple characters who serve the same function into collectives (e.g., the guests at the casino); and
- **a list of clues** that may be found at this location.

CLUES

Clues are always short and specific items of information that lead to a location no deeper than the next Depth (they can also lead back to a shallower Depth or sideways to a different location in the same Depth). Specifically, clues should lead to one of the follow-up locations of the location they are found in. They can be, among other things:

- **physical evidence**
  a calling card, muddy footprints, strange marks on a car's bumper, photos, a matching gun
- **information gleaned from characters**
  eyewitness reports, rumors, a story revealing someone's kindness, alibi, confession, suspicious behaviour
- **observations and deductions**
  security camera feed, stake out, crime scene analysis, a suspect showing up at the scene

- **papertrail**
  personal files, schematics, City records, police records, company financial statements
- **information obtained by legendary means**
  (using divination powers, asking one's Mythos for guidance)
  what the killer's Mythos is, what the dead know about this, the contents of a locked safe

Some clues can be accessed in more than one location (e.g., a person's digital profile). Either copy them to your other locations or note that to yourself. Conversely, you can distribute clues across different locations so that the characters must piece them together to discover a fact. For example, one location may have the murder weapon while another location may have the killer's fingerprints, and the two can be cross-referenced to incriminate the killer.

Create at least some clues that can work with the abilities and resources of each of lead character. However, do not plan how each clue will be revealed. First, many of the clues you will prepare may not be used eventually because the players will not choose to investigate the locations these clues are in. Second, keeping the planning to a minimum keeps you "playing to find out", as you are more flexible in dispensing the evidence.

While most clues point out a logical course of investigation, clues that rule out incorrect courses of investigation can greatly help the flow of your case. Remember that the players start out not knowing anything about the case you created, so eliminating possible explanations to what happened is a big part of their investigation.

Mack the MC starts by creating the crime scene location, where Ashley Lind was found dead after her 'suicide':

Location description:
At the night of the event, the entrance to the Royal Plaza hotel is closed off entirely; mixing with the bright lights of the hotel's signs and floodlights, blue and red police lights flood the area. The rain falls heavily. Ashley's body is covered by a tarp. Police officers and detectives go around collecting evidence and questioning witnesses. The following morning, the body has been removed and only the area of impact is surrounded by police tape, with a single policeman standing watch and taking additional witness reports.

Characters at the scene:

- Detective Johnny Benson, a forensics specialist; a brusque sturdy middle-aged man, who grunts, growls, and barks more than he talks.
- Police officers (collective)
- Eyewitnesses (collective)

Clues:

- Shortly after midnight, this person's body came crashing through the glass ceiling of the hotel entrance.
- She is a dark-haired, white female, late 20s to mid 30s.
- She was wearing an evening gown.
- There was no major event at the hotel, but the casino was open.
- One eyewitness says he saw her at the casino earlier that night. She was alone (this was during the heist).
- Forensics say she died from the impact with the ground.
- Searching the body:
- There is a small loaded pistol tucked in her thigh holster.
- Stashed in a hidden pocket at the back of the dress, there are her driver's license (identifying her as Ashley Lind) and a few bank notes.
- Policemen say there is nothing on the roof indicating a struggle.
- The police thinks it was suicide.

Mack then continues to create similar write-ups for all the other locations.

RED HERRINGS

A *red herring* is a misleading clue that points the crew in the wrong direction, that is, to a dead-ended investigation path. A red herring can enhance a case by complicating it and making it harder for the players to crack; however, it must be used with caution, keeping certain caveats in mind.

A *cold* red herring, one which really does lead to a dead-end, should be revealed as such in the location it is found or in the location it points to (that is, shortly after it is found) to avoid frustration. Otherwise, you may create an entire investigation thread that amounts to nothing. While in reality investigating a possible lead may certainly come to a dead end, cinematic investigations tend to weed out the cold red herrings quickly. Furthermore, from a game perspective, your players may be disappointed if they spend a session or two investigating a direction that ends up being completely useless to the story. Unless you wish to simulate a very realistic investigation, it is suggested to refrain from creating dead-ended branches in your iceberg. Most of the time you do not need to create cold red herrings yourself: the players will often misinterpret your clues and go in the wrong direction until additional clues reveal the truth.

A *hot* red herring is one that ties back to the investigation or reveals something else of importance to the crew, and is an enjoyable cinematic trick. While it makes the crew believe something false, it also indirectly reveals information valuable to the story. For example, in the above murder case with Thor and Loki (see page 369), the Rift of Thor is a red herring; the Rift of Loki uses him to shift the blame from herself. However, even though the Rift of Thor is technically a decoy, it is not a narrative dead-end; in fact, it may be instrumental to the investigation, depending on what path the players take. Another option is to use a hot red herring in one investigation to reveal details from another case.

If you wish to incorporate a hot red herring into your story, try to plant a clue early in the investigation that will make the players misinterpret all the other, valid clues. Later in the investigation, plant another clue that refutes the red herring and restores the players' interpretation of the clues to the right track, resulting in an "AHA!" moment and revealing a twist in the plot. This way, all the other clues collected by the players along the investigation are not worthless, they're just temporarily misinterpreted.

STEP 3: ADDING DANGERS

Your case is almost ready now. At this point, it is an investigation that the crew can engage in, with specific investigative challenges such as asking the right questions, drawing the right conclusions, following up in the right place or with the right people, etc. However, a *City of Mist* story is not complete without some action: someone tampers with the evidence, someone assaults the investigators, someone tries to get away, or someone tries to kill the killer.

Furthermore, some cases involve challenging follow-up actions. For example, if the lead characters found a factory that makes designer drugs, maybe they want to shut it down by force; or if they need to get a special ingredient for a potion that will save their crewmate's life, they may venture into a mysterious Enclave and battle whatever they find inside. These challenges should be described in game terms so you can use them in your scenes.

People and things who pose a threat to the investigation, to the crew, or to the crew's goals are Dangers. You complete your case by creating a list of potential Dangers. Ask yourself:

? WHO OR WHAT COULD ENDANGER THE INVESTIGATION OR INTERFERE WITH FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS?

- The perpetrator or anyone trying to protect them
- A third party with interest in the case
- The victim(s) (e.g., turned to mindless zombies)
- Threats or conditions in a location (e.g., drunk bar crowd or the collapsing water tanks in the City Aquarium)
- Enemies of the crew, and particularly Nemeses you can weave into the story

Put together a list of Dangers which may participate in the case. You may want to write your own Dangers, using the rules given in Chapter 6: This is MY City!, or use some of the Dangers in the Danger Profiles directory (also in Chapter 6) or in other *City of Mist* products.

Mack the MC goes over the backstory to see who or what could be a potential Danger. He comes up with the following:

- **Kenny Liu**, hotel and casino magnate. Besides his sizeable army of private security, Kenny Liu is the Rift of the The Emperor (Borderliner) and is able to supernaturally command others, overwhelming the weak-willed.
- **Carlton Cooper**, casino chief of security (the Dragon, Touched). Mack wants Cooper to have mostly the senses of the Dragon, like its fabled ability to know every coin in his hoard. Giving the ability a twist, Cooper can tell when there is money missing from the casino's safe or cashiers, and can sense the location of any chip of the Royal Plaza Casino, anywhere in the City. Mack is also deliberating some more classic dragon powers, like scales or fire-breathing.
  - Cooper in his car, in the chase scene
  - The hitman Cooper may have hired
- **Martin "Marty" Brooks**, a conman; while a Sleeper, Marty can certainly fool the crew.
- **Théo Blanc**, a professional gambler. Mack considers making the card player a Rift as well.
- **Casino security**
  - The casino security guards (as a collective); they can also be used as Kenny Liu's private security.
  - The Box, in case the characters get in a fight there
- **K9**, the Rift of Cerebros, if the group somehow interacts with him. His stats are given in the Danger Profiles directory.

WRAPPING UP

Together, your backstory, locations, and Dangers make up everything you need to run your case. While the backstory gives you a broad background on the case from which you can easily improvise, the locations and the Dangers provide details that can be promptly incorporated in the game, without unnecessary pondering or deliberations. Your iceberg gives you a good grasp of how the case *might* evolve, but as you're "playing to find out", keep in mind that the players may have different ideas on how to crack this case. Either way, you are ready; you can now take your group on a broody noir investigation of legendary powers and ordinary people in the streets of your City of Mist.





DESIGNING A SERIES

While solving a single *City of Mist* case is lots of fun, a true *City of Mist* story needs time and breadth to build up, deepen, and brew. It is then that the real magic of the City unfolds, providing you with countless cinematic moments before it culminates in a gratifying cathartic experience. Playing a series allows the lead characters to grow and evolve, to experience achievements and downfalls, and to materialize what was dormant inside them all along: their destiny. It allows the plot to thicken, with supporting characters weaving in and out of the storyline and major villains dominating entire story arcs, with shocking revelations forcing the lead characters to choose sides, and with a slow-paced investigation finally unearthing an unspeakable truth which, once known, changes everything.

THE SERIES CONCEPT

The series concept, established at the beginning of the Exposition Session, defines what your group (yourself included) would like the series to be about. The nature of the crew, its goals, and its modus operandi form the baseline from which everything in the series arises. Most if not all of the cases in your series should be written in accordance with the series concept, or adapted to it, so keep it in mind.

```
Alice the MC is designing the Lake-
side Drive series. Her group decided
that the series will revolve around a
neighborhood which was partly flooded
and submerged in a pond, a catastrophe
which everyone seemed to have forgotten
— everyone except the lead characters.
Most of the cases in the series will
involve investigating cases of people
who disappeared when the neighborhood
sunk underwater or people and organi-
zations involved in the catastrophe or
who are in-the-know.
```

PRIORITIZING MYSTERIES AND IDENTITIES

As explained in Chapter 4: Moment of Truth, an important aspect of the lead characters' development hangs on dramatic moments where they must choose between their Mysteries, their Identities, and/or circumstantial considerations (such as a threat on their lives, etc.). While only the player can decide whether his character is facing a dilemma and thus is **Making a Hard Choice**, it falls to you to provide the circumstances which may trigger this move.

In a way, the players use their characters' Mysteries and Identities to tell you what they would like to explore in their character and you should respond to that by providing them with the opportunities to do so. During a session, you can create a situation that allows a player to trigger **Make a Hard Choice** by using the hard MC move **Force Them to Choose** or by orchestrating the right circumstances.

When you design your series, make sure to gather enough story elements and plot ideas that focus on the lead characters' Mysteries and Identities. Later, when you write story arcs and cases for the series, think of how to leverage these elements and ideas in order to trap characters in situations that would allow their players to trigger their Mysteries and Identities.

Read more about Mystery and Identity dilemmas under **Make a Hard Choice**, page 290.

SERIES RESOURCES

The first step in creating your series is sifting through what you and your group have already put together and compiling a list of resources you can use in your cases and story arcs. At the end of the Exposition Session, or after your group plays through a few cases, you already have a plethora of materials to draw from:

- The crew theme, power tags, weakness tags, and Mystery or Identity
- Each character's backstory, themes, power tags, weakness tags, Mysteries, and Identities
- Each character's Mythos and the characters, locations, and plot developments associated with it
- Your notes from the Exposition Session, and specifically "A Day In The Life"

Go over all these ideas and details and divide them into four lists or "buckets": burning questions, story elements, plot ideas, and style guides. You can use the Series Resources Sheet at the end of the book.

BURNING QUESTIONS

List here all the burning questions of the series. Burning questions are unresolved issues that your group would like to see resolved in an interesting way during the series, written as a question. If your group is not going to be interested in the answer to a question, then it isn't a burning one. The questions in your list can touch on all the different levels of the series, from the general to the specific. They can be questions that the players or the characters have asked or questions that you keep to yourself.

- **Questions at the heart of the series**, if they are known at this point, such as *Who is the Crimson King? What lies at the bottom of the pond?*
- **Story arc questions**, such as *Who is behind the new drug on the streets? Will the crew stop Vulcan before he can melt down Union Station?*
- **Crew questions** related to what matters to them (also as reflected by the crew themes and Mystery or Identity) such as *Who is watching the watchmen? How can they fight crime if they break the law? What should the crew do with their loose canon crewmate?*
- **Individual characters questions** related to what matters to them (also as reflected by their themes, Mysteries, and Identities), such as *How high can Jack climb? Is Salamander going to keep his job? Is Excalibur going to rebel against her father?*
- **Questions about recurring story elements** including non-player characters, locations, or groups such as *Why does Caterina always wears her jacket inside out? Where does Lazy Pete work at nights? What is going down in Hanger 74? Who are the Red Caps?*

Later, when you write cases or story arcs, burning questions can be used several ways:

- **Plant clues that lead to the answers you chose:** You can answer some of the burning questions in a way that seems the most compelling to you. You then plant throughout the series clues which will lead the crew to the answers; the crew follows these clues until they reveal the truth.
- **Create situations that will reveal the answer:** Leave some of the burning questions to be resolved in the game, especially if the actions of the crew can affect the answer. For example, if you wonder at the beginning of the series, *Will the crew save the City from the Rift of Morpheus against all odds?* you can create situations that will allow the crew to reveal Morpheus' plan and stop it, and then see what happens. This is particularly true about questions regarding player characters Mysteries and Identities: you should always allow the character's actions to reveal the truth about who she really is.
- **Use a "soft" answer:** you can have a tentative answer to your question and plant some vague clues about it. When the characters take action to influence the outcome of this burning question or when you have a better idea later, you can change it.

If you are using the optional rule of Reversed Clues (see page 242), the players can also affect the answers of important questions by spending a Clue to say what they find. You then adjust the answer to accomodate the information given by the player.

STORY ELEMENTS

List here all the elements you can use later in your cases and story arcs. Story elements are characters, locations, organizations, groups, trends, phenomenons, and even abstract forces that exist in your story and that you may wish to use later in the series. You can introduce story elements in the cases you write or as part of your improvisation during a session.

Think about how often you would want to see each element in the series. Divide the greater story element list into these sublists:

- **Supporting cast or major themes:** story elements central to a story arc or to the entire series, such as *the Crimson King, the Lakeside Drive lake, the evil organization Genesis*, etc.
- **Recurring cast or themes:** story elements that appear regularly in the series, either as allies, threats, or as part of the background setting
- **Guest appearances**: story elements which will

probably appear in one case only

- **Cameos**: story elements that are referenced occasionally but not explored

Based on how the series evolves, story elements can change the scope of their role. For example, if you introduce a character as a guest appearance and the players somehow become more involved with her, you may decide to make her a recurring or even a major character.

PLOT IDEAS

List here all the ideas you have for plot developments and twists. As you go through the series materials, you may find that ideas for plot developments already start coming to mind: the possible fate of one of the supporting characters, a future attack on the crew's base of operations. Like story elements, plot ideas are developments you can use in the backstory of your cases, as potential developments in a case, or as part of your improvisation in a session.

If you prefer to "play to find out" about this aspect of the plot, it's better to phrase a plot idea as a question and move it to the burning questions section. For example, instead of deciding that *The mayor will be assassinated at the rally* you can transform this idea into a burning question, *Will the mayor be assassinated at the rally?* By doing so, you allow the players to take part in shaping the answer to that question.

STYLE GUIDES

List here all the ideas you have for the series' visual and narrative style, or in other words, elements that contribute to the cohesive *feel* of the series rather than its content and plotline. This can include thematic motifs that recur throughout the series or special effects you want to remind yourself to describe.

Alice the MC wants to give her Lakeside Drive series a creepy touch. Drawing on the crew theme weakness tag, *hydrophobia*, and the backstory of the crew, which involves a catastrophic event in which possibly thousands of people drowned, she decides to weave descriptions of water in a scary way: there is a constant sound of water dripping, trickling, and flowing in the series. Expanding on that, she adds that the Lakeside Drive neighborhood has a lot of water problems: burst pipes, moisture in the walls, flooded basements, etc.

Furthermore, since the series is set in the 80s, Alice watches some movies and shows that depict that period, to better represent it in her descriptions.

USING AND BUILDING UP YOUR SERIES RESOURCES

Have your series resource lists with you when you run sessions for the group and refer to them when you need some ideas.

At the end of every session, go over your notes from the session and add them to your series resources as new burning questions, new story elements, new plot ideas, or new style guides.

As the series unfolds, the crew and the lead characters evolve. Whenever the players add a new detail to their crew or individual characters, add that detail to the series resources, if it's relevant. Such new details can be:

- New crew themes, tags, Mysteries, or Identities
- New character themes, tags, Mysteries or Identities, theme improvements, extra themes, or Nemeses
- Ongoing or permanent story tags

STORY ARCS

The most fundamental component of a series is a **story arc**: a sequence of related cases that revolve around a major threat, usually an Avatar or another type of powerful Rift. The set of sessions spent playing through a story arc is generally called a **season** (although a season may involve several story arcs or parts of story arcs), with the first session designated season premiere and the last session designated season finale.

EPISODIC SERIES

Inspired by modern storytelling, which is leaning more and more toward sequential stories, *City of Mist* is designed so the content of the cases weaves into one or more story arcs. However, you can also choose to create an episodic series, where there is no major storyline connecting the different cases. Each case in an episodic series stands alone: a single crime, wrong, or problem which the lead characters investigate and resolve. The connecting thread in an episodic series is the crew itself, for example, a police team investigating a different crime every time, or an order of hunters fighting the monster of the week. Sometimes a few cases can connect and form a mini story arc, but this does not define the series.

THE BIGGER ICEBERG

A story arc is made of cases and, like the cases it is made of, it can be likened to an iceberg.

At **the bottom of the iceberg**, there lies the **threat** who is the root of all the crimes, wrongs, or problems that comprise the different cases of the story arc. This threat is usually a powerful Rift, but weaker Rifts and Sleepers could also serve as threats if they are influential enough. The threat's influence and power determine how involved the story arc will be: a Borderliner gone rogue could keep the crew busy for a few cases at most; a well-established Legendary could be the subject of a medium story arc; while an Avatar could act as the ongoing threat of an entire series.

Every threat that lies at the foundation of an iceberg has:

- **a large-scale agenda** that she is trying to promote;
- **a modus operandi**, methods to further her agenda;
- **an endgame**, the ultimate goal which this agenda seeks to accomplish; and
- **an operation**, a real-life system of resources, facilities, and agents that promote her agenda.

The body of the iceberg represents **the operation.** The influence of the threat seeps upwards through the different Depths of its operation and spreads out to affect the City. Each Depth of the operation corresponds to a level of awareness: Sleepers, Touched, Borderliners, Legendaries, and Avatars. This serves as a rough guideline to determine how deep this aspect of the operation is hidden in the Mist. Therefore, the Sleeper Depth of an operation is its most visible aspect while the Avatar Depth, if it's a part of the operation, contains the most hidden and unknown aspects of the operation, aspects only the Avatar who created the operation knows of. (Note that this does not mean one must attain a certain level of awareness to become savvy to parts an of operation at the corresponding Depth; the Depth of every part of an operation only indicates how well-hidden that part is.)

The lowest Depth, or the bottom of the the iceberg, represents the threat, as said above. Immediately above the threat are her most loyal or powerful allies or servants, each responsible for an entire branch of activity. For example, an Avatar threat could have several Legendary-depth subordinates, each responsible for a different aspect of the Avatar's operation. Another threat, a Legendary, could have just one Borderliner-depth henchman at his service, or five, depending on how broad the operation is. This succession of power continues

up the iceberg, with each level responsible for a sub-branch of the threat's operation.

Here too, this does not mean anyone at the Legendary-depth of an operation must be a Legendary; however, most characters running an operation (or any part thereof) at any given Depth would have the level of awareness corresponding to that level. Any deviation from that guideline mostly reflects on that individual's value to the operation. For example, non-Legendary individuals serving at the Legendary Depth of an operation may be new or subordinate Avatars with little influence or, conversely, Borderlines, Touched, or even Sleepers with considerable influence and power.

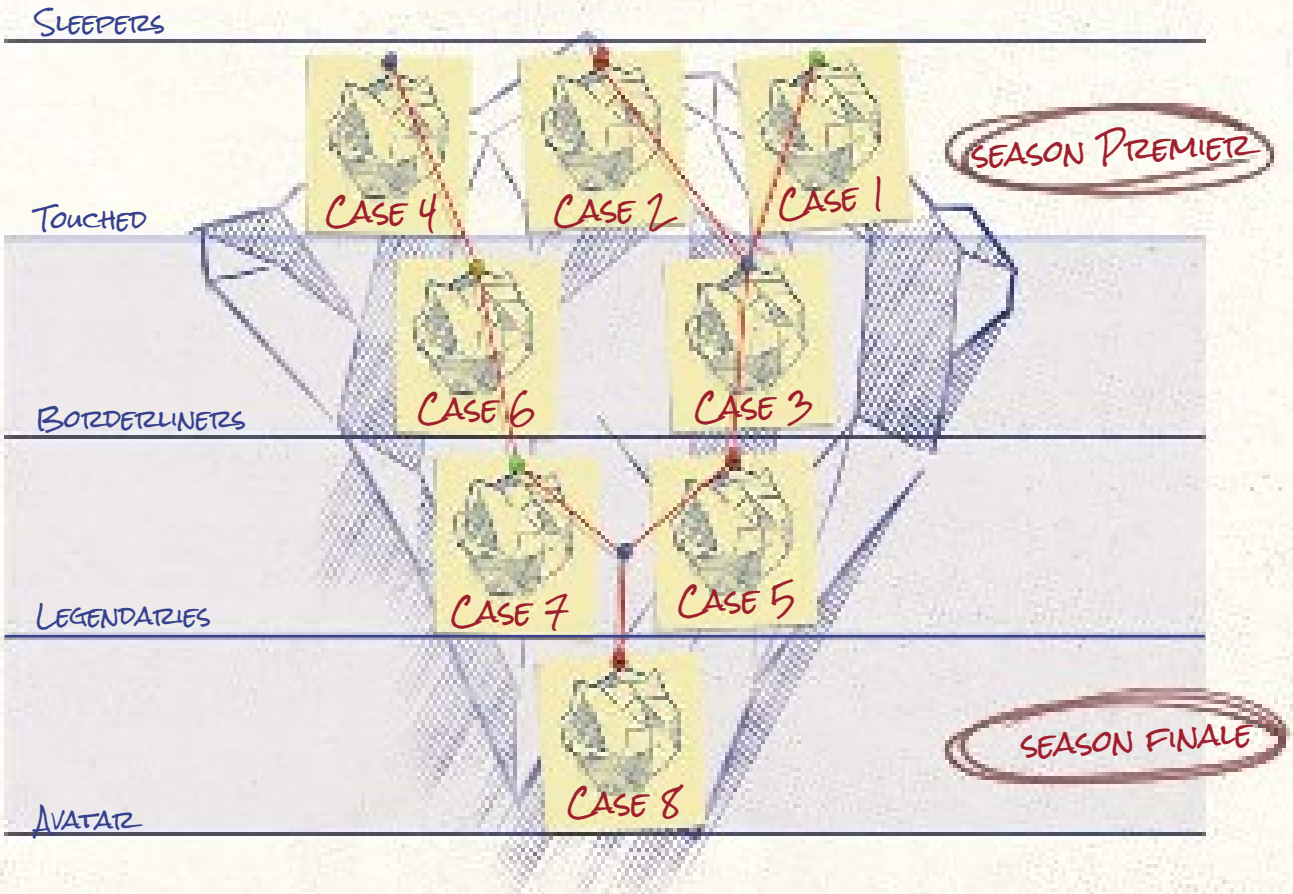
The tip of the iceberg represents Depth 0 or the Sleeper Depth, or, in other words, the visible manifestations of the various parts of the operation. If one of the branches of the threat's operation is involved with arm deals on the street, that takes place on the Sleeper Depth. If another branch promotes hatred and violence through spiked prescribed medication, that takes place on the Sleeper Depth too.

HERE TOO, THE INVESTIGATION REVEALS THE ICEBERG

In a story arc as in a case, the crew's investigation leads them from the tip of the iceberg down to the bottom. The first difference between a story arc and a case is a that while a case's iceberg is made of locations, a story arc's iceberg is made of cases.

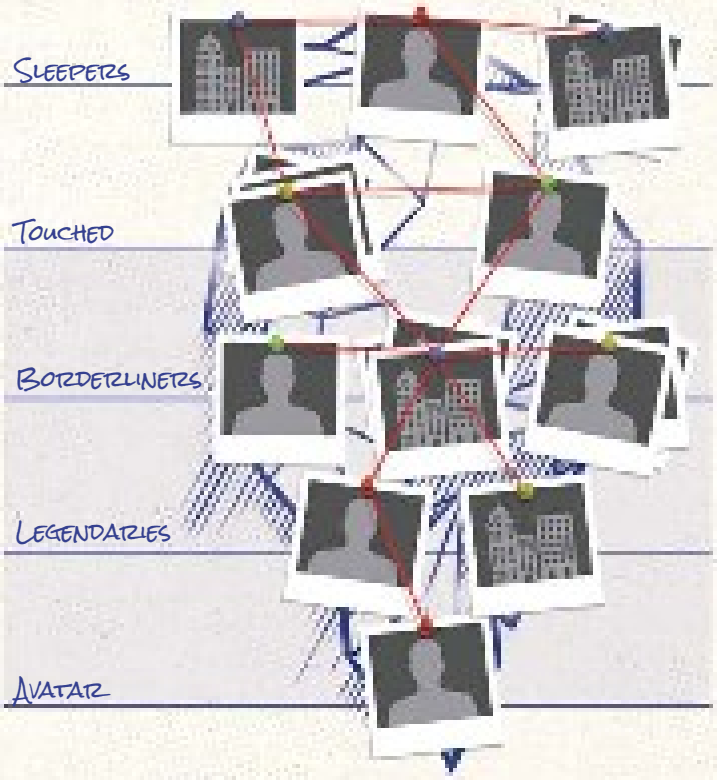
Every case in a story arc reveals more about the threat or brings the crew closer to overcoming it. It starts with information the crew obtained at the end of a previous case and ends with information leading to the next case or to several potential cases. In other words, **the truth** of every case becomes **the hook** of the following case. Like locations, subsequent cases can also be on the same Depth: they help expose other branches of the operation, branches that later merge into the same root as the crew digs deeper.

The second difference between a story arc and a case is that while in a case you write all or most locations before playing the case, **a story arc is**



written as it unfolds, never in advance. Every case you play in a story arc can change everything (play to find out, remember?). The lead characters can reveal an important clue that brings them much closer to the threat than you anticipated; they can decide to launch an attack on one of the operation's facilities; they could take a time-out to go on a quest to restore the health of a crewmate who **Stopped. Holding. Back** and paid the ultimate price in the last case; they may be captured by the threat's operatives, and so on. You cannot and should not try to predict what the next case you play will be. Instead, you only write the next case in the story arc after your group completes the last case you wrote.

The story arc ends when the threat is eventually overcome or transformed into something else, or when the threat permanently overcomes the crew (end of the series?).



THE OPERATION ICEBERG

What you can and should have ready in advance for a series is the **Operation Iceberg**, a map detailing the various Depths of the operation at the center of your story arcs, along with the characters, locations, and groups involved in each Depth. This map of the operation, reminiscent of a "crime board" or "evidence board", keeps you aware of other possible operational activities taking place in the City parallel to what the crew is currently investigating. During sessions, it helps you improvise when the crew exceeds the boundaries of your written case and plunges deeper into or further across the iceberg. Between sessions, this layout of the iceberg let's you know what the crew will expose or confront in the next case you write and what clues to provide to lead them closer to the truth.

Chapter 6: This is MY City! explains how to create operations for Avatars and includes a handful of Avatars and their Operations Icebergs which you can use as the foundation for your story arcs.

HOW MANY STORY ARCS DO I NEED?

A series could have one central story arc or several interwoven story arcs, with the crew switching between story arcs from case to case, or sometimes, investigating a case that links two story arcs. Smaller story arcs can converge into larger story arcs; for example a Legendary-scale story arc can end up being just a remote branch of an Avatar's operation from another story arc. Even story arcs that ended can be rebooted with a new twist.

Note that having more than one story arc expands your City "crime board" and makes the series dramatically more involved. As a consequence, it requires more cases and therefore sessions to investigate and expose. You should adapt the number and complexity of your story arcs to suit the planned length of the series and the availability of your group.

STORY ARC WRITING PRINCIPLES

Think of the City as a living, changing metropolis. This narration principle applies also to writing cases in a story arc. Cases are usually separated by a span of time: usually a few days or weeks, although in some series cases could be months and maybe even years apart. The City does not stop during this time; it continues to change. Social trends, political movements, and natural phenomenon all continue to evolve and affect the City. Most importantly, the work of the Mythoi and their Avatars, as well as the work of the Gatekeepers, never ceases. New Rifts are born, operations expand, and the Mist weakens in some areas and is restored in others. Change is constant.

Another important factor is that the actions of the characters have an impact on the City. Individuals that were saved by them seek them out to thank them personally; individuals who were harmed by their actions hold a grudge or seek revenge. What little of the crew's activity that is visible to Sleepers makes it to the media: they are linked with derailing a subway train, blowing the lid on a political conspiracy, or for being the bodyguards of the number one DJ in town. The crew gains reputation also behind the veil of the Mist: their names cross the lips of big underworld players who wish to recruit or eliminate them. Slumbering Mythoi awaken as they see in the crew members an opportunity to play out their dramas, perhaps even birthing new Rifts solely for this purpose. Everything is responding to the lead characters all the time. After all, this show is about them.

Once something is established, break it. Modern storytelling, which was greatly influenced by film noir, is all about shock. Take your time cultivating the status-quo: an annoying mayor who constricts the actions of the crew, a reliable ally who's always there when the going gets rough; a familiar landmark that seems to always crop up in the story. Then, when they least expect it, shatter the status quo: have the mayor become an Avatar, have their ally killed off or have him betray them, have the landmark swallowed into the earth so that the City skyline now seems empty and questions abound. Leave no stone unturned and don't be afraid to slaughter the series' holy cows (but not the players' holy cows). It makes for a great story.

THE DAILY

As a cinematic device, you can create one or more daily newspapers or news shows that report about developments in the City. At the beginning of each session, during downtime, or as a cutscene, share with the players what headlines have made it to the daily news. You can use this medium to share clues and hooks with the crew, to announce coming trouble (a la **Complicate Things**), to report about parallel branches or story arcs that continue to progress and stir the crew into action, etc.

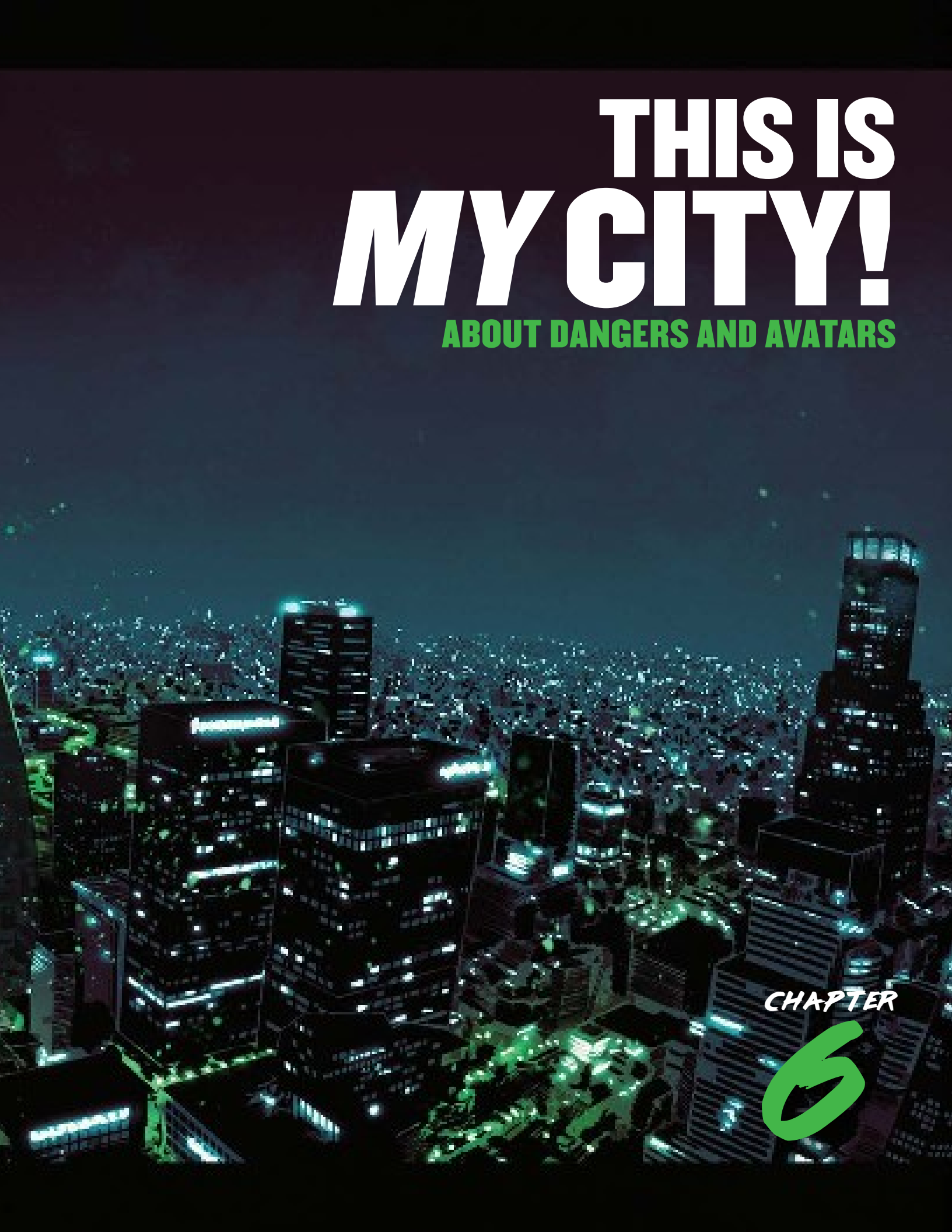

OUR ASSET HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT OF THE GAME
THEY ARE GETTING TOO CLOSE, MY KING
"FEAR NOT, MY DEAR MORGIANA."


"THIS IS A SECRET THAT CAN NEVER HAVE A HAPPY ENDING."
"THESE INVESTIGATORS, THEIR TWO-BIT MINDS, THEY DON'T DO IT OUT OF ENVIRONMENT."
"THEY'RE DOING IT OUT OF FEAR."
"THAT'S THE ONE THING THEY WILL NEVER OVERCOME."
"THEY DEFINE THEMSELVES THROUGH FEAR."
"AND THAT IS WHY I WILL ALWAYS CONTROL THEIR DESTINY."

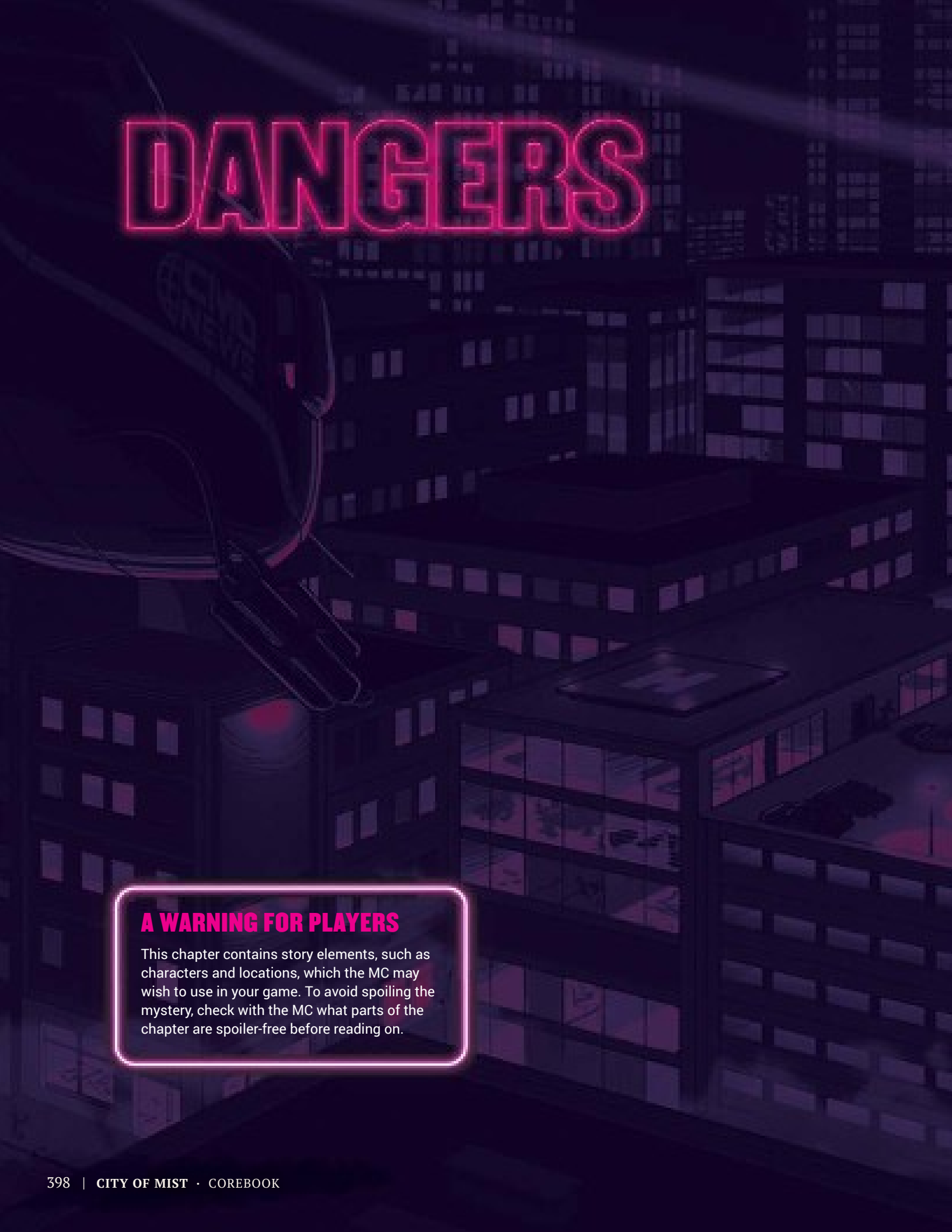

THIS IS WAR...

THIS IS *MY* CITY!

ABOUT DANGERS AND AVATARS



CHAPTER 6



DANGERS

A WARNING FOR PLAYERS

This chapter contains story elements, such as characters and locations, which the MC may wish to use in your game. To avoid spoiling the mystery, check with the MC what parts of the chapter are spoiler-free before reading on.

"I followed her into the filthy alley. A jet of steam blew out of the subway vents and I lost sight of her for a moment. I could hear the clickety-clack of her heels on the cobblestones. "Miss Rustov? You said on the phone that you had information about the Circus Brotherhood…". She laughed, somewhere in the alley, a rolling, unhinged laughter. I was starting to feel nervous. "Did I? You told everyone at the bar you were looking for them..." She stepped out of the mist, her eyes yellow like the moon, fangs as long as coffin nails protruding from her mouth, and three twisted horns adorning her head. "... I didn't want to disappoint you," she said coldly and then lunged at me with deformed fingers tapered and sharp. "I wish I could return the favor," I said. In my hand, the magnificent Shamshir-e Zomorrodnegar materialized from hilt to blade and rose to meet the demon's claws. "I found you, Fulad-zereh — and now you will die."

—Arsalan

Throughout your series, the lead characters are destined to encounter a wide range of characters, locations, and situations that will challenge them or pose a threat to their investigation – or their lives. Such threats can be Rifts endowed with legendary powers (including Relics, Familiars, and Enclaves) or mundane adversaries and hazards. They can be anything from a rickety scaffolding a police officer must scale in pursuit of a suspect to the heaving, grotesque Rift of a Minotaur guarding the door to the basement of a nightclub; a conniving little elf summoned with faerie magic by a wiccan gangbanger; or an elegant *femme fatale* Sleeper who destroys the good reputation of a brusque yet ultimately vulnerable detective.

Threats to the lead characters are described as **Dangers**: challenges that have predefined ways to influence or hurt the lead characters and predefined ways in which they can be overcome. During case creation, Dangers allow you to plan a threat in advance and control its challenge level. During a session, Dangers allow you to react faster by choosing to activate predefined Danger moves instead of improvising MC moves. You can create your own Dangers or use those under Danger Profiles, starting on page 421.

WHO GETS TO BE A DANGER?

You CAN create a Danger profile for any non-player character or entity that you control: from enemies, through self-serving neutral parties or random bystanders, to allies and series regulars. Anyone can potentially be a threat to the lead characters or their investigation: hostile or volatile characters are an obvious threat because they might hurt the lead characters, but friendly or innocent characters can also pose a threat because the lead characters might try to protect them or decide to change the course of their investigation because of them. For example, a little girl who is the Rift of Armageddon could be completely innocent but still pose a threat to the City; or the apparition that has been guiding the crew through the entire season can make moves to convince them to follow its advice and abandon other aspects of their lives, etc.

Do not create Danger profiles for the player's secondary characters (see page 248), such as a sidekick or a riding beast. They are represented by the player's moves and statuses.

You SHOULD create a Danger only when you want to predefine the nature of a threat or a challenge. If a non-player character is unlikely to pose a threat to the crew, you won't be needing a Danger profile for her. Also, if a character *does* pose a threat but you feel you can portray it well using the MC moves alone, there is no need to predefine its moves. Danger moves are predefined MC moves and their effects are identical. The difference is that when you have a Danger profile, you have your moves ready in advance and tailored to the specific threat you want to portray.

DANGER PROFILES

A Danger profile contains all the information you need to use a Danger in a session: a brief description, its status **spectrums**, which define the ways in which it may be overcome, and **Dangers moves,** actions the Danger can take involving her abilities and resources.

SPECTRUMS

DANGERS AND STATUSES

Dangers can take statuses just as player characters do. When a Danger receives a status, take a tracking card and note it in the same way a player notes statuses for his character: write down the tag and mark the tier. Then place the tracking card on the table where everyone can see it.

If a Danger continues to take statuses of the same nature – in other words, "on the same spectrum" – these statuses stack according to the rules for player character statuses, given under Taking Statuses on the Same Spectrum (page 235): a higher status supersedes a lower status, an equal status increases the tier by one, and a lower status gradually builds up a higher status toward the next tier.

The effects of statuses on a Danger's abilities and the lead characters' interactions with the Danger are explained below, under Using Dangers.

WHAT ARE SPECTRUMS?

Spectrums are used to track how much of a given type of status a Danger can take before it changes irrevocably. Spectrums most often indicate ways in which a Danger can be overcome. A Danger has one or more spectrums, each consisting of a descriptive tag and a maximum.

The **descriptive tag** of a spectrum defines which type of statuses can eventually overpower that Danger and effectively end it (or transform it). Most Dangers have several spectrums, each describing a different approach to overcome or transform it. For example:

- A security guard could be physically *hurt*, *threatened*, or *bribed*.
- A celebrity performer could be *shamed* or *befriended* so she no longer poses a threat.
- A kindly old man could be *hurt* or *frightened to death*.
- In a building on fire, the fire can be *quenched* but the building can also *collapse*.
- The not-so-bright Rift of a Troll could either be *turned-to-stone* using sunlight or *outsmarted*.
- A character's best friend could be *losing hope* or *slipping out of reach*.
- An epidemic raging across the City can be *quarantined* or *cured*.
- The Rift of the Phoenix could *burn* itself to ashes and then rise again.
- A time-bomb could be *ticking* until eventually it explodes.
- An orchestrated stock exchange crash could be *stabilized* or *exposed*.
- A poltergeist could be *banished* or *appeased*.

The **maximum** of a spectrum, ranging from 1 to 6, indicates the tier of status on that spectrum required to overcome the Danger. The greater the maximum, the more punishment a Danger can take on a spectrum before it is overcome or transformed. A Danger could have several spectrums with a different maximum for each, representing easier and harder ways to overcome it.

If the player characters wish to overcome a Danger, they can try to give it statuses that fit one of its spectrums (although players don't necessarily know a Danger's spectrums, as explained below, they can still try to figure out ways to defeat it). Conversely, if the player characters want to protect a character or object represented by a Danger or stop a Danger from coming to a specific end or outcome, they should try to prevent it from taking statuses on the corresponding spectrums or reduce the tier of statuses on those spectrums.

When a Danger takes a status on one of its spectrums with a tier equal to or greater than the spectrum's maximum, the spectrum is maxed out. The Danger is then overcome or transformed in a manner befitting the spectrum. If it is overcome, it ceases to pose a threat to the crew or the investigation (whether temporarily or permanently depends on the story and how the Danger was overcome). This usually means you as the MC stop making moves from the Danger's profile. If the player characters were trying to protect this Danger or prevent it from accumulating statuses, they fail and suffer the consequences.

- A security guard with *hurt:3* is defeated after taking *gunshot-3*.
- A celebrity performer with *befriended:6* will

become your friend if she takes *beguiled-5* twice, stacking to a tier-6 status.

- A kindly old man with *frightened to death:1* could be dead with even the slightest *fright-1*.
- A building on fire that has *collapse:4* would collapse after taking *molten-reinforcements-3* and *structural-damage-3*, stacking to a tier-4 status.
- The not-so-bright Rift of a Troll with *turned-to-stone:5* or *outsmarted:1* could be overcome by taking a lot of sunlight-related statuses or one little *tricked-1* status.
- A character's best friend with *losing hope:3* may try to kill himself if he takes *depression-1* four times consecutively, stacking to a tier-3 status.
- An epidemic raging across the City with *quarantined:4* could be contained if the population was *educated-3* and *medicated-3*, stacking to a tier-4 status.
- The Rift of the Phoenix with *burning:6* could take quite a few *burn-1*, *inflamed-2*, and *scorching-fire-3* before crumbling to ashes.
- A time-bomb with *ticking:5* could be slowly accumulating *tick-1*'s and *tock-1*'s.
- An orchestrated stock exchange crash could be *stabilized:5* if commerce was *blocked-at-the-mainframe-5* or *exposed:3* if it's *made-publically-known-2* and *called-out-by-politicians-2*, stacking to a tier-3 status.
- A poltergeist could be *appeased:4* after being *hesitant-2*, *hesitant-2*, and *convinced-3* (stacking to a tier-4 status).

Based on the nature of the spectrum and the statuses the Danger has taken, the MC decides the outcome of a maxed out spectrum. For example, if a *hurt:3* spectrum of a mobster is maxed out, the MC can rule that the mobster has surrendered, passed out, or died. The MC can choose to delegate this decision to the player who landed the final or decisive blow to that spectrum (if it was a player).

Depending on the chosen outcome, a Danger may permanently or temporarily cease to pose a threat to the lead characters. Alternatively, if maxing out a spectrum doesn't completely incapacitate the Danger, it may continue to pose a threat to a limited extent or in a different way that is not related to the maxed out spectrum. For example, if a City official's *legally-bind:4* spectrum was maxed out, she could not pose a legal or formal threat to the crew and would be bound by law to do what they demanded. However, she could still become violent or, conversely, become the target of an assassination attempt and therefore require protection.

SPECTRUMS AS ONGOING CONFLICTS

Spectrums are used to make a challange more involved, gradual, colorful, and difficult. Every spectrum represents an ongoing conflict or development. To overcome a Danger or create a specific outcome in the story that relates to that spectrum, the player characters must impose high enough statuses on that spectrum. For example, to kill a mobster with a *hurt:4* spectrum, they must impose high enough statuses on the hurt spectrum; to catch a burglar with a *catch:3* spectrum, they must impose enough statuses on her catch spectrum. However, if the burglar did not have a catch spectrum, it would mean catching her is not an ongoing conflict and can be done without imposing statuses at all.

Some player moves allow the player to achieve an outcome in the story without imposing statuses. Specifically, **Go Toe to Toe** allows a player to achieve a goal they set before they roll the dice. When a Danger has a spectrum that corresponds to what the player character is trying to acheive, tell the player that since they are facing a challenging adversary or situation, they must first inflict statuses before they can achieve their goal. With **Go Toe to Toe**, they should use the option "Get them good" to do so.

Jerry (playing Det. Enkidu): I want to bring down the Minotaur guy and subdue him, then arrest him. I'm **Going Toe to Toe** with the goal of subduing him.

Alice the MC looks at the Minotaur's Danger profile, seeing he has a spectrum of *hurt-or-subdue:5*. She says: Actually, since he's a raging pile of muscles, he can put up a fight. You'll need to impose a status to subdue him. You're still **Going Toe to Toe**, but choose to "get him good". You can use

your goal to gain a secondary advantage, if you roll 10 or more.

Jerry: Okay, I got 7–9 with a Power of 3. I choose to give him *joint-lock-3*.

MC: Good. You manage to lock your arm around him, but he's putting up a fight and trying to aggressively shake you off. This one isn't going quietly!

The exception to the above rule is the move **Stop. Holding. Back.**, which allows players to achieve any outcome in the story. Furthermore, the MC may always exempt the players from having to overcome a Danger using its spectrums, for cinematic considerations. Since Dangers are the MC's tools, the hard MC moves, such as **Make Something Horrible Happen**, can always circumvent a Danger's spectrum (e.g., the MC can kill off a Danger with a single move, if she deems it cinematically interesting and plausible).

COUNTDOWN SPECTRUMS

As mentioned above, some spectrums represent a Danger's upcoming transformation or end which is undesirable for the lead characters, such as the collapsing house on fire, the exploding time bomb, or the depressed best friend. Such a spectrum is called a **countdown spectrum**.

Countdown spectrums trigger a Danger move when they are maxed out. The move represents the outcome of the completed transformation or achieved end of the spectrum. For example, a person infected with Lycanthropy could turn into a werewolf when his *transformed:3* spectrum is maxed out, becoming a different Danger (a werewolf); a bomb can inflict a high-tier status on anyone and everything around when its *ticking:5* is maxed out.

In most cases, a Danger with a countdown spectrum has at least one Danger move which allows it to give itself a status on that spectrum. This represents the Danger's progression towards its transformation or end. For example, a time bomb can give itself *tick-1* or a security system could give itself *alert-2* every time the player characters trigger a security measure. The move may be activated at different intervals depending on its nature: it might be a hard move, which is activated only when the players miss a roll (like the alarm; things get more dangerous as the players fail) or, in special circumstances, it might be played as a soft move after every time one of the players makes a move (like the time bomb; things get more dangerous with every action).

Conversely, a countdown spectrum may rely on statuses imposed by the player characters to progress. For example, a volcanic golem created by the Hawaiian volcano goddess, Pele, could explode after the player characters damage it enough. In this case, the countdown spectrum may define both how to overcome a Danger and what happens when a Danger is overcome.

SPECTRUMS AND CHALLENGE LEVEL

As a rule, it's harder to defeat a Danger with a *hurt:5* spectrum by inflicting physical harm than it is to defeat a Danger with a *hurt:2* spectrum in the same manner.

However, various defensive Danger moves can affect the way a Danger takes statuses, so the number of tiers in a Danger spectrum is not the only indication of how challenging it is. A Danger may also have other spectrums which describe alternate ways to overcome it, making it an overall easier target.

Furthermore, the difficulty of overcoming a Danger is not just in the number of tiers in a spectrum, but in its tag as well. For example, if the characters have no mystical firepower, they would have a hard time banishing even a *banish:1* poltergeist.

MISSING SPECTRUMS

A Danger does not need to have a spectrum accounting for every possible way of overcoming it. Since spectrums can be added on the fly (see below) a Danger's profile only lists spectrums for the major or expected ways of overcoming it. For example, if it is unlikely that a famous opera singer would often get involved in violence during the course of the series, her Danger profile will not have a *hurt* spectrum.

IMMUNITIES

Some Dangers are immune to certain types of statuses. Such immunities are represented by a spectrum with no maximum. Any statuses the Danger takes on that spectrum are ignored, even if they are tier-5 or tier-6 statuses. A spectrum with no maximum is marked with – (e.g., *hurt:–*).

For example, if the troll Rift has a *hurt:–* spectrum, it could mean he is virtually impossible to overcome by physical harm – the lead characters must find another way to defeat him. The same could be true for the poltergeist, who simply has no physical body to hurt.

OFF-SPECTRUM STATUSES

A Danger can take a status even if it does not match any of its listed spectrums. This is particularly true for temporary statuses describing fleeting conditions. For example, a poltergeist can be temporarily *blinded-2* or *confused-1*, or it can be *enraged-4*, even if it doesn't have such spectrums. While off-spectrum statuses do not contribute directly to overcoming the Danger in the expected ways, they act as normal statuses that can affect the player characters' interaction with the Danger, so they are tracked normally.

DANGER MOVES

Danger moves are predefined MC and player moves that represent how a Danger interacts with the world and affects the story: what actions it normally takes, what abilities it has, etc. Most Danger moves are self-explanatory; they list in words what happens in the story and how to translate it into the rules, if necessary. There are three types of Danger moves: custom moves, hard Danger moves, and soft Danger moves.

CUSTOM MOVES

Custom moves are unique rules that represent special abilities or circumstances regarding the Danger. Like player moves, custom moves occur when the circumstances trigger their condition, no matter who currently has the spotlight. Therefore, they are considered MC intrusions. For example:

- **Made of Clay:** When the Golem of Prague enters the scene, give it *hardened-skin-1*.
- **Bodyguard:** When the mayor takes a status describing physical harm, his bodyguard takes it instead, if the MC deems it possible.
- **Brambles and Thorns:** When you try to get into the castle of the Sleeping Beauty, you first take *entangled-3* or *nick-and-cuts-2*, MC's choice.

Read more about custom moves and how to use them on page 414.

HARD DANGER MOVES

Hard Danger moves are predefined variations of hard MC moves. The effects used in hard Danger moves correspond to some of the hard MC moves. You can invoke them whenever you can invoke a hard MC move.

GIVE A STATUS

A status given by a hard Danger move is ongoing, unless otherwise stated. Tier-6 statuses are always permanent.

Give to others, negative:

- Clumsily throw a punch at someone (*bruise-1*)
- Flirt with someone to draw their attention (*distracted-2*, temporary)
- Rapidly throw three shurikens at different people (*cut-2*)
- Bind in an icicle (*frozen-3*)
- Drown with bureaucracy (*bogged-down-with-paperwork-5*)
- Withering curse (*withered-4*, permanent)
- Fatal headshot (*dead-6*)
- Put out a warrant for someone's arrest (*wanted-4* or *most-wanted-5*)

Give to others, positive:

- Cover for partner (*cover-2*, temporary)
- "Empower my sisters!" (*confident-3*)
- Glamour others to make them look different (*glamour-4*)
- Rejuvenate and revitalize (*vitality-1*)

Give to itself:

- Give an impressive speech (*center-of-attention-4*, temporary)
- Suck up the energy from an electrical source (*charged-2*)
- Increase the intensity of its own flames (*in-flames-2*)
- Tick, tock (alternating *tick-1* and *tock-1* statuses)

REDUCE OR REMOVE A STATUS

A hard Danger move can remove both ongoing and temporary statuses, unless otherwise stated.

Remove from others or from opponents:

- Use a fire extinguisher (reduce 2 tiers of fire statuses)
- Win back control over the fight (reduce 1 tier of temporary combat advantage statuses from an opponent)

Remove from itself or allies:

- Restore freedom of movement (reduce 3 tiers of restricting statuses)
- Rally the troops (reduce 2 tiers of negative tactical statuses from the troops)

BURN A TAG

A hard Danger move can burn story tags and power tags of any theme. If a temporary or ongoing story tag is burnt, it expires, as normal.

- Banish beings not of this world (burn 3 tags of summoned creatures)
- Disarm (burn one weapon or handheld item tag)
- Sap someone's strength (burn 2 strength-related tags)
- Freeze someone's assets (burn 2 asset-related tags)

CREATE A STORY TAG
(**Complicate Things, Bigtime**)

A story tag created by a hard Danger move is ongoing, unless otherwise stated.

- Raise the dead (*zombie*, *skeleton*, or *wraith*)
- Snuff out the lights (*darkness*)
- Throw a tear gas grenade (*tear gas cloud*, temporary)
- Erect a stone wall (*stone wall*, *fortified*)

CREATE A NEW DANGER
(**Complicate Things, Bigtime**)

Bring a new Danger into the scene.

- Raise the dead (add new Danger: Host of Undead)
- Possess a bystander (add new Danger: Possessed Bystander)
- Activate an automated security system (add new Danger: Automated Security System)
- Explode into disease-carrying spores (add new Danger: Citywide Epidemic)

SOFT DANGER MOVES

Soft Danger moves are predefined variations of the soft MC move **Complicate Things**. You can invoke them whenever you can make a soft MC move. They describe an action the Danger can take to complicate things which changes the story without affecting the rules directly. The action can be cosmetic or significant but not dramatically detrimental for the crew (that would require to **Complicate Things, Bigtime** and therefore a hard move). However, the action can set the ground for a more dramatic negative outcome, building up to **Hit Them After a Fair Warning**. For example:

- Close in on the crew from all directions
- Threaten to kill a hostage
- Start to overload the bridge
- Slink back into the shadows, where the crew can't see
- Send incriminating or embarrassing photos to the press
- Beg for mercy
- Demand that you show up in time for work, or else



COLLECTIVES

In *City of Mist*, groups of non-player characters or entities that are acting together as a single unit can be represented by a single Danger profile called a collective. To represent the size of a collective, determine its **size factor** using the table below.

Size of collective	Size factor
One member	0
A handful of members	1
Several members	2
Many members	3
A host of members	4

COLLECTIVE SPECTRUMS

A collective has the same spectrums as one of its individual members.

Members of the collective can take statuses independently. When a single member of a collective is the target of a status, track its spectrums separately from the collective. Whenever a single member is overcome, the MC determines whether the size factor of the collective should be reduced. For example, if enough members of a collective with "several members" are overcome, the collective may be reduced to a "handful of members".

The collective can take statuses as a group. If the entire collective is the target of a status, first reduce the tier of that status by the size factor of the collective. Then, apply any other defenses that members of the collective may have.

Statuses taken by a collective represent the condition of the group as a whole, not its individuals, so their tags should be adjusted to represent that. For example, while *black-eye-2* describes the condition of an individual, *a-few-men-short-2* is more appropriate for a group.

Fighting a horde of malicious pixies with *hurt:2*, Excalibur transforms her bracelet into a rocket launcher and **Hits With All She's Got**, giving the horde a status of *blown-to-smithereens-5*. However, since there are so many of them, the horde (size factor 4) reduces the tier by 4 and takes only *a-few-dead-fairies-1* on the *hurt* spectrum. Another hit like that and she'll get rid of them.

COLLECTIVE DANGER MOVES

Danger moves made by the collective have a greater effect than those of an individual member. If the entire collective can affect a target, increase the effect of its moves (the tier of the status it gives, the number of tags it can burn, etc.) by its size factor. This requires the entire collective to take the same action against a single target (which may be another collective). If the entire collective cannot take the same action against a single target, break it down into smaller collectives as explained below.

Robin Hood's band of muggers attacks Declan L'Estrange in the park. Each individual member can impose *bad-bruise-2*. Since the Merry Men have several members (size factor 2) and they can all attack L'Estrange at once, the collective can give him *broken-ribs-4*.

BREAKING DOWN COLLECTIVES

A collective can be broken down to smaller collectives. This applies when a collective splits up or when only a part of a collective is making a Danger move or is affected by a status (or any other game effect). The MC determines how exactly the collective splits up and the size factor of the resulting collectives. As a general rule of thumb, a collective with a size factor of 2 or more should split up to two units with a size factor smaller by one (e.g. a size factor 4 collective breaks up into two units with a size factor of 3 each, a size factor 3 collective breaks up into two units with a size factor of 2 each). The collective can be broken down again and again until the size of the affected group is reached.

An army of tin soldiers, led by the Nutcracker, overruns the City. Each soldier can cause *stab-2* with its bayonet. The army itself is a host, so its size factor is 4. However, when the army attacks a single person, only a handful of soldiers can attack together with bayonets. Their size factor is 1, so they cause *multiple-stabs-3*.

USING PLAYER MOVES AGAINST COLLECTIVES

When players use **Hit With All You've Got** against a collective and choose "Get them good or get more of them", the increased tier represents affecting more members of a collective; no further adjustment is needed.

When players use **Change the Game** and apply the effect improvement "Scale up the effect", treat the size factor of the collective as lower by one for each time that effect improvement is chosen. If they apply the *Dynamite!* Improvement "Large-scale effect", ignore the size factor altogether.

USING DANGERS

CREATING A DANGER ON THE FLY

You can create a Danger profile on the fly when you want to predefine how challenging an imminent threat will be for the crew. You can write down or make a mental note of quick and simple statements that outline the encounter:

- "This thug will go down when he takes *hurt-3*" (spectrum *hurt:3*)
- "If the dam hits tier 5, the City will be flooded" (countdown spectrum *collapse:5*)
- "I'm going to scare them by saying how the witch peers into their hearts" (soft move)
- "That Chimera is pretty mean, I guess it can do a *bite-4* or *slashed-4*" (hard move)
- "Vulcan is burning so whenever they hit him, they also get *burn-2*" (custom move)

INTRODUCING A DANGER

When a Danger enters a scene, narrate its appearance as you would for any character, location, or object.

Do not automatically share with the players the details of the Danger, such as its spectrums or Danger moves. First, consider which of the player characters is likely to have knowledge of this Danger, its nature, its abilities, and its resources. When a Danger's move is activated, either by you or because its condition was fulfilled, you must reveal this move to the group.

If the player characters wish to know more about a Danger, and given the right means, they can **Investigate** and spend Clues to ask questions about it. Provide details based on the outcome of the move and the players' questions, source, and method. As usual, you can choose to give a solid lead or a vague idea instead of exact specifications. For example, a lead character who is a gang member might know that a rival thug would take a tier-2 or tier-3 beating before he bails; a Rift of the Great Spirit might know that a Wendigo can drain the life out of its victims but perhaps not the extent to which the Rift of the Wendigo has perfected this ability.

ADDING SPECTRUMS AND MOVES ON THE FLY

If the circumstances call for additional spectrums and moves for your Danger, simply add them on the fly.

Add a spectrum if the player characters are exploring a way to overcome the Danger that is not reflected in its listed spectrums. If this new way can somehow overcome the Danger, create a new spectrum by estimating what tier of status is required to defeat the Danger in this way and choose a maximum from 1 to 6.

> Det. Enkidu has had enough tousling with a troll under the highway bridge, so she's looking for another way to end the conflict. The troll has two spectrums listed, *turned-to-stone:5* and *outsmarted:1* but Det. Enkidu doesn't know about the first and she's too much of a brute to try the second. Instead, she tries the animal approach, turning their fight into a game and trying to *amuse-2* the troll. Enjoying this stroke of genius, Alice the MC agrees that the troll can eventually be persuaded to stand down this way and adds a new spectrum, *amused:4*.

Add a Danger move if you come up with an action that is appropriate for the Danger and is likely to be used by it regularly, but is not listed in its moves. If the action is unique to the situation, don't add a Danger move; simply make an MC move to reflect it, and narrate it as originating from the Danger. When you want to add a Danger move meant to be used regularly, choose whether it is a soft Danger move, a hard Danger move, or a custom move and select the appropriate effects and specifics.

> The troll later befriends Det. Enkidu and becomes an occasional ally. He often manages to entertain the hardy detective, who grows fond of him. The MC wants the troll to have an amusing and pacifying effect on Det. Enkidu. She creates two new Danger moves for the troll, in addition to his listed Danger moves:
>
> - a soft Danger move: "Start a fight for fun when it's least appropriate."
> - a hard Danger move: "Give Enkidu *amused-2* or remove 2 tiers from any moody or raging statuses Enkidu currently has."
>
> Since Enkidu often uses her rage to fuel her aggression and drive the investigation, Alice the MC thinks these moves could make things interesting.

EFFECTS OF STATUSES ON DANGERS

A Danger's statuses can be used in the game in several ways. They can:

- count against that Danger's spectrums to promote its defeat (as explained above);
- affect player moves against that Danger; and/or
- affect the Danger's own moves.

As the MC, you are advised to choose only the most appropriate of these options for each status taken by a Danger.

When necessary, you may apply more than one option. However, be mindful of how these options affect the challenge level of the game. For instance, if a Danger has taken a negative status, applying all of the above options to the same negative status could dramatically reduce the challenge level for the players, as a single status is promoting the Danger's defeat, improving the players' moves against it, and weakening its own moves against the players.

In addition to the above, off-spectrum statuses that are relevant to the Danger affect it like they do the player characters: tier-5 statuses incapacitate the Danger and prevent it from taking related actions while tier-6 statuses transform it permanently or destroy it. For example, a *blinded-5* Danger cannot take actions which require seeing, while a *blind-6* Danger could be permanently blind or make a fatal mistake due to her temporary blindness.

APPLYING A DANGER'S STATUS TO A PLAYER MOVE

When appropriate, a Danger's status can apply to player moves made against that Danger or to player moves that target that Danger. The Danger's status is then deemed to be helpful or detri-

mental to the action the player character is taking. Note that the status only increases or reduces the Power of the action if it is the highest helpful status or the highest detrimental status among the statuses relevant for the action, as normal.

The Big Bad Wolf is hunting down Kitsune in the alleys of Chinatown and has given itself *sharpened-senses-3*. When Kitsune tries to **Sneak Around** to avoid the wolf, his Power is reduced by 3 since this status is detrimental to his action. (This assumes Kit has no other detrimental statuses of a higher tier.)

The super-criminal Margo Falls has fallen for Sullivan's charms, after he gave her the status *infatuated-2*. If Sullivan tries to **Convince** her to postpone her plans to rob the City Central Bank, his Power for this action is increased by 2 due to this helpful status (assuming he has no other helpful statuses of a higher tier).

Just like any player status, the Danger's status only applies to player actions which it directly enhances or impedes. This is given to the MC's interpretation; you are advised to use this guideline to adjust the challenge level of the game.

In a shadowy industrial loft, Margo Falls' team of professional mercenaries, a Danger with a spectrum of *overwhelmed:4*, is fighting Det. Enkidu, Goodfellow, and Sánchez, who are trying to reach Sullivan. Det. Enkidu charges at the mercs, **Hitting With All She's Got**, and manages to land a status of *pushed-back-1*, which counts towards their spectrum (three more tiers to go).

Since she did not choose to protect herself, the detective then makes a **Face Danger** move against heavy gunfire (*perforated-4*). The MC rules that being *pushed-back-1* doesn't reduce the effectivity of the mercenaries tactics, so Enkidu doesn't get to treat that status as a helpful status.

Later, Goodfellow tries to **Sneak Around** the mercs and secretly reach Sullivan in the back room. The MC rules *pushed-back-1* counts as a detrimental status for him because the mercenary team is now concentrated around the entrance to the back room.

APPLYING A DANGER'S STATUS TO ITS OWN DANGER MOVES

In some cases, the MC may rule that a particularly appropriate status detracts from a Danger's abilities or improves them.

When you make a Danger move, if a status detracts from that Danger's ability to perform the move, you can reduce the effect of the move by the tier of that status.

The MC rules that the mercenaries' *pushed-back-1* doesn't really hurt their firepower, and therefore they can still give a status of *perforated-4*. However, later in the game Goodfellow uses his illusions to create phantom visions of the crew members, imposing a temporary status of *can't-get-a-visual-2* on the mercs. The MC determines that this new status detracts from the mercenaries' ability to shoot. The next time the mercenaries fire their guns, their status of *perforated-4* will be reduced by 2 (the tier of *can't-get-a-visual-2* that Goodfellow imposed on them), so they will give *flesh-wound-2* instead.

On the other hand, when you make a Danger move and a status improves the Danger's ability to perform the move, you can increase the associated effect. Whatever the effect is, mark its numerical value on a tracking card (e.g., if the effect removes two tiers from a status, mark 2 on the card). Then stack the enhancing status with this effect, as if they were statuses on the same spectrum. This may result in the same tier or a greater tier. If the resulting tier is greater, use it as the new numerical value of the effect (e.g. if the final tier is 3, the effect can now remove three tiers from a status, instead of two).

Knowing the crew will show up to take Sullivan from her, Margo Falls equipped the mercenaries with rune-inscribed bullets that can penetrate both mundane and Mythos defenses, making them *dangerously-armed-4*. Placing their original *perforated-4* status on the card, the MC marks the number 4. Stacking it with *dangerously-armed-4* she gets a tier-5 status, which means the mercs now cause a tier-5 status, *shredded-5*.

The leader of the mercenary team also has an ability to remove two tiers of

any negative tactical statuses from his team. He then gets a boost from Margo Falls herself in the form of a *mastermind-advice-3* status and the MC deems it helpful to his move. The MC marks the number 2 on the card (for his ability to remove two tiers) and stacks it with Margo's 3, resulting in 3. The commander can now remove three tiers of negative tactical statuses instead of just two.

RECOVERING FROM STATUSES

As long as a Danger remains in the story, it can recover from statuses in the same way a player character does, with any MC, Danger, or player moves which reduce or remove statuses and apply to the situation. Players can spend Juice to remove tiers from the Danger's statuses, if the method of the Juice is relevant. Finally, statuses expire for Dangers in the same way they expire for player characters: temporary statuses expire after a single hard Move to which they apply or when the circumstances dictate it; ongoing statuses expire when the circumstances dictate it; and permanent statuses do not expire.

DANGERS AND TAGS

Dangers have no power tags or weakness tags; effects that burn tags have no bearing on Danger moves. However, Danger moves can generate story tags, so effects that burn tags can remove story tags created by Danger moves. Story tags created by Dangers can impede moves players make against them. Finally, depending on circumstances, Danger moves may be affected by story tags in the same way they are affected by statuses; treat relevant story tags as tier-1 statuses. If multiple tags of similar nature are relevant, you can stack them as you would multiple tier-1 statuses on the same spectrum in order to increase the benefit they provide.

DANGERS THAT ARE NOT A THREAT

The purpose of Dangers is to present complications for the player characters: either as challenges to overcome, such as adversaries or dangerous situations, or as victims or targets deserving of assistance and protection. When the lead characters are witnessing an interaction between two characters, these NPCs do not use their Danger profiles and the rules to resolve the conflict; instead, simply narrate it in the way that most promotes the story. You can use the soft move **Complicate Things** to involve the lead characters in the interaction. If they don't step in, use **Hit Them After Fair Warning** to make a hard move such as **Make Something Horrible Happen** or **Deny Them Something They Want**. Use the rules only when the lead characters become involved. For example, if they try to assist one party by providing medical attention after the interaction, you can use the Dangers' profiles to determine how badly was a Danger injured and how challenging would it be for the lead characters to assist her.

Similarly, Danger moves are not meant to be used to assist the lead characters. However, Dangers profiles can serve as guidelines as to what the Danger is capable of. For example, if a Danger can remove statuses from her allies, it represents an ability she has in the story. If that Danger later teams up with the crew, decide how this ability may be applied to the lead characters. Then, use the information in the Danger's profile to determine if this has any effect on the rules, and if so, what it is. For example, you can decide that this character can remove statuses from the lead characters but only once per scene. This applies to a circumstantial use of the Danger's powers; if the players would like to use the character as a regular ally, they should obtain the appropriate themes and tags to represent her as such. Optionally, you could write a custom move to represent this ally's assistance.



CREATING DANGERS

Creating a new Danger is as simple as naming its spectrums and MC moves. Creating custom-made Dangers for your cases is not only a lot of fun, it also helps you present a cohesive story that matches your series concept. Follow the steps below to create your own Dangers.

STEP 1: CONCEPT

Think about the character, location, force, or group that this Danger will represent.

- **FOR A CHARACTER: WHAT ARE THIS DANGER'S ABILITIES AND RESOURCES?**
- **FOR A RIFT: WHAT IS ITS MYTHOS? WHAT IS ITS LEVEL OF AWARENESS? WHAT MYTHOS POWERS DOES IT POSSESS?**
- **FOR A LOCATION: WHAT IS DANGEROUS ABOUT THIS PLACE?**
- **FOR ALL DANGERS: IN WHICH WAYS WILL THIS DANGER INTERACT WITH THE PLAYER CHARACTERS?**

Mack the MC is creating a few Dangers for his casino case, the suicide of Ashley Lind (see page 384). He starts with Carlton Cooper, the Royal Plaza Casino's Chief of Security and the Rift of the Dragon (Touched). Cooper is a highly-trained security officer and casino fraud countermeasures expert. As a Touched Rift, Cooper manifests mostly powers that allow him to watch the "hoard" he was entrusted with. Mack thinks that trying to manifest anything more flashy would severely strain the Chief of Security.

STEP 2: CHOOSE SPECTRUMS

Create the Danger's spectrums by considering these questions. You must create at least one spectrum.

- **HOW CAN THIS DANGER BE OVERCOME? WHAT STATUSES CAN BRING IT TO AN END?**

List one or more ways in which this Danger can be overcome or in which it can come to an end; these are the Danger's spectrums. For each spectrum, set a maximum between 1 to 6 which is the tier of relevant statuses required to max out this spectrum.

- **WHAT DANGEROUS TRANSFORMATION OR END IS THIS DANGER MOVING TOWARD?**

If relevant, list one or more countdown spectrums with a maximum between 1 and 6. When these spectrums max out, this Danger will transform into something else: a monster, an incendiary ball of fire, a City-wide disaster.

Mack the MC considers the ways in which Cooper can be overcome. Obviously, he can be hurt or killed, but as a skilled security officer with possibly dragon-like physiology, it won't be easy to do, so Mack gives Cooper a *hurt:5* spectrum.

Theoretically, Cooper can also be outsmarted or convinced to betray his employer; but since he is a shrewd man and a loyal employee, Mack doesn't think he should have these spectrums. He's not immune to either possibility, but they just don't represent likely ways to get rid of him.

However, since this is a crime drama, Mack thinks one of the ways to defeat Cooper is to *implicate:4* him in the death of Ashley Lind and put him behind bars. It won't be easy but if the crew can manage it, Cooper will be forced to skip town to avoid jail. He's loyal, not stupid.

STEP 3: CHOOSE SOFT DANGER MOVES

Create the Danger's soft moves by considering this question:

- **HOW CAN THIS DANGER MAKE LIFE HARDER FOR THE CREW, WITHOUT DRAMATIC CONSEQUENCES (YET)?**

List a few short sentences describing actions typical to this danger that may pose a complication but have no direct influence on the rules (i.e. no game effects) and no dramatic results. Optionally, these actions could be precursors to a hard Danger move this Danger possesses. See examples for soft Danger moves under Danger Moves (page 403) and under Danger Profiles below, starting on page 421.

Mack the MC lists the top actions Cooper can do to complicate things for the crew:

- Analyze the scene astutely, slowly piecing together the crew's next move
- Vanish into a service elevator or back corridor in the hotel or the casino
- Call Kenny Liu's private security (they're on their way)
- When in trouble, stop everything and inhale deeply (preparing to blow fire)

STEP 4: CHOOSE HARD DANGER MOVES

Create the Danger's hard moves by considering these questions:

? HOW CAN THIS DANGER INFLUENCE OR HURT OTHERS, IF THE CREW LETS IT?

? HOW CAN THIS DANGER HELP ITSELF OR ITS ALLIES, IF THE CREW LETS IT?

? HOW DOES THIS DANGER AFFECT THE SCENE OR THE STORY, IF THE CREW LETS IT?

List a few short descriptions of actions the Danger can take and the consequences associated with each. For each action, choose an effect that reflects it: give a status, reduce or remove a status, burn a tag, or create a story tag. You may use a single effect or multiple effects for each action. See examples for hard Danger moves under Danger Moves (page 403) and under Danger Profiles, starting on page 421.

Mack the MC lists Cooper's hard moves:

- Hide, destroy, or tamper with evidence (*lack of evidence*)
- Keep the private security team efficient (*efficient-2*)
- Spot a greedy character and offer money (*greased-3*)
- Use martial arts to restrain or hurt someone (*restrained-3* or *painful-injury-3*)
- Breathe fire, exhausting himself (*burns-4*, giving himself *exhausted-2*)
- Call Kenny Liu's private security (they arrive) (create a new Danger: Kenny Liu's Private Security, or increase its collective size if they're already here)

STEP 5: CHOOSE CUSTOM MOVES

Think about the Danger's custom moves by considering these questions:

? WHAT CAN THIS DANGER DO THAT HAS NOT BEEN DESCRIBED BY ITS SOFT AND HARD MOVES?

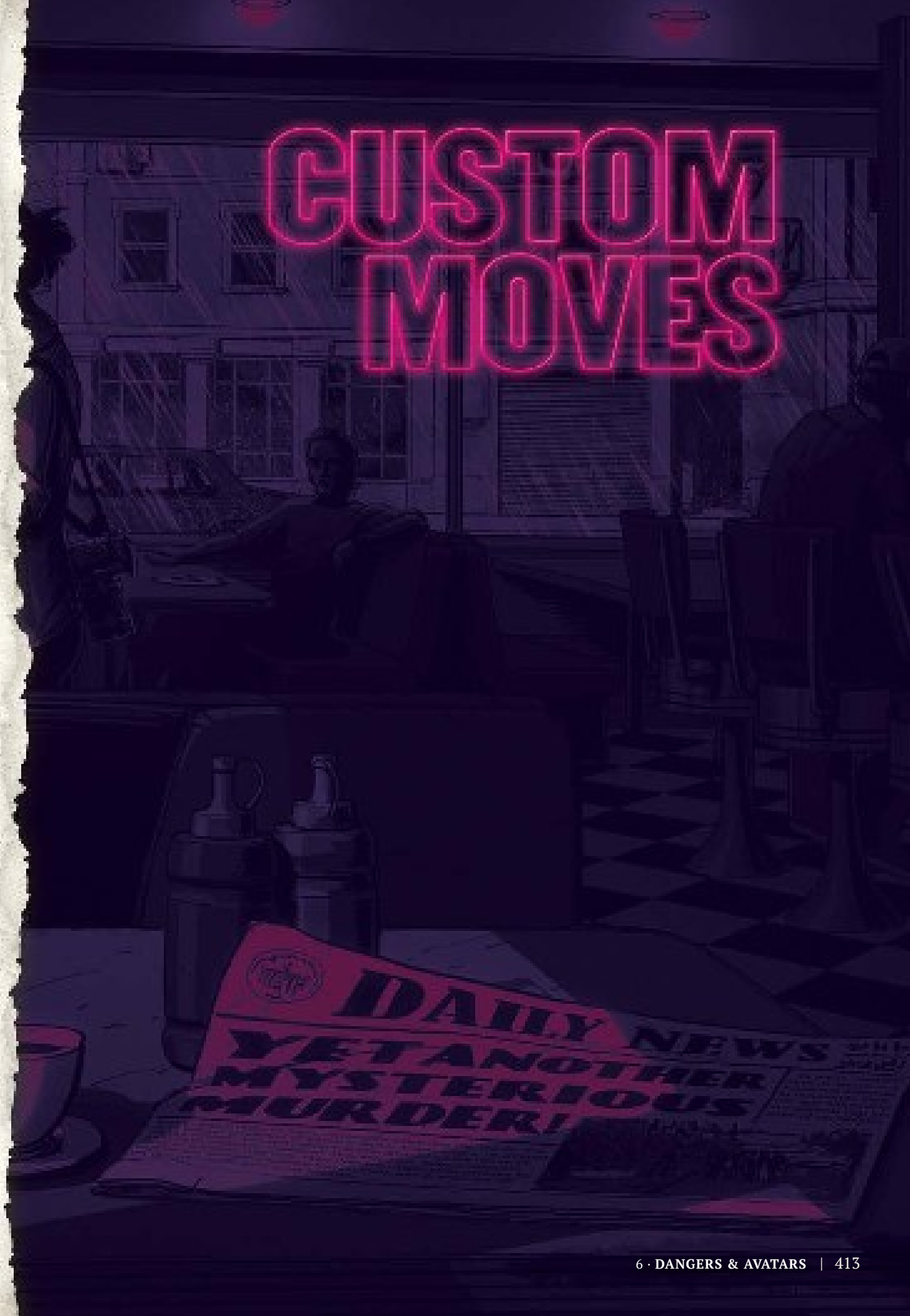
? WHAT QUALITY DOES THIS DANGER POSSESS THAT HAS NOT BEEN DESCRIBED BY ITS SOFT AND HARD MOVES?

Phrase the custom move as a condition and an outcome. Read more about creating custom moves under Custom Moves, page 414.

Mack the MC can think of a few abilities he still didn't cover: Cooper's supernatural alertness and his ability to know where anything stolen from the casino can be found. He creates the following custom moves:

Ultimate Predator: When Cooper enters the scene, give him *alert-2*.

Hoard Keeper: When you take something of value from the casino, Cooper knows where it is in town.


CUSTOM
MOVES
DAILY NEWS
YET ANOTHER
MYSTERIOUS
MURDER!

Custom moves are rules that are tailored for a specific story element or circumstance. They allow you to introduce interesting situations and abilities in a way that has a direct impact on the rules, which in turn can make your game more engaging and fun.

Custom moves work in the same way as player moves do: they have a **condition**, which is triggered when a certain circumstance occurs in the story, and they have an **outcome**, which you apply when the move is triggered. However, unlike player moves, custom moves use conditions that can refer to anything, not just the players, e.g. "When Medusa enters the scene, …" or "When you try to hit Proximo, …".

Most custom moves are diceless, that is, they do not require the players to roll the dice.

TYPES OF CUSTOM MOVES

Custom moves can be used to describe any special condition in the story. The most common uses are:

- **Custom Danger move**, reflecting the nature, abilities, or resources of a Danger which allow it to impose special conditions on the game
- **Situational custom move**, reflecting the outcome of a specific circumstance in the game or the unique effects of a Relic, an Enclave, or anything that is the product of Mythos powers. See some examples of situational custom moves at the end of some of the Avatar Profiles (starting on page 454).
- **Improvement**, granting the character expanded use of the existing rules. The characters' theme improvements are essentially custom moves. You can expand the list by writing additional theme improvements or other improvements.

INTRODUCING A CUSTOM MOVE

As long as a custom move has not been triggered, you as the MC have the choice of whether to reveal it to the players in advance, reveal parts of it (such as the name only, or the condition only), or keep it from them entirely (only revealing it later for great dramatic effect).

The first time a custom move is triggered, you must reveal it to the players: either read it out loud to everyone in the table or pass around copies of the move written or printed on paper or cue cards. It becomes a part of the rules until it is no longer relevant or you choose to remove it.

WHEN SHOULD I USE CUSTOM MOVES?

Custom moves are an essential part of *City of Mist*: they enrich the game by adding more possibilities to the rules. However, since each custom move essentially redefines a small part of the rules, they can have a strong effect on your game, sometimes in unpredictable and undesirable ways. In addition, most aspects of the story are already covered by the game's moves and resources, so stacking additional rules might be redundant. For each custom move you create or include in your game, consider the following:

? **Are rules required to reflect this story element or situation, or is the story enough?**

? **For actions: Is there an existing player move or MC move that already covers this action?** Consider the Core Moves, Cinematic Moves, and Dramatic Moments Moves (especially **Stop. Holding. Back.**), as well as, soft and hard MC moves.

? **For abilities: Is there an existing game resource that can represent this ability?** Consider tags, statuses, Clues, Juice, Attention, Crack or Fade, Mysteries & Identities, etc.

Also note that there is no ability in the game that can remove or change moves so once you introduce a custom move into the game, the players cannot change the move, only cope with its outcome. You as the MC, however, can remove a custom move when it is no longer relevant. (The exception ot the above are custom moves, which can affect other moves; however, creating rules that can break other rules may turn your game into a tedious exercise in legal wording).

If you can find an alternative within the existing rules of the game, use it; it will keep the game light and dynamic. Use a custom move only when it adds something new and interesting to the game.

Because custom moves become visible to the players, be careful not to reveal any of the details of the case or series ahead of time in custom moves you create. Choose the wording of the move carefully.

CREATING A CUSTOM MOVE

Putting together a custom move is easy, but creating a good custom move is an art that touches on game design and requires you to think of the possible applications and implications of the move you are creating.

To create a move, think about what circumstance or ability you want to reflect in the move and choose the appropriate condition, roll (if any), and outcome(s). The condition should be specific; vague terms might cause the move to trigger inadvertently. A roll should be used only if you want variable outcomes that are dependent on some story or game element; remember you can also have variable outcomes by referring to a game element ("if *tick* is higher than 3, then… otherwise…") or by simply presenting a few choices. The outcome should give you a clear direction about what's happening next in the story, or a clear effect on some game elements, or both.

Then read the move again and consider what effect it would have on your game. You know your players better than anyone, so ask yourself, how will they be interacting with this move? Rephrase and rewrite as needed. Use the templates and examples given below as guidelines.

CONDITIONS

Whenever a custom move is triggered, regardless of the timing, the outcome is applied. Therefore, a condition can be used in different ways to trigger certain outcomes at points that are not covered by the existing rules, for example at the start of a scene or while a player has the spotlight.

Custom move conditions commonly start with the words "When", "Whenever", "Every time", "At" etc.

The following are common custom move conditions that are used in this chapter and that you can use in your own custom moves. Each type of condition opener is followed by a few examples of how you could use it:

- When you [as your character, do something in the story]
  - » When you take something of value from the casino, …
  - » When you aggravate the giant, …
  - » When you eat the magic mushroom, …
  - » When you get too far from the City, …
- When you [as a player, use the rules in a specific way]
  - » When you take a status, …
  - » When you gain Clues, …
  - » When you spend Juice, …
  - » When you burn another player's tag, …
- When [a Danger does something in the story or interacts with the rules]
  - » When the Golem of Prague enters the scene, …
  - » When Helix Labs puts a bounty on your head, …
  - » When your favorite waitress takes a status, …
  - » When the time bomb's *ticking:4* spectrum is maxed out, …
- When a situation transpires in the game
  - » When the cops arrive to arrest you, …
  - » When the mayor declares a state of emergency, …
  - » Every time the City Herald publishes a story about a cover-up, …
  - » When Níðhöggr the Serpent starts eating away at the roots of the world tree Yggdrasil, …
- At [a given point in the game]
  - » At the beginning of the session / scene / cutscene / downtime, …
  - » At the end of the session / scene / cutscene / downtime, …

ROLLS

Some custom moves may include a roll. When a custom move asks for a roll, only the players roll – never the MC. The players always roll two six-sided dice (2d6). Depending on the move's purpose, it can require the players to:

- **roll+Power**, reflecting the player character's standard resources, like tags and statuses. Note that most player character actions that are based on roll+Power are already covered by the Core Moves.
- **roll+Mythos**, reflecting the player character's awareness and connection with her Mythos
- **roll+Logos**, reflecting the player character's grounding and attachment to the City
- **roll+[any other value]**, such as
  - » roll+[the number of heads the Hydra has left]
  - » roll+[the number of times you crossed paths with Eddie Dreamtime]
  - » roll+[the tier of the current *collapse* status this burning house has]
  - » To maintain an interesting range of results, the value added to the roll should be between +4 and -4.

When a custom move includes a roll, the move can specify different outcomes for a hit (any final score of 7 or more), a score of 7-9, a score of 10+, and even a score of 12+, if relevant. If the move does not explicitly specify an outcome for a miss (a final score of six or less), the outcome is a hard MC move. See the explanation on Outcome Categories, page 213.

OUTCOMES

A custom move's outcome describes what happens when it is triggered. It can be described as events taking place in the story, as in this example:

```
Every time the City Herald publishes a
story about a cover-up, a reporter or
an editor is found dead the next morn-
ing.
```

It can be described in game terms:

```
When the Golem of Prague enters the
scene, give it hardened-skin-1.
```

Or it can be described with both:

```
Every time the City Herald publishes a
story about a cover-up, a reporter or
an editor is found dead the next morn-
ing. The killer or killers get ahead-
of-the-game-1.
```

CHALLENGE LEVEL AND CUSTOM MOVES

Custom moves can radically affect the challenge level of the game. When you introduce a new custom move into the game or write your own, consider its impact on the player characters and the story.

The effect a custom move has on the challenge level of the game depends on all of its components:

The condition determines how often and in what situations it will be triggered. You can control the challenge level of a custom move by increasing or decreasing the frequency in which it is triggered, for example from once a session to once a scene or vice versa.

The roll defines which factors affect the outcome. It also introduces an element of chance into the move. This often causes some player characters to be more or less affected or successful than other player characters.

The outcome(s) determines how impactful the move is when it triggers. To tweak the move, change the effects of its outcome; for example, reduce or increase the tier of the status it gives the players.

CUSTOM MOVES TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES

A few common types of *City of Mist* custom moves are given below. You can use the examples given here in your game or fill out the templates to create your own custom moves. Templates that have the potential to significantly increase the challenge level of your game are marked with one, two, or three ★ icons, ranging from mild to major impact respectively. Like any move, their impact also depends on their specific conditions and outcomes.

ACTIVE SHIELD

An Active Shield move triggers when anyone or anything is trying to give a status to the Danger who has this move or influence it in other ways. This move activates after a player (or the MC) declares he wants to make a move or spend a resource to affect the Danger but before he actually makes the move or applies the rules to do so. Any effects applied by the Active Shield affect the move attempted by the player (or the MC) and may even nullify it (e.g., by giving an appropriate tier-5 status or by burning the tags used to make the offensive move).

★★ **Active Shield:** When you [description of attack], you first [outcome].

Popular: When you publicly shame Adam Drake, you first take *humiliated-3* as his fans boo you.

Defensive Shrouding: Once per scene, when you attack Gatekeeper Agents with Mythos powers, they manipulate the Mist to choke out your powers. The MC first burns two power tags related to your attack.

Boobytraps: Every time someone tries to enter your base uninvited, they take a status with tier=Power+2 once, unless they found a way to circumvent those security measures.

Brambles and Thorns: When you try to get into the castle of the Sleeping Beauty, you first take *entangled-3* or *nick-and-cuts-2*, MC's choice.

COUNTDOWN OUTCOME

A Countdown Outcome move is used to define what happens when a countdown spectrum is maxed out.

Countdown Outcome: When [Danger]'s [countdown spectrum] spectrum is maxed out, [outcome].

Lycanthropy: When a Bite Victim's *transformation:3* spectrum is maxed out, he or she transforms completely. Replace Bite Victim with the Danger: Hungry Werewolf.

KABOOM!: When the Time Bomb's *ticking:5* spectrum is maxed out, the bomb explodes. Everyone and everything within a one mile radius takes *disintegrated-6*.

Too late: When the Citywide Epidemic spectrum *spread:6* is maxed out, it is too late to stop the disease from spreading. The population of the City is decimated. Cut to a scene one month later and describe the devastating effect this had on the City.

STARTING STATUS OR TAG

A starting status custom move allows a Danger to start the scene with a status already in place, usually making things more difficult for the players. The Danger may not have to physically enter the scene to trigger this move; if the players are interacting with the Danger remotely this move may also apply.

★ **Starting status:** When [Danger] enters the scene, give it [status].

Made of Clay: When the Golem of Prague enters the scene, give it *hardened-skin-1*.

Ultimate Predator: When Cooper enters the scene, give him *alert-2*.

Celebrity Status: When Isabella walks into a public gathering, give her *admired-4*.

★★ **Starting status, renewable (hard):** When [Danger] enters the scene, give it [status]. If [Danger] loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.

Relentless investigator: When a nagging reporter enters the scene, give him *onto-you-1*. If the nagging reporter loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.

★★★ **Starting status, renewable (soft):** When [Danger] enters the scene, give it [status]. If [Danger] loses this status, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.

Force-field generator: When Helix Lab Elite Security enter the scene, give them *force-field-3*. If Helix Lab Elite Security loses this status, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.

Similarly, Starting Tag allows a Danger to add a tag to the scene upon entering it. The tag is ongoing, unless otherwise stated.

★ **Starting tag:** When [Danger] enters the scene, add [tag] to the scene.

Three-Headed: When K9 enters the scene with his dogs, add *protective dog*, *mean dog*, and *watchful dog* to the scene.

Lens flare: When Apollo, the god of light, enters the scene, add *blinding flash* (temporary) to the scene.

★★ **Starting status, renewable (hard):** When [Danger] enters the scene, add [tag] to the scene. If this tag is removed, the MC can renew it as a hard move.

Smoke & Mirrors: When the Mononoke Ninjas enter the scene, add *smoke* to the scene. If this tag is removed, the MC can renew it as a hard move.

★★★ **Starting status, renewable (soft):** When [Danger] enters the scene, give it [status]. If this tag is removed, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.

Whirlwind God: When Ara Tiotio, the Polynesian tornado god, enters the scene, add *strong winds* to the scene. If this tag is removed, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.

STATUS FILTER

Status filters modify statuses that the Danger is receiving as they occur. They can be used to represent special defenses or resistance to harm or, conversely, susceptibilities or vulnerabilities.

★ **Status Filter (defense):** When [Danger] takes a [type of status], reduce the tier of the status by [a number of tiers].

Durable: When an Oni takes a physical harm status, reduce the tier of the status by 2.

Indomitable: When the Rift of Thor takes a mind-control status while raging, reduce the tier of the status by 3.

Massive: When the Kraken takes a status describing topical harm, reduce the tier of the status by 4. When the Kraken takes a status describing area harm, reduce the tier of the status by 3.

Status Filter (vulnerability): When [Danger] takes a [type of status], increase the tier of the status by [a number of tiers].

Dry Bones: When a Wight takes a fire-related status, increase the tier of the status by 2.

Structural Instability: When the Forgotten Subway Tunnel takes a status that moves its walls or supports, increase the tier of the status by 1.

STATUS PAYLOAD

A Status Payload is a custom move that is triggered when a player character or a Danger takes a specific status. This usually applies only if the status has any remaining tiers after the player character or Danger applied any relevant defenses (e.g., after the player character's **Face Danger** move).

★ **Status Payload:** When you take [type of status and source], [outcome].

Hollow point: When you take a gunshot status from gangsters using hollow point ammunition, take an additional tier-1 status with a similar tag.

Fishing for Information: When you take a *candid* status from an Aware Investigator, the MC can trade each of the tiers to have you truthfully answer a question, one-for-one. The investigator now knows your answers, whether or not your character actually said it.

Bow of Artemis: When you take a status from Natasha's arrows, you take an additional tier-3 status of the MC's choice representing the arrow she used, e.g., *poisoned-3*, *sick-3*, *unlucky-3*.

DANGER DEFENSES

Using hard MC moves and custom moves, a Danger can erect four types of defenses.

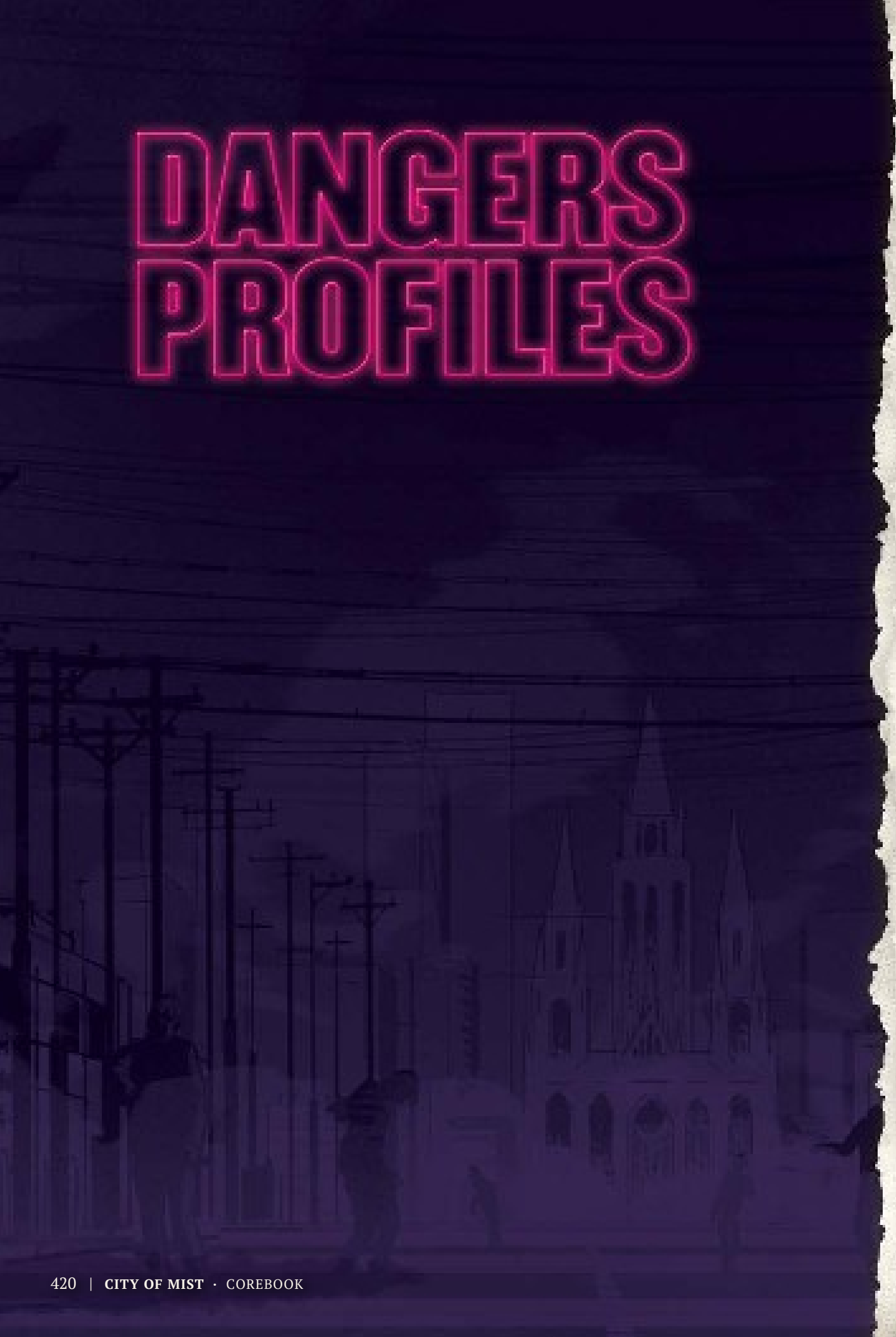
The first option is the ability to give itself **a defensive status**. When appropriate, this defensive status can serve as a detrimental status for a player character's attack against this Danger, reducing its Power. However, since only the highest detrimental status applies to any roll, a defensive status is effective only insofar as the attacking player character does not have a higher detrimental status. A defensive status can be removed, in which case the MC must decide if it can be renewed and when (without a custom move, this requires a hard MC move).

The second option is the ability to create **a defensive story tag**. When appropriate, this defensive tag can reduce the Power of a player character's attack against this Danger. This works regardless of the player character's other tags and statuses. However, since the same story tag cannot be created twice, multiple story tags must describe different types of defenses which may not all be relevant to each specific attack (e.g., *armor*, *shield*, *visored helmet*). Using story tags can also make the conflict more descriptive. A defensive story tag can be removed, in which case the MC must decide if it can be renewed and when (without a custom move, this requires a hard MC move because the tag is significantly detrimental to the player characters).

The above options not only reduce the tier of the status imposed by the attack but also reduce the chances the player will score well in his roll and increase the chances of a miss (which then triggers an additional hard MC move). They are suitable for Dangers with defenses that can be taken away and are hit-and-miss.

The third option is the ability to **reduce or remove statuses**. If this is applied as a hard Danger move, the Danger can only recover when a player character misses a move. However, if this is represented by a custom move with a **status filter**, then any relevant incoming status is affected. This is a more reliable type of defense, suitable for describing innate forms of protection, like size and durability. However, it does not affect the player characters' chances of succeeding or failing their actions.

The fourth option is to set up an **active shield**, which harms the player characters in some way whenever they attempt an attack. This defense can only be applied with a custom move and therefore cannot be prevented by the players. It also has the double effect of attacking the player characters whenever they attack, possibly imposing a status that will both promote their defeat and weaken their attacks. Hence, this defense is an exceptionally potent one and should be reserved for stronger Dangers.


DANGERS
PROFILES

This section of the book contains Danger profiles that you can use in your games, describing a variety of Dangers of all shapes and forms. It is divided into three sections:

- **Mundane Dangers** are ordinary individuals and threats that can be a part of any City. They can be used to describe Sleeper characters and threats of a mundane nature, or they can be combined with Mythos Power Sets to create Rifts on the fly.
- **Mythos Power Sets** are sets of Danger moves that represent special abilities granted by a specific type of Mythos. They can be added to a Mundane Danger to instantly create a unique Rift, such as a Witch Reporter or a Dog Catcher with a Hunter Mythos.
- **Rifts and Other Mythical Dangers** are complete Danger profiles of Rifts and other mythical beings (such as creatures created by Rifts) from the *City of Mist* setting.

DANGER RATING

Dangers profiles are given a Danger Rating to reflect their potential ability to challenge or harm the crew, normally ranging from zero (least dangerous) to five (most dangerous). The Danger Rating is marked next to each Danger's title with one ★ for each point of Danger Rating the Danger has.

Mythos Power Sets can increase the Danger Rating of a Mundane Danger. Each is marked by a + sign followed by the number of ★ equal to the point of Danger Rating this set adds to a Danger it is combined with. Combining a Mythos Power Set with a Mundane Danger may result in a Danger with a Danger Rating above five.

Remember that the challenge level of a Danger varies greatly based on how you as the MC use it, what optional rules you include in your game, and what your policies about tags and statuses are. You should therefore treat Danger Rating as a general estimate only.

COLLECTIVE PROFILES

Danger profiles describing a collective list the size factor of the collective and the Danger moves for a single member of the collective. As explained under Collectives (page 406), when multiple members make the same Danger move against the same target, you should increase the effects of the move accordingly.

MUNDANE DANGERS

CITY RESIDENTS

CITY OFFICIAL ★

A City Official can be anyone working at a formal position in the City: a courthouse clerk, a vehicle registration officer, a meter maid, etc. You can use the City Official as a non-violent barrier between the lead characters and something they want from the municipality. The City Official is usually a bureaucrat; she will sign papers, disclose information, or approve the crew's requests only when she is legally bound to do so. Adjust the City Official's spectrums according to how high-ranking, corruptible, or timid this individual is.

CORRUPT 3 / LEGALLY BIND 3 / SCARE 3

- Ask for more documents (*vexed-by-bureaucracy-2*)
- Call security or the police (create a new Danger: Beat Cops / Security Guards)
- Threaten to call security or the police if not left alone
- End the conversation abruptly

CORPORATE LAWYER ★★★

This slimy corporate legal advisor is an expert at exploiting the City's legal system to benefit her employers. Enjoying a fat paycheck plus bonuses, money is not something that can sway this scumbag. Moreover, if anyone so much as lays a finger on her or hers, they'll be in serious legal trouble. Just give her a reason. You can also use this Danger profile to represent the City's District Attorney.

BRIBE – / DEFEAT IN COURT 5 / IMPLICATE 5 / THREATEN 4

- **Lawsuit:** When you give the Corporate Lawyer a status describing physical harm, restraint, or financial loss, you get a status describing legal implications of the same tier, such as *criminal-record-2* or *most-wanted-5*.
- **Objection!:** When Corporate Lawyer takes a legal or court status, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- **Relentless:** At the end of the scene, remove any statuses on the Corporate Lawyer's *threaten* spectrum.
- Use the court system against someone (*legal-trouble-3*) or sway the judge and/or jury against them in a trial (*guilty-3*)
- Send a P.I. to dig up some dirt on someone (create a new Danger: Detective)
- Bail her client out of trouble (remove up to two tiers of legal statuses)
- Threaten with legal action

HELPLESS CITY RESIDENT

Anyone in the City who cannot fend for themselves or does not pose a serious threat can be considered a Helpless City Resident. Such individuals often need the crew's protection and can be used to support the lead characters or their adversaries.

HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / SCARE 1

- Try to fight back (*ouch-1*)
- Call the police or scream for help

A Helpless City Resident can have one of the following moves, according to her background:

- **Spunky kid:** pick up a *stone* (temporary) or pull out a *sling*
- **Social worker:** help someone cope (remove one tier of a negative emotional status or give *calm-1*)
- **Doctor:** give medical assistance (remove one tier of a negative physical status)
- **Scientist:** offer someone their *scientific expertise*
- **Retired citizen:** give someone a *good advice* (temporary)
- **Stylist:** give someone a quick make-over (*fresh look*)
- **Bank manager:** give someone *the keys to the safe*
- **Dog catcher:** restrain someone or an animal with an animal control pole (*tangled-1*)
- **Waiter/waitress:** protect his/herself in *self-defense*
- **Rock band:** make this Danger a collective with a size factor of 1. They can also *excite-1* the audience (*inflame-2* as a band).

MOB ★★

This Danger represents an excited crowd of City residents: angry protesters, hysterical fans, a violent mob, etc.

QUELL 2

- **Collective:** This collective has many members and a size factor of 3.
- **(optional) Hard Core:** When *quell* is maxed out, create a new Danger: Mob, with a size factor smaller by one than that of the quelled mob. Give the new Mob a *violent-1* status.
- Root for their idol (give *confident-2*) or humiliate their idol's enemies (*humiliated-2*)
- Overrun a barricade, a police line, or a location (*overrun-1*)
- Many people shout and cheer, the mob is abuzz (give itself *inflamed-1*)
- A few people shout and cheer, the atmosphere is heating up

MOVER & SHAKER ★★★★

This Danger represents one of the City's most powerful individuals, such as the mayor, a media magnate, or an industrial tycoon. With a battery of lawyers and the police on her payrolls (either legitimately or illegitimately), this person cannot be easily implicated in crimes unless the crew digs up some real dirt and manages to find a judge who will listen. Yeah, good luck with that.

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / IMPLICATE – / THREATEN 5

- **Make Me an Offer I Can't Refuse:** When you refuse the offer of a Mover & Shaker, you are **Taking the Risk**.
- **Bodyguards:** When a Mover & Shaker takes a status her bodyguards can protect her from, the bodyguards take the status instead (use SWAT Team / Elite Security for the bodyguards).
- **Never Rest:** At the end of every downtime or as a hard move, the Mover & Shaker can give you *besmirched-reputation-3* or *wanted-3*, or create a new Danger to go after you (choose from City Official , Corporate Lawyer, Detective, SWAT Team / Elite Security, Hitman, etc.)
- **Relentless:** At the end of the scene, remove any statuses on the Mover & Shaker's *threaten* spectrum.
- Pull out a hidden weapon and attack (*well-placed-shot-4*)
- Subtly and chillingly threaten someone
- Be suspiciously nice to someone



PSYCHE WARD NURSE ★

If the lead characters talk too much about their experiences as Rifts, they may find themselves facing one or more of these trained psychiatric nurses. This nurse is used to hearing crazy people claim they are being wrongfully detained, so it will not be easy to impress her.

CONVINCE 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE 2

- **Hold Him Down!:** As a hard move, the Psyche Ward Nurse can change a target's status tag from *restrained* to *sedated*, keeping the same tier.
- Call the other nurses (this Danger becomes a **Collective** with a size factor of 1)
- Restrain manually or with a straight jacket (*restrained-3*)
- Ignore a patient's pleas (remove 2 tiers from any convincing statuses)
- Warn a patient not to disturb the order, or else

RADICAL ACTIVIST ★★

This individual is predominantly concerned with promoting her cause – whether it is a social, political, or environmental one – and may go to considerable lengths to do so.

CRIMINALIZE 3 / DELEGITIMIZE 4 / INFLAME 3 / RESTRAIN 2 / TALK SENSE 4

- Radical Action: When *inflame* is maxed out, Make Something Horrible Happen. The Radical Activist then dies, disappears, goes mad, goes to prison, etc.
- Wanted Fugitive: When *criminalize* is maxed out, the police attempt to arrest the Radical Activist. If appropriate, create a new Danger: Beat Cops.
- Vehemently fight for her rights (remove one tier from restricting statuses)
- Make you believe in her cause (*good-point-1*)
- Ostracize someone who does not adhere to her cause (*bad-rep-1*)
- Barricade herself and get herself into trouble (giving herself *barricaded-1* and *criminalized-1*)
- Cause a scene and get in trouble with the authorities

REPORTER ★★

Television, radio, and newspaper reporters are always looking for the next scoop. You can often find them snooping around where unusual events take place, even if they are completely oblivious to the legendary happenings behind the scenes.

FOOL 3 / SCARE 4

- **Inquisitive:** As a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Reporter knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- **On the Ball:** When the Reporter enters the scene, give her *alert-1*.
- Expose someone publically or give them a bad reputation (*exposed-2* or *infamous-2*) or threaten to do so unless…
- Use a *press pass*
- Show up at the worst time, snooping around
- Find an unlikely witness and start interviewing them
- Shove a microphone, camera, or notepad in someone's face and tell them they're live or that what they say will be on the morning newspaper

SOCIAL BUTTERFLY ★★

This person is flowing with charisma and good looks and can dominate any social gathering she attends. You can use this Danger to represent a celebrity, an old-money snob, a well-connected agent in the entertainment industry, etc.

BEFRIEND 5 / SHAME OR OVERSHADOW 4 / THREATEN 2

- **Words Can Never Hurt Me:** When Social Butterfly takes an unwanted social status, reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- Become the life of the party (give herself *center-of-attention-3*, temporary)
- Humiliate or shame someone (*shamed-3*), draw the attention away from someone (*ignored-3*) or give her support to someone (*popular-2*)
- Take over a casual conversation and impress the audience

TROUBLED INDIVIDUAL ★

This individual keeps getting into trouble and usually asks the crew to help her out. She can be a showgirl that fell in with the wrong people, a teenager in a rough neighborhood, or a snoopy superintendent who keeps running into criminal activity.

GET INTO TROUBLE 3 / HURT OR SUBDUE 2

- Knack for Getting into Trouble: At the end of every downtime, the Troubled Individual takes *trouble-1*.
- **Tragedy:** When *get in trouble* is maxed out, **Make Something Horrible Happen** to her.
- **Mysterious Past**: When you spend a Clue to ask a question about the Troubled Individual's past, the MC can choose to give answers that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false (as in the 7-9 option of **Investigate**).
- Get someone to like her (*friendly-2*)
- Disappear at the least convenient time (hard move)
- Warn the crew that something bad is about to happen

VIOLENT DRUNK ★

This extremely intoxicated person has had too much to drink (or consumed too much drugs), to the point of becoming emotional and aggressive.

DETOX 4 / HURT OR SUBDUE 3

- **Drown the Pain:** When Violent Drunk enters the scene, give her *dulled-pain-1*.
- Punch someone (*bruise-2*)
- Blather unintelligibly about her past and make someone pity her (*pity-1*)
- Act up, pushing someone around

CRIMINALS

CAT BURGLAR ★★

This expert burglar can tackle even advanced security systems to get to the precious items she seeks. A cat burglar could be working alone or with a team; for herself or for an employer. She could be after money, papers, jewelry, or even Relics.

CATCH 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE 2

- Stealthy: When the Cat Burglar enters the scene, if she's sneaking, give her *stealthy-2*. If the Cat Burglar loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- Fence: At the beginning of downtime, the Cat Burglar can use her criminal network to make one object she had in her possession disappear or reach someone else.
- Override, avoid, or escape security measures (remove up to two tiers of alertness statuses from others or restraining status from herself, or give *disabled-2*)
- Get away (Deny Them Something They Want)
- Easily slip through mundane security systems while the crew is left behind
- Flee, gaining distance

CRIME LORD ★★★★

A Crime Lord is the all-powerful ruler of an underworld empire. Often a dangerous and violent person, a crime lord is a formidable opponent both face-to-face and from afar.

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / THREATEN –

- **Make Me an Offer I Can't Refuse:** When you refuse the demands of a Crime Lord, you are **Taking the Risk**.
- **Bodyguards:** When Crime Lord takes a status her bodyguards can protect her from, the bodyguards take the status instead (use Hired Thugs for the bodyguards).
- **Violent Tendencies:** When you attack or threaten the Crime Lord, you first take *threatened-3* or *injured-3*, MC's choice.
- **Never Rest:** At the end of every downtime or as a hard move, the Crime Lord can give you *threatened-3* or create a new Danger to go after you (choose from Corporate Lawyer and any criminal Danger).
- Brutally bludgeon, hack, or shoot someone (*horrible-injury-4*)
- Observe silently, mulling over her judgement

CON ARTIST ★★

A con artist is a master of deception: she can make you believe she is a simple saleswoman, swindle you out of your inheritance, or swipe an important keycard out of your pocket while you are having a conversation.

BUILD TRUST – / HURT 2 / THREATEN 3

- Fool someone (remove up to two tiers of alertness statuses from others or give *confused-2*)
- Steal something undetected (burn a tag that describes an item or **Deny Them Something They Want**)
- Pull out a hidden weapon and attack (*nasty-cut-2* or *flesh-wound-2*)
- Act friendly and build rapport with someone

Normally, a deception should be played out within the story and without using rules (because they reveal the existence of falsehood). Alternatively, you can use the con artist's moves to try to fool the players. The **Build Trust** move is deceptive: the con artist pretends to be suspicious and the players try to build trust with her. Then, at a critical moment, the con artist betrays the crew and flips the status to her favor, allowing her to escape with the money or shoot a crew member in the back. Note that unless she has the ability to resist Mythos powers, the con artist cannot flip *trust* statuses created by mythical means.

- **(optional) Build Trust:** When you do something that makes [name] trust you, she takes *trust-2*. When you try to **Convince** [name], you can choose to give her a *trust* status if she refuses you. If you use her *trust* against her, you lose her trust and remove this status. Once you build enough trust, she may open up to you.
- **(optional) Abuse Trust:** When [name] betrays you, the trust you thought you built with her becomes her advantage. The MC will change the tag *trust* into an appropriate positive status for her such as *underestimated* or *overlooked*. After she betrays you, remove the status.

DELINQUENT TEENAGERS ★

Packs of unruly teenagers are often seen on the City streets, loitering, tagging, and disturbing the peace.

HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / THREATEN 1

- **Collective:** This collective has several members and a size factor of 2.
- Beat someone up (*bruise-1*) or spray them with pepper spray or paint spray (*blinded-1*)
- Fire each other up (*fired-up-0*, only relevant when size factor is applied)
- Loiter about, make noise, disturb the peace

GETAWAY VEHICLE ★★

A team of criminals usually has a vehicle nearby with a driver on standby to help them escape the crime scene as fast as possible. This Danger can also represent a drag race car.

CATCH OR OUTRUN 5 / DECOMMISSION 4

- **(optional) Vehicle:** Once per scene and depending on vehicle size, up to a handful of gunmen emerge from the vehicle windows and start shooting (use Hired Thugs). The gunmen automatically disembark when *decommission* is maxed out, but they take *hurt-1*.
- Slam into someone and try to force them off the road or turn sharply to shake someone off (*unsteady-2*)
- Get away (hard move)
- Accelerate and gain distance

HEIST TEAM ★★★+

Complex criminal operations require a team of professionals to carry out. This team includes different specialists who work together to pull off a heist, each contributing a different skill or know-how.

DISBAND X / HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / TURN 5

- **Team:** The Heist Team *disband* spectrum has a maximum equal to the number of team members minus one. Team members take statuses separately on the other spectrums. When a team member is overcome, turned, or captured, give the team a *disband* status with a tier greater by one than it has now. When a team member is retrieved, decrease the *disband* tier by one.
- **Gambit:** Once per scene, change one team member to another type.
- One team member gets away (**Deny Them Something They Want**)

Choose the members of the heist team (there may be more than one of each type):

- **Con Artist or Face:** fool someone (remove up to two tiers of alertness statuses from others or give *distracted-2*)
- **Demolitions Expert:** Once per scene, after you declare your move but before you roll the dice, the MC can have the Demolitions Expert set off a charge as an intrusion (*fatal-injury-5* or **Deny Them Something They Want**).
- **Ex-Military:** shoot (*gunshot-3*) or physically subdue someone (*staggering-3*). When the Ex-Military takes a physical harm or subdue status, reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- **Master Thief:** steal something (burn a tag that describes an object or **Deny Them Something They Want**)
- **Operator / Mastermind:** give all team members *tactical-advantage-2* or remove up to two tiers of negative tactical statuses from all team members.

HIRED THUGS ★★

These common crooks are hired to threaten snoopy reporters, beat up rebellious neighborhood residents, hit the opposition with a drive-by shooting, or guard their boss and her illegal operations. Some of them work for the highest bidder while others are loyal to whomever they serve, driven by fear or criminal affiliation.

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / THREATEN 4

- **Collective:** This collective has a handful of members and a size factor of 1.
- Bully (*threatened-2*), beat up (*broken-arm-3*), or shower with bullets (*gunshot-3*)
- Eliminate a vulnerable target (*shot-in-the-gut-4*)

HITMAN ★★★

For as long as human society existed, assassins have been used to enact personal revenge or eliminate political rivals. This highly-trained individual in a professional killer and an expert of infiltration.

GET TO POSITION 3 / HURT OR SUBDUE 5

- **Take the Shot:** When *get-to-position* is maxed out, remove any statuses on this spectrum and the Hitman attacks her target (*fatal-wound-5* or *dead-6*).
- **Inscrutable:** To ask the MC a question about the Hitman, you must spend two Clues instead of one. At the MCs option, you may be able to combine Clues with another player.
- **(optional) Fateful Hour:** The Hitman can use "Move to position" (see below) as a soft move.
- Disable a threat with martial arts or expert gunslinging (*broken-4*)
- Move to position (*closing-on-target-1*)
- Flee the scene or swallow a cyanide pill (hard move)
- Betray her presence (but not her exact position) with a subtle clue, e.g., a reflection of her scope or a movement of her shadow

PETTY CROOK ★

The petty crook is a weasel, a lowlife, or a scumbag who is involved in criminal activity but is rarely taken seriously by anyone in the business. Sometimes a petty crook will be hired by a crime organization as a cheap laborer or to do a menial task. She often screws this job up, getting herself in bigger trouble. In the end, the petty crook doesn't want to hurt anyone, she just wants to get ahead in life.

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / THREATEN OR SCARE 2

- **Bad Luck is Contagious:** Once per scene, when the Petty Crook is present, the MC can make a hard move as an intrusion.
- Hit with a knucklebuster, a crowbar, or a pistol (*hurt-1* or *damaged-1*)
- Offer something valuable to save her skin (*I'm-listening-2*)
- Beg for her life, sharing her life story

SMUGGLER ★★

Smugglers make their money running contraband or stolen goods through borders and law enforcement undetected. Unsavory and sly, they have an ever-growing repertoire of shell game tricks that ensure they are never caught or incriminated.

BRIBE 4 / HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / THREATEN 5

- **Sneaky Bastard:** When the Smuggler enters the scene, give her *sneaky-2*. If the Smuggler loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- **(optional) Fleet:** The Smuggler commands a smuggling vehicle (use Getaway Vehicle) and can call an additional vehicle as a hard move.
- Open a crate and pull out an over-the-top firearm, proceed to use it (*pumped-full-of-led-4*)
- Use the environment to block and delay pursuers (*blocked-3 or outrun*)
- Even if captured, make her contraband arrive at its destination nonetheless (**Deny them Something They Want**)
- Get away (**Deny them Something They Want**)

STREET GANG ★★

The rough parts of town are overrun by street gangs. More than just disturbers of peace and not quite on par with organized crime, these gangs are nonetheless armed and dangerous, especially when an unwanted visitor wanders off into their turf or when they face a threat to their control over their turf.

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / RALLY 3 / THREATEN 2

- **Collective:** This collective has a several members and a size factor of 2.
- **Home Turf:** When the Street Gang enters the scene in its home turf or when it enters its home turf, give it *home-advantage-1*. If the Street Gang loses this status and are in their home turf, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.
- **Rally the Locals:** When the Street Gang is on its own turf and the *rally* spectrum is maxed out, increase its size factor by one (to a maximum of 3).
- When on their home turf, rally the local population to join them (*rally-2*)
- Threaten someone with violence (*threatened-2*) or make real on their threats (*broken-bones-3* or *gunshot-3*)
- Mob an intruder or victim

LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY

BEAT COPS / SECURITY GUARDS ★

This Danger represents a small standard unit within a larger law enforcement or private security force, often serving in the lowest ranks of the organization and performing routine tasks such as patrolling and tackling threats on the field.

CORRUPT 2 / HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / OVERRIDE AUTHORITY 1

- **Collective:** This collective has a handful of members and a size factor of 1.
- Physically subdue a target (*subdued-2*)
- Open fire using semi-automatic pistols or revolvers (*flesh-wound-2*)
- Call for backup (increase size factor by one)
- Close in on a target
- Order someone to leave the premises or "freeze!"

DETECTIVE / INVESTIGATOR ★★

The police detective or private investigator character is a staple of the noir genre. The detective may be working against the crew, helping the crew, or she may be a rival of the crew. Adjust the *corrupt* and *override-authority* spectrums of the detective according to how corruptible or how high-ranking this individual is, respectively.

CORRUPT 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / OVERRIDE AUTHORITY 3

- **Powers of Deduction:** When the Detective surveys the scene for the first time or as a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Detective knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- **On the Ball:** When the Detective enters the scene, give her *alert-1*.
- Put someone on the spot (tell the truth or take *pressured-2*)
- Shoot a suspect or a threat with a firearm (*gunshot-wound-3*)
- Cuff a suspect or tighten the handcuffs (*handcuffed-2*)
- Observe a scene quietly
- Find a piece of evidence
- When alone, call for backup



POLICE SQUAD CAR ★★

Police squad cars patrol the streets of the City and chase down criminals on wheels.

DECOMMISSION 3 / OUTRUN 4

- **Vehicle:** When the police officers driving the Police Squad Car disembark, create a new Danger: Beat Cops. This happens automatically when *decommission* is maxed out, but Beat Cops take *hurt-1*.
- Block your escape (*blocked-3*)
- Fire while driving, using intermediate or deadly force (*bean-bag-bruise-2* or *pellet-wounds-3*)
- Ram with bullbar (*smashed-4*, but gives itself *damaged-1*)
- Catch up with a target in flight

SWAT TEAM / ELITE SECURITY ★★★

Law enforcement authorities and private security details keep units of highly-trained and well-equipped officers, capable of carrying out complex tactical operations such as assaulting fortified targets, extracting hostages or assets, securing control over a key position, and even assassinating a target.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Collective:** This collective has several members and a size factor of 2.
- **Body Armor:** When SWAT Team / Elite Security enter the scene, give them *armored-1*.
- **Stealthy:** When SWAT Team / Elite Security enters the scene, if it's sneaking, give it *stealthy-2*.
- Concentrate fire on a single target (*perforated-4*) or spread it across multiple targets (*flesh-wound-2*)
- Perform a tactical maneuver to gain the upper hand (give itself *tactical-advantage-2*, remove up to two tiers of positive tactical statuses from nearby targets, or burn up to two tags representing tactical advantages)
- Storm a location, preferably rappelling through a glass ceiling or throwing flash bombs or smoke grenades (give everyone else a temporary *surprised-2*, *blinded-2*, or *dazzled-2*)
- Arrive by helicopter, ram down a barrier, or find another way in

SECURITY SYSTEM ★★

From a simple safe to the complex hi-tech system of a corporate facility, intrusion countermeasures of all kinds are installed on the premises or storage facilities to protect or hide valuable possessions. This Danger profile represents a standard home or office security system or a common safe; you can adjust its challenge level by adjusting its alarm spectrum or changing the repercussion of setting off the alarm. For example, you could add a sleeping gas trap or replace Beat Cops / Security Guards with SWAT Team / Elite Security, or even a legendary adversary.

Note that players do not know when the *alarm* spectrum would max out and when the alarm would go off; they see the statuses but they don't know the maximum. They can try to **Investigate** to estimate the internal threat level of the system if they have the skills or abilities needed to do so.

ALARM 3 / OVERRIDE 4

- **Red Alert:** When *alarm* is maxed out, create a new Danger: Beat Cops / Security Guards and give *locked-in/out-5* to unauthorized personnel in the perimeter.
- Increase its internal threat level (give itself *threat-1* on the *alarm* spectrum)
- Make anyone trying to override it *nervous-2* or give them *sweaty-hands-2*
- Present another security countermeasure that must be overcome, such as magnetic lock, keypad, window alarm, motion detector, safe mechanism, etc.

LOCATIONS & HAZARDS

DERELICT BUILDING ★

Abandoned derelict structures are a common sight in the City. Sometimes they are stripped bare of their contents; other times, they still contain the furniture they once did, but now it's dilapidated and rotting. Hobos, rejects, addicts, and cultists love hanging out in these forsaken places, as do many Rifts who wish for a respite from the mainstream and the Mist.

Only physical statuses that affect a large area or that target a weak point in the Derelict Building count against its *collapse* spectrum. The MC can also rule that appropriate statuses given with **Hit With All You've Got** affect the building if the attacker does not choose to control the collateral damage or chooses to inflict collateral damage.

COLLAPSE 5

- **Collapse:** When the *collapse* spectrum is maxed out, the building collapses and everyone inside take *buried-by-debris-5*.
- **Loose debris:** Whenever the Derelict Building takes a status on the *collapse* spectrum, debris falls from above (*bump-on-the-head-2* or *head-injury-3*) on everyone inside.
- Reveal a collapsed staircase, a hole in the middle of a second-floor room, an attic that can only be accessed by climbing a vine or a rickety drain, etc.

HOUSE FIRE ★★

Whether the result of an accident or of arson, a house fire can be devastating and is virtually unstoppable once it reaches a certain point.

Note that statuses on the *burning* spectrum can only be reduced by an effect that includes the entire house. Topical control of the fire has no effect on this Danger as a whole.

BURNING 6

- **On Fire:** When the House Fire enters the scene, give it *burning-2* on its *burning* spectrum. The House Fire can give itself *burning-1* as a soft move, unless its *burning* spectrum has no statuses on it, in which case it has been quenched.
- **Go Down in Flames:** When the *burning* spectrum is maxed out, the house collapses or explodes in a ball of fire. Everyone inside takes *burnt-alive-6*. Everyone in the immediate vicinity of the house takes *blast-4*.
- **(optional) Save Me!:** When house fire enters the scene, there are people trapped in the house (create a Danger: one or more Helpless City Resident).
- Burn the house or any one person in (give itself or someone else a *burning* status with a tier equal to the current tier on the *burning* spectrum)

TIME BOMB ★★★

This Danger describes a typical time-delayed explosive device. You can tweak this bomb by changing the tier of its *tick* status, changing the effect of the explosion, or making it easier or harder to defuse.

DEFUSE 5 / TICKING 4

- **KABOOM!:** When the Time Bomb's *ticking* spectrum is maxed out, the bomb explodes. Everyone and everything within a one mile radius takes *disintegrated-6*.
- Baffle anyone trying to defuse it with colorful wires (*wire-dilemma-2*)
- Display the time running out (*tick-1*)
- Stress out anyone standing near it (*nervous-2*)
- Tick away

CITYWIDE EPIDEMIC ★★★

When a deadly virus breaks out of a top-secret government facility or arrives in the city in the blood of a "patient-zero", an outbreak is inevitable. This Danger represents an aggressive and highly contagious disease that could potentially spread to the entire City, killing millions.

Note that statuses on the *spread* spectrum can only be reduced by an effect that affects the entire City. Topical control of the disease has no effect on this Danger as a whole.

SPREAD 6

- **Spreading:** When the Citywide Epidemic enters the story, give it *spreading-2* on its *spread* spectrum. When its *spread* spectrum has no statuses on it, it has been quarantined.
- **Too late:** When the Citywide Epidemic spectrum *spread* is maxed out, it is too late to stop the disease from spreading. The population of the City is decimated. Cut to a scene one month later and describe the devastating effect this had on the City.
- **Around the Clock:** At the end of downtime, all infected people and anyone who isn't quarantined take an *infected-1* status. The Citywide Epidemic increases the tier of the status on its *spread* spectrum by one.
- Worsen the condition of an infected person (*infected-3*)

JUNKYARD COMPACTOR ★★

This typical junkyard hydraulic compactor uses a conveyor belt and a heavy plate to flatten metallic debris – or your crewmates.

DECOMMISSION 4

- **Sturdy:** When the Junkyard Compactor takes a status representing raw physical damage, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- **Conveyor Belt:** When you get on the conveyor belt, the MC will give you a status depending on your location (*far-1*, *midway-2*, or *close-3*). As a soft move, the Junkyard Compactor can increase the tier of that status by one. You cannot Face Danger against this increment. If you move along the belt, the MC will reduce or increase the tier accordingly. If you get off the belt, remove the status.
- **Pancake:** When you hit tier 5 on the conveyor belt status, you take *pancake-6* (you can Face Danger).

MYTHOS POWER SETS

BEAST +★

BIG BAD WOLF · MINOTAUR · SHAPESHIFTER

- **Thick Hide, Wild Nature:** When a Beast takes a physical harm or subdual status, reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- **Acute Senses:** When a Beast enters the scene, give it *alert-2*.
- Claw, bite, or maul (*wounded-3*)



CREATURE OF DARKNESS +★★

NAGA · VAMPIRE · WENDIGO

- **Drain Life:** As a hard move, the Creature of Darkness imposes *drained-3*. For every tier of drained the target takes after applying its defenses, the Creature of Darkness removes one tier from a harmful status it has or gives itself a positive status with one tier.
- **(optional +★) A Dire Enemy:** When you attack a Creature of Darkness, you first take *drained-3* (with effects as above).

DEMIGOD OR GIANT +★★

HERCULES · GILGAMESH · PAUL BUNYAN

- **Invincible:** When a Demigod takes a physical harm or subdual status, reduce the tier of the status by 3.
- Punch with immense strength or hurl an object or weapon at someone (*broken-4*)

GHOST OR SPIRIT +★

ANCESTRAL SPIRITS · NYMPH · POLTERGEIST

- **Incorporeal:** A Ghost or Spirit cannot take physical harm or subdual statuses when it is incorporeal. Give its *hurt or subdue* spectrum a maximum of –. She cannot use any Danger moves that represent actions in the physical world (unless otherwise stated).
- **(optional) Materialize:** The Ghost or Spirit can become incorporeal or materialize as a hard move. When she becomes incorporeal, any statuses she had previously are kept and continue to affect her. When she materializes, she regains her original *hurt or subdue* maximum.
- **Imperceptible:** An incorporeal Ghost or Spirit can turn imperceptible or perceptible as a soft move. You cannot perceive the Ghost or Spirit with normal senses while she is imperceptible.

GOLEM OR ELEMENTAL +★

GOLEM OF PRAGUE · VOLCANO GOD · POSEIDON

- **Elemental Body:** When a Golem or Elemental takes a physical harm status, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- **Elemental Body, Part II:** When a Golem or Elemental takes a status from the element it is made of, the status becomes a positive status and does not add to its *hurt or subdue* spectrum.
- **(optional +★) Elemental Body, Part III:** When you attack a Golem or Elemental, you first take a tier-2 status related to the element it is made of.

HUNTER +★

ROBIN HOOD · ARTEMIS · MAASAI WARRIOR

- Hunter Instincts: When a Hunter enters the scene, give her *alert-3*.
- Can't Escape: When the hunter gives you a physical harm or subdual status, take an additional *crippled-2* or *trapped-2*.

MIND CONTROLLER +★

PERSON OF UNTOLD BEAUTY · PIED PIPER OF HAMLIN · POSSESSIVE SPIRIT

- **Impervious:** When a Mind Controller takes a status resembling her own form of mind control, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- Influence a person to do their bidding (*beguiled-3*, *hypnotized-3*, *possessed-3*, etc.)
- **(optional +★) Mind Reading:** As an MC intrusion, the MC can reduce the tier of the Mind Controller's influence status by one to have you truthfully answer a question. The Mind Controller now knows your answer.

LEADER +★

ROYALTY · FABLED MILITARY LEADER · FOLK HERO

- **Trained combatant:** Increase the tier of the mundane physical harm or subdual statuses caused by the Leader's moves by one.
- Rally the troops (remove up to two tiers of negative tactical or morale statuses from herself and others)
- Command someone to do as she bids (*compelled-3*)

MESSENGER OF THE LIGHT +★

ANGEL OR SAINT · FAIRY GODMOTHER · A WHITE MAGICIAN

- **Protection from Evil:** When a Messenger of the Light takes a status from a source that is inherently evil or dark, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- Bless or enchant someone to protect them from evil (*protected-2*)
- Banish the forces of evil or darkness (*banish-3*)

NATURE SPIRIT OR GOD +★

DRYAD · GAYA · KAMI

- Use the weather, flora, or fauna to harm or restrict someone (*entangled-in-vines-3*, *blown-away-3*, *stuck-in-quicksand-3*, *viciously-bitten-3*)
- Alter the weather, creating a story tag such as *lashing rain*, *fog*, *sunshine*, etc.
- Heal living beings (remove up to one tier of physical harm statuses)

SORCERER OR WITCH +★

BALOR OF THE EVIL EYE · EVIL WITCH OF THE WEST · MORGANA

- **Sorcery**: Once per scene, a Sorcerer or Witch can create three story tags as an intrusion. In addition, as a hard move, a Sorcerer or Witch can create one story tag. The story tag can describe means of protection, environmental effects, conjured allies, or abilities and qualities the Sorcerer or Witch can give herself.
- Attack with sorcery (give an appropriate status with a tier equal to the number of story tags participating or enhancing the attack)
- **(optional +★) Dark Magick:** To burn a story tag created by the Sorcerer or Witch, you must spend two points of Juice instead of one.
- **(optional −★) Hedge Magick:** The story tags created by the Sorcerer or Witch are temporary.

NECROMANCER +★★

BARON SAMEDI · HADES · WITCH OF ENDOR

- **Bodyguards:** When the Necromancer takes a status her bodyguards can protect her from, the bodyguards take the status instead.
- **Speak to the Dead:** As a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Necromancer knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- Raise the dead (create a new Danger: Undead, with a *hurt:3* spectrum, a size factor of 1, and the ability to inflict *slashed-3*)

SWIFT-FOOTED +★

THE HARE (AND THE TORTOISE) · MERCURY · MONKEY KING

- **Runner:** The Swift-Footed has an *outrun:5* spectrum.
- Slam into someone at full speed (*mild-concussion-3*)
- Snatch something out of someone's hand or reach (burn a tag that describes an item or **Deny Them Something They Want**)



THIEF +★

GOLDILOCKS · JACK AND THE BEANSTALK · PROMETHEUS

- **Stealthy:** When a Thief enters the scene, if she's sneaking, give her *stealthy-4*. If the Thief loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- Steal something undetected (burn a tag that describes an item or **Deny Them Something They Want**)

TRICKSTER +★

FAIRIES & GOBLINS · PUSS IN BOOTS · TRICKSTER GOD

- **Deceitful:** When you spend a Clue to ask a question about the Trickster, the MC can choose to give answers that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false (as in the 7-9 option of **Investigate**).
- Convince someone to take a course of action (*convinced-3*)
- Take an illusory or false appearance (give itself a story tag)

WARRIOR +★

KNIGHT OF THE ROUND TABLE · DAVID & GOLIATH · SAMURAI

- **Trained combatant:** Increase the tier of the mundane physical harm or subdual statuses caused by the Warrior's moves by one.
- **Unbeatable:** When a Warrior enters the scene, give her three defensive story tags such as *armor*, *shield*, *helmet*, *parry*, *dodge*, *block*, *slide*, *leap*, etc.
- **Legendary Swordsmanship:** When you attack a Warrior, you first take a tier-2 status related to her fighting skills. (**Trained Combatant** does not apply to this)

WEAPON BEARER (RELIC) +★★

THUNDERBOLT OF ZEUS · THE FLAMING SWORD · SPEAR OF DESTINY

- **It Blocks By Itself:** When a Weapon Bearer enters the scene, give her *defensive-maneuvers-3*. It applies to any attack her Relic can block. If she loses this status, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.
- Smite someone with her weapon (an appropriate tier-4 status)
- Protect one more person or object with her weapon (*defensive-maneuvers-3*)

WINGED CREATURE +★

FLYING MONKEYS · PEGASUS · QUETZALCOATL

- **Take Flight:** A Winged Creature either has a permanent *wings* story tag or it can give itself *wings* at any point and discard the tag at will.
- Swoop down and slash with talons or beak (*slashed-3*)
- Fly away and avoid capture (**Deny Them Something They Want**)

RIFTS & OTHER MYTHICAL DANGERS

DOWNTOWN

ALICE (ALICE IN WONDERLAND) ★★★★★

(Read the Mist-shrouded description of this character on page 48)

Alice is the strongest reality-bender in the City. Unfortunately for everyone else, she is also a total airhead and has absolutely no control over her powers – nor is she seeking to gain any. No-one really knows what the hell is going on with this crazy drifter or where she came from, although some of the more knowledgeable beings in the City speculate that she emerged from the Wishing Well in a nearby village. It's unclear whether she is an Avatar, an extremely powerful Rift, or something else. Avatars steer well away from her, fearful of any strange and unexpected mystical consequences. Few know this, but even the Gatekeepers are freaked out by what she can do and her resistance to their methods.

ALTER – / HURT OR SUBDUE –

- **Pandemonium:** When Alice experiences an altered state of consciousness, everything in her line of sight takes *bedlam-5* ignoring **Face Danger** or other defenses. Logic, proportion, and the laws of physics evaporate. Things and people became totally different things and people. When Alice returns to a normal state of consciousness everything returns to normal. The *bedlam-5* status changes to *dormant-bedlam-5*. The Pandemonium is triggered if anyone tries to attack or alter Alice in any way.
- **Subsequent Pandemonium:** When you hit tier 6 on a pandemonium status, pick one theme at random (roll a dice or draw one out without seeing the cards). You replace that theme. The tier-6 status changes to *dormant-bedlam-5*.
- **Utter State of Chaos:** When you **Stop. Holding. Back.** to fight Alice's powers, you must make a Significant sacrifice to stabilize a small area in the pandemonium, a No-Return sacrifice to remove the pandemonium status from someone, and the Ultimate sacrifice to end the pandemonium without anyone taking any statuses.
- **Redefined Essence:** When you use reality-bending to alter the pandemonium statuses, the status you are trying to remove also applies to your attempt.

THE "REEDS" (NATURE BOY) ★★★

(Read the Mist-shrouded description of this location on page 46)

"The Reeds" is home to the wisest individual in the City, a nameless boy living in an Enclave that appears to be a riverbank. Wearing a pair of torn linen shorts, this boy basks in the sun, pretends to be fishing, and takes short swims now and then. Sometimes he goes out to tour the City but he always comes back to his Enclave.

The keeper of the gate to the Enclave is a blind sax player named Zebedee Jackson. He has been granted the wisdom to help others and if he can't, see if they are worthy of the boy's advice.

HARM ZEBEDEE 1 HARM THE BOY 1

- **Zebedee:** When Zebedee asks you a question, you must answer truthfully or take *afraid-to-know-5*. If you're afraid to know, Zebedee will not take you to the kid.
- **Just To Love:** When you take an action driven by malice or self-interest in "the Reeds", you hear an old jazz tune playing in your head. You must first **Face Danger** against *overwhelmed-by-emotion-5*.
- **The Greatest Thing You'll Ever Learn:** For every power tag you have that represents true love, Nature Boy will answer one question. You receive one Clue, but the MC must answer it with a straight answer. You cannot use the same tag with this move ever again. Unless you show true love, the boy can't answer your questions, even if you force him.

RACHEL DELANEY (RAPUNZEL) ★★

In a secure penthouse downtown, Rachel Delaney is being held against her will by a powerful individual. All her needs are catered for but she cannot leave. Her captors simply feel she is too valuable and they might be right. Rachel's hair is very special: it transports people magically from one place to another. Rachel, for her part, didn't ask for this. She tried to escape, but to no avail. She's escaped before but her captors found her and put her back where she is. With every passing day, she is growing more and more bitter.

HURT OR SUBDUE 2

- **Transported:** When you pull on a piece of one of Rachel's hairs, you are transported to where the rest of that hair is (whether it is attached to Rachel's head or not). The entire hair then crumbles to dust.
- Give someone one of her intact hairs (*Rachel's hair*, temporary)
- Beg or manipulate someone to help her escape (*pity-3*)
- Shoot someone with a concealed handgun (*shot-in-the-gut-4*)
- Call security (create a Danger: SWAT Team / Elite Security)

THE BLUE-COLLAR RESIDENTIAL

JACQUELINE BROWN (JACK AND THE BEANSTALK) ★★★

(Read a description of this character on page 54)

CATCH 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE 2

- Stealthy: When Jacqueline Brown enters the scene, if she's sneaking, give her *stealthy-2*. If she loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- Green-thumbed: As a soft move, Jacqueline Brown can grow a *giant beanstalk* from the earth where she stands or destroy one with a touch. Once per scene, she can do so as an MC intrusion. Anyone and anything supported by the beanstalk when she destroys it starts falling and must Take the Risk and/or Face Danger.
- Giant Slayer: Increase the tier of any physical harm statuses that Jacqueline Brown causes to oversized human-like creatures by one.
- Shoot someone with a pistol she's packing (*gunshot-3*)



SAMUEL VALTIERRA (BARON SAMEDI) ★★★★★

(Read a description of this character on page 53)

- Samuel Valtierra's abilities can be represented by the Crime Lord Danger combined with the Necromancer Mythos Power Set. However, instead of Undead, Valtierra calls forth his **Zombies**, living gang members who betrayed him and whom he brought back from the dead as his servants. They are a Danger with a *hurt:5* spectrum, a size factor of 1, and the ability to inflict a *ferocious-bite-3*. In addition, Valtierra has the ability to prevent and even reverse a person's death, as described in the move below; this ability has placed him in direct conflict with the Avatar of Hades, Anatoly Vidales (see page 454).
- **Nobody dies unless I say so:** Valtierra can bring a person back to life. To do so, he must touch a body that has died up to three days ago. The revived person rises completely healed, although illnesses and chronic conditions may remain. The MC rules what statuses the revived person retains. Valtierra can also choose to revive a person as a mindless zombie under his control, giving them *zombie-5*.

THE OLD QUARTER

MAGIC SWORD (FLAMING SWORD OF EDEN) ★★★★

This magical sword has been placed by the Museum Watch (the *ad hoc* group of vigilantes protecting the museum, mentioned on page 58) to protect the treasures in the museum from thieves, burglars, and raiders. While it cannot be destroyed, it can run out of magical energy if it exerts itself while fighting a powerful interloper. The sword is a guardian, not a killer; unless absolutely necessary, it will not use deadly force. Instead, it will try to render interlopers unconscious so the Museum Watch can drag them out.

EXHAUST 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE – / MYSTICALLY BIND 5

- **Resistant to Magic:** As long as the Flaming Sword is not completely exhausted, it cannot take any statuses on its *mystically-bind* spectrum.
- **Mystical Object:** When the *mystically-bind* spectrum is maxed out, the sword obeys the orders of whoever bound it.
- **Mystical Sense:** The sword can sense beings and mystical energies around it. When it enters the scene, give it *mystically-aware-4*. If it loses this status the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it, but the sword takes *exhausted-1*. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- Strike with its flaming blade (*burning-injury-3*)
- Impale an interloper (*burning-sword-through-the-heart-6*, but the sword takes *exhausted-3*)
- Blast the area around it with mystical fire, damaging only its target(s) (*holy-burns-5*, but the sword takes *exhausted-2*)
- Magically alert the Museum Watch (create a Danger: Heist Team)
- Hover in the corridors of the museum, searching for interlopers
- Fly at maximum velocity at a target

PAUL DUMONT / "THE GARGOYLE" (QUASIMODO) ★★★

(Read the Mist-shrouded description of this character on page 61)

When Paul Dumont found the diary of the previous "cursed" Dumont family members, he realized what his forebears discovered before him: the "cursed" were created to fight corruption, especially that of the "blessed" family members. The curse had found a way of balancing itself out – and he was it. At nights, Paul prowls the rooftops as the famous vigilante "the Gargoyle", a name he inherited from the previous "cursed" members of his family.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Scandalous:** When the Gargoyle touches the ground on the street, a scandal immediately ensues: either someone sees him and a mob soon gathers around to capture him (create a Danger: Mob) or the MC can **Make Something Horrible Happen**.
- **Stoneskin:** When a the Gargoyle takes a physical harm status, reduce the tier of the status by 3.
- **Gear:** When the Gargoyle enters the scene, give him a *hoodie*, a *grappling gun*, and a *glider*. If any of these tags is removed, the MC can renew one as a hard move if the Gargoyle can reasonably reclaim it.
- Climb up a building, take cover, and prepare to swoop (give himself *superior-position-3*)
- Slash with claws of stone (*gash-3*), overpower with martial arts (*staggered-3*), or throw a bola at someone (*entangled-3*)
- Creep in the shadows

THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE

SPIDER (SPIDER GRANDMOTHER) ★★★

(Read the description of this character on page 67)

HURT OR SUBDUE 5

- **Spider Senses:** When Spider enters the scene, give him *alert-3*.
- **Tough Son of a Gun:** When Spider takes a physical harm or subdual status, reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- **Dreamcatcher:** For every tier of *restrained* Spider gives a target, he can burn one of its Mythos power tags (for a PC) or reduce one of its legendary move effects by one (for a Danger).
- **Decommission:** As a soft move, Spider can give a *restrained-5* target an additional *no-Mythos-powers-5* status, against which the target cannot **Face Danger**.
- **Net Trap Landmine:** Once per scene, when you try to attack Spider, you first take a *restrained-5*.
- Restrain a target using a ziplock (*ziplock-2*) or a fire a net from his shotgun (*tied-up-4*)
- Step in silently, surveying the surrounding
- Warn someone to come quietly, or else



LILY CHOW (PRINCE OF IRON HANS) ★★★★

(Read the Mist-shrouded description of this character on page 66)

Lily Chow is able to summon (or conjure) one of the most powerful beings in the City to her aid – but she can't keep it up for long. Iron Hans is a green giant of pure magical energy, invulnerable for the most part and capable of virtually any magical feat. While he seems to be a powerful and wise individual, Iron Hans is entirely committed to Lily and her voyage of exploration in the City. If she asks him a question, he advises her, but mostly he just watches over her. If Lily evolves during the series, you can increase her spectrums or improve her martial arts move, or remove the *flicker* status from some of Hans' moves.

BANISH HANS 5 / HURT OR SUBDUE HANS – / HURT OR SUBDUE LILY 2

- **Cheeky Brat:** When Lily Chow enters the scene, give her *indignant-3*. If she loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- **Gutter Out:** When the *banish Hans* spectrum is maxed out, Iron Hans disappears. Lily Chow cannot summon him again this scene.
- **Energy Hulk**: Every time Iron Hans takes a physical harm status, he ignores it and Lily takes a *flicker-1* status on the *banish Hans* spectrum. As a soft move (or an MC intrusion if Lily is in danger), Iron Hans can move over and contain up to a handful of people inside him. Anyone inside Iron Hans cannot take any physical harm or subdual statuses.
- **Magician**: Once per scene, Iron Hans can create three story tags as an intrusion. As a hard move, he can create one story tag. After either action, Lily takes a *flicker-1* status on the *banish Hans* spectrum. The story tags can describe means of protection, environmental effects, conjured allies, or abilities and qualities Iron Hans can give himself or Lily.
- **Stop. Holding. Back:** Lily can have Hans grow to protect several people from one physical harm status (size factor 2) or concentrate all his energy on a fatal blow by burning two protective tags (or otherwise reducing a target's defenses by 2) and then imposing *cut-in-half-6*. Iron Hans vanishes and Lily Chow can't summon him again until the end of the next downtime.
- Command Iron Hans to attack, with one of the following: cleave with a magical energy axe (*gaping-gash-5*) or hit with a punch, a kick, or the butt of the axe handle (*barely-standing-4*). Lily takes a *flicker-1* status on the *banish Hans* spectrum.
- Use basic martial arts to protect herself (give herself *defensive-stance-1* and give someone *prone-2*, temporary, or *dizzy-2*)
- Threaten someone not to mess with her
- Behave like a brat and talk back indignantly

ELSEWHERE

CHINTHE STATUES (CHINTHE) ★★★

(Read the Mist-shrouded description of this character on page 69)

The Chinthe statues are Relics that have been heirlooms of the Wong family for three generations. At any sign of an intruder or a threat to the Wongs' store, these statues come to life as guardian lions and either restrain or kill the intruder, as their master commands. Since the living Chinthe are creatures conjured from beyond the Mist, some sorcerers are able to revert them back to stone form using the right spells; however, as celestial guardians, these statues are immune to dark magic. This Danger profile represents a single statue.

DAMAGE 4 / REVERT 4

- **Guardian Lions:** When you **Investigate** or **Sneak Around** near the Chinthe, if you score 7-9, the MC can choose to awaken the Chinthe instead of choosing from the move list. When the Chinthe are awake, their master knows about it and can see and hear through their eyes and ears until they return to their statute state.
- **Celestial Beings:** When a Chinthe takes a physical harm or subdual status, reduce the tier of the status by 2. When a Chinthe takes a dark magic status, ignore the status.
- Leap on a single target, holding it down (*held-down-3*)
- Bite or slash someone with their golden claws (*slash-3*)
- Banish otherworldly creatures and/or dispel dark magic (*banish-5* or burn five tags describing such creatures)
- Awaken at the first sign of an intruder

GATEKEEPER AGENTS ★★★

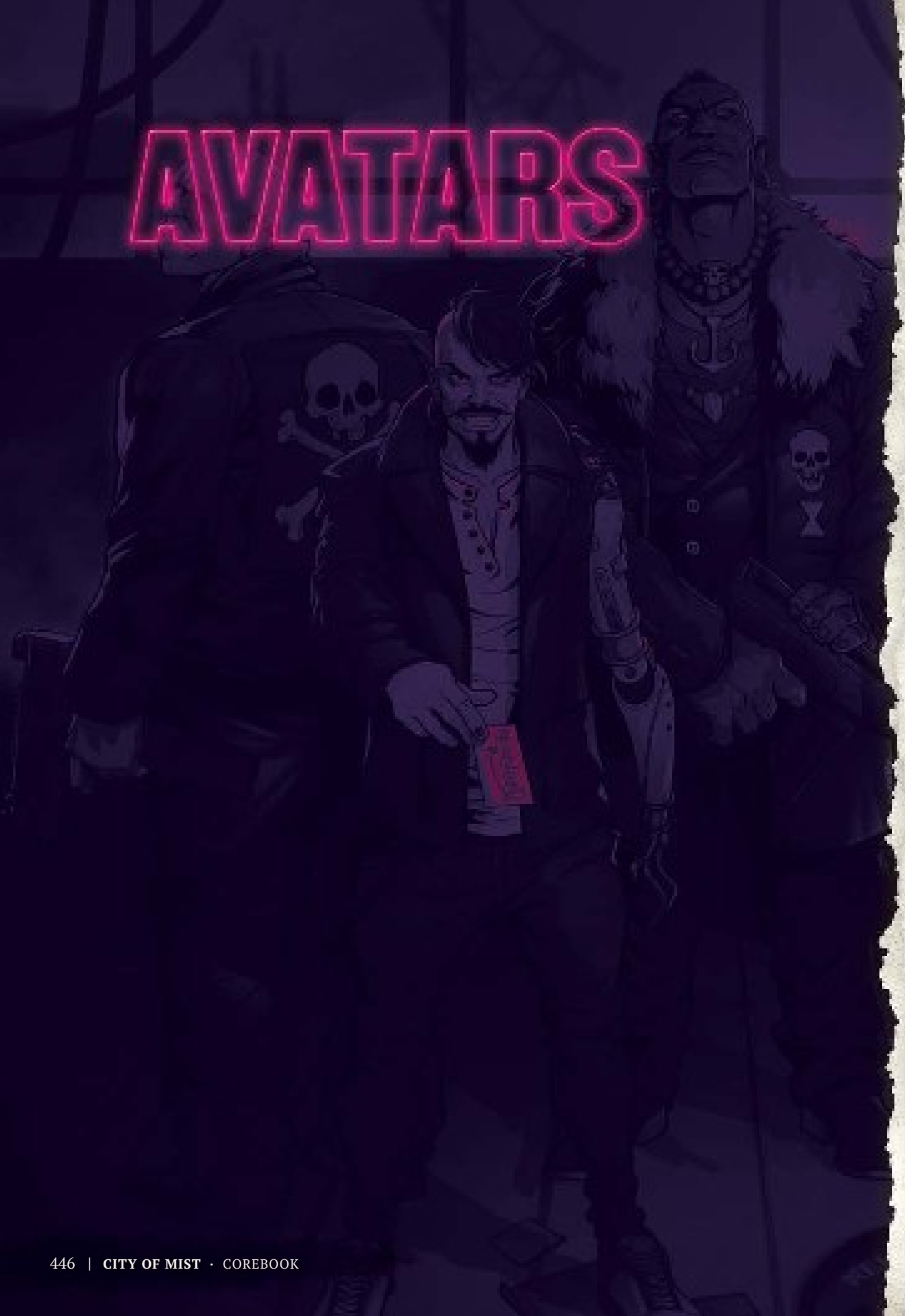
Out of the many different units at the disposal of the Gatekeepers, the ones most commonly seen in active duty are the field agents units. Besides their extensive mundane training, Gatekeeper agents are trained in the art of *shrouding*, the manipulation of the Mist.

Gatekeepers sometimes take a mundane guise created by the Mist. You should narrate this false identity as perfectly normal and unsuspicious characters. When you want to give the players a chance to expose the Gatekeepers, you can drop faint hints about the false identities. Use the **Creepy Feeling** move when the lead characters are already suspecting something and decide to **Investigate**; it reflects the difficulty of obtaining concrete information about the Gatekeepers' cover. When you reveal **Creepy Feeling** to the players, use the name of the Gatekeeprs' false identities (instead of "Gatekeeper Agents") to avoid automatically exposing the Gatekeepers.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Collective:** This collective has a handful of members and a size factor of 1.
- **Creepy Feeling:** Whenever you try to **Investigate** to learn more about [false identity], you get a strange feeling that he / she is impenetrable. [False identity] takes *mysterious-2*. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- **Explosive Shrouding Ward:** Once per scene, as an intrusion, everyone around the Gatekeepers takes *oblivious-5*. At their option, the Gatekeepers may flee the scene.
- **Defensive Shrouding**: Once per scene, when you attack Gatekeeper Agents with Mythos powers, they manipulate the Mist to choke out your powers. The MC first burns two power tags related to your attack.
- Shroud someone so they can't remember (*vague-memories-3*)
- Shroud someone's Mythos, so they lose their powers (burn two Mythos power tags or reduce a Danger's move effect by two)
- Fire a standard-issue pistol (*gunshot-3*) or use basic martial arts (*hold-down-2* or *bruise-2*)
- Show up out of nowhere
- Tell everyone how they soon won't remember all this




AVATARS

As explained under The Mythoi, Their Avatars, And Their Operations (page 431), Avatars rule the City. From their ivory towers hidden deep in the Mist, each of them runs a many-branched operation centered on one purpose alone: to manifest the story of their Mythos on a City-wide scale. These operations branch out further and further until they affect many different individuals and groups, one of whom will come in contact with the lead characters. This sparks off the investigation which may end with the exposure of the Avatar's operation and an inevitable clash of mythical forces.

For the MC, an Avatar is the subject matter of a story arc, similar to a major villain in a TV series or comic book. Like any threat that is at the core of a story arc, an Avatar has **a large-scale agenda**, **a modus operandi**, **an endgame**, and **an operation** mapped on an Operation Iceberg (see Story Arcs, page 390).

You can use the details of an Avatar and her operation to add new burning questions, story elements, plot ideas, and style guides to your series, as explained under Series Resources (page 387). When writing the next case in the story arc and when improvising during a session, the Avatar's Operation Iceberg indicates what operational activities take place in the that the crew may uncover and how they are connected.

A story arc surrounding the operation of an Avatar can be quite involved, encompassing the ups-and-downs of the crew's investigation and possible conflicts with the Avatar's minions. It could take quite a few sessions before the crew unravels the source of all the crimes, wrongdoings, and problems in this story arc: the Avatar herself. When your group finally comes face-to-face with the Avatar, the consequences can be devastating: to the crew, to the Avatar, and to the City.

THE ROLE OF AN AVATAR IN THE SERIES

The most obvious role an Avatar can play in a story arc is the role of an adversary, someone evil who is responsible for countless wrongs and must be stopped at any cost, or someone who directly opposes the crew's agenda. However, Avatars are never just overpowered challenges; they are a mirror of what could become of the lead characters if they allow themselves to be taken over by their Mythoi. While sometimes their actions can certainly be classified as evil, Avatars only ever act in the best interest of their Mythos, just as the lead characters often do. Most of the time, they act in the best interest of the City as they see it through they eyes of their Mythos. Therefore, like all others threats in *City of Mist*, an Avatar and those working in her operation should have identifiable motives that often put the lead characters in a dilemma, possibly triggering their Mysteries and Identities.

While some Avatars are more clearly wrongdoers or enemies (even if humanly so), other Avatars can play a more complicated role in the series. Avatars can use their operations to help the crew, becoming a hidden ally. This is especially true when the crew is digging into the operation of a rival Avatar. Someone in an Avatar's operation may reach out to the crew and hire them to do a job. An Avatar and her minions could try to manipulate the crew into doing something for them, and so on.

An Avatar's position towards the crew need not be fixed. Each branch of her operation could have a different approach to the crew: one branch may wish to exterminate the crew while another may wish to recruit the crew members to their ranks. As the investigation goes further into the Avatar's operation, the crew discovers new aspects of the operation that may change how they feel about working with that Avatar. The crew may even discover that their closest allies and their worst enemies are simply different aspects of the same Avatar.

AGENDA AS THE STORY ARC OVERARCHING THEME

Just like player character Avatars, the MC's Avatars are driven to fulfil their Mythos' agenda on a larger-than-life scale, affecting the entire City. An Avatar may wish to teach everyone a lesson, help everyone fulfil a specific desire or a goal, or force everyone to experience a specific emotion. The lesson, desire, or emotion that lies at the heart of an Avatar gives the story arc its flavor and guides your cinematic considerations as the MC throughout the season.

The Avatar's agenda dictates the overarching theme of the story arc: the Avatar of the Fisher King dictates a story arc about pain and suffering, the Avatar of Hades dictates a story arc about debt, death, and the afterlife; the Avatar of Peter Pan dictates a story arc about eternal youth and freedom from care; and so on.

CONNECTING THE AVATAR TO THE CREW

When you decide to use a specific Avatar in a story arc, her Agenda should interact with the series concept. Ask yourself:

? **HOW DOES THIS AVATAR TIE INTO THE SERIES CONCEPT AND CREW THEME(S)?**

If your series is about a crew of vigilantes, then perhaps you should emphasize the criminal aspect of the Avatar's operation. If your series is about a group of insurance investigators, maybe the Avatar is the mysterious owner of their company or, conversely, an Avatar related to unpredictability and mayhem that is the potential source of the company's demise. If your series revolves around the personal drama within the crew, perhaps an Avatar who aspires to evoke powerful emotions is most fitting.

Furthermore, an Avatar should have some connection to each of the lead characters. Ask yourself:

? **HOW DOES THIS AVATAR RELATE TO THE PLAYER CHARACTERS' THEME(S)?**

The nature of an Avatar's relation to each player character could vary. One character may only be affected by one branch of the Avatar's operation, while another could be of personal interest to the Avatar. The lesson, desire, or emotion the Avatar symbolizes could play a role in one character's Mythos, while for another character it is her Logos themes that are more affected, for example, the object of her Defining Relationship may be caught in the clutches of the Avatar's operation, etc.

Do not try to plan in advance how the Avatar will interact with the crew and with each player character and what the final outcome will be. Instead, use the answers to the questions above to help you create additional story elements and plot ideas that will engage the players.

UNREACHABLE, UNFATHOMABLE, INDESTRUCTIBLE

Avatars are more than major threats in a story arc; they are the closest beings in *City of Mist* to the Mythoi themselves. There are a number of guidelines to consider when incorporating an Avatar into the series:

KEEP YOUR AVATAR A MYSTERY FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

Avatars are buried deep at the bottom of the Operation Iceberg. When an Avatar is revealed, all is revealed, so the uncovering of an Avatar should be a very slow process that builds up towards the end of the story arc. Try to avoid even mentioning the Avatar before the crew is at least half-way down the iceberg. Then gradually and sporadically drop thin hints and insinuations that there is a common thread behind all the cases the crew is solving and perhaps a single guiding hand. When the crew defeats someone in the Avatar's operation, let them wonder if that is the bottom of the iceberg; if they assume so, don't contradict them – let them be surprised later. Remember that an Avatar is hidden in the Mist. Operatives on the field most likely don't know or don't remember who they are really working for, least of all her real name. Everyone else has no idea the Avatar exists (barring the other Avatars, the Gatekeepers, and perhaps the strongest and most influential of Legendaries in the City).

MAKE YOUR AVATAR WORTHY OF THE TITLE

Avatars are barely human anymore; they are their Mythos incarnate, virtually gods. In many ways, they are superior to all other Rifts in the City: they are more aware, wiser, and more influential and powerful. Assume that your Avatar is always ten steps ahead of the crew: if she has become aware of them, she already has several plans how to use them to further her agenda. If the crew ever becomes an actual nuisance or even a threat to an Avatar, give them a run for their money. The Avatar will make their life so miserable that they wished they never got involved or she will manipulate their lives so masterfully that they would not realize they are playing into her hands before it's too late.

If the crew ever comes face-to-face with an Avatar, they cannot walk away unscathed or unchanged. They have met with a force of nature and this force always wants something from them. They can resist, they can succumb, they can come to an agreement, but they cannot escape the consequences of meddling with such a godlike entity. Make sure that such an encounter is well-remembered: work out the details of what the Avatar will do to the lead characters in advance and create the required plot ideas, Dangers, custom moves, etc.

In Mack the MC's game, the crew was finally invited to meet the Avatar of Peter Pan face-to-face after they exposed his existence and influence over the City. They want to find a way to enter Neverland, where one of the crew's allies is being held against his will (or so they think). Mack the MC considers what might happen to anyone meeting such a mythical force in person. He wants to play it out as a battle of wills, with the Avatar trying to convince the crew members to abandon their obligations and come to Neverland with him. Mack the MC therefore gives Peter Pan a move that can cause *yearning-for-Neverland-4*; at tier 6, the affected character leaves for Neverland and triggers the following custom move:

When you go to Neverland, replace one of your Logos theme with a nascent Personality theme titled "Carefree". When you come back from Neverland, keep "Carefree" or replace it as you would a normal Logos theme.

Mack the MC plans to reveal the custom move as soon as the encounter begins, to represent the character's understanding that Peter Pan's intention is to coax them to abandon their responsibilities. Mack hopes this will make the crew's decision to go to Neverland more interesting, and at any rate, no-one is likely to leave the encounter with the Avatar unchanged.

TREAT YOUR AVATAR AS A PLOT DEVICE, NOT A GAME CHALLENGE

Avatars are not ordinary game challenges – they are the soul of a story arc. An Avatar cannot be destroyed in battle without the special means mentioned below. First, Avatars are extremely powerful; their physical manifestations are the worst Dangers there are, capable of levelling entire City blocks and sustaining unimaginable amounts of damage or avoiding it all together. Second, while the physical manifestation of an Avatar may be represented as a Danger and can be defeated and destroyed, all well-founded Avatars have found one way or another to reform their physical manifestation, given time. If the crew thinks destroying the physical form of an Avatar is a solution to their problem, they will find it not only immensely difficult and costly but also quite futile.

To overcome an Avatar, the crew must do more than dish out tremendous amounts of punishment; they must understand the Avatar, her story, her origin, and then use this understanding to get what they want from her or orchestrate her demise. Such an understanding of the Avatar can involve an **origin investigation**, a series of cases that delve into the history of the Avatar and her motives. The crew may uncover the Avatar's **Secret Identity**, the last thing that she had to sacrifice to become an Avatar but which may still bear some importance to her and may cause her to forsake Avatarhood, if played right (see Becoming an Avatar, page 306).

Alternatively, the crew may find another Rift (perhaps even a Relic, a Familiar, or an Enclave) which is related to the Mythos of the Avatar and is the key to her undoing. All of the Avatar's secrets may be guarded by powerful beings: Rifts of part of her Mythos, the Avatar's strongest servants, or even other Avatars. The crew must answer many questions and sacrifice a great deal before they have a chance of influencing or threatening an Avatar.

CREATING AN AVATAR

To use an Avatar in a story arc, you will need to create the Avatar's Operation Iceberg: a schematic detailing the layout of the Avatar's operation and the details of each component in it. The steps below explain this process.

Most threats in *City of Mist* tend to originate from an Avatar or at least are backed by one. However, you may wish to create an operation run by a threat that isn't an Avatar such as a less powerful Rift or even a Sleeper. The process given below can be applied to any such threat that runs an operation, no matter her personal level of awareness or the size of her operation.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH AGENDA AND ENDGAME

An Operation Iceberg is based on the Avatar's **agenda** and planned **endgame**. A non-player Avatar's agenda and endgame are established in the same way as for a player character Avatar. In brief, you refine the core lesson, emotion, or desire that lies at the heart of the Avatar's Mythos and then decide how the Avatar plans to realize this lesson, emotion, or desire in the City in the biggest way possible.

This is also a good time to establish the Avatar's history as well as her Secret Identity: the last speck of humanity remaining in her, which may be instrumental to her downfall. For the full explanation on how to create an Avatar concept, see Becoming an Avatar (page 306).

Mack the MC is working on the Avatar of Peter Pan. He considers the Mythos of Peter Pan and decides that it is concerned with being an eternal child and freeing people from 'adult' obligations and commitments. The Avatar's endgame is to turn the City into one big Neverland, where no-one is committed to anything and everyone is free to do as they please.

STEP 2: ESTABLISH MODUS OPERANDI

An Avatar's modus operandi (method or mode of operation) is the practical way in which she promotes her agenda and plans to achieve her endgame in the City. Ask yourself:

? WHAT ACTIONS DOES THE AVATAR'S OPERATION TAKE TO TURN HER AGENDA INTO REALITY?

An Avatar's modus operandi always requires tangible actions that often involve criminal or subversive activity or create problems for the residents of the City. An Avatar's operation may focus on a single main activity or spread across multiple different activities, which may be separate or intertwined.

Mack the MC considers how the Avatar of Peter Pan can realize his plans for the City. He decides that Peter Pan has a few Enclaves in town that serve as "Neverlands" and that Peter Pan is luring people into them, probably starting with children and irresponsible adults.

But Mack doesn't want it all to be about spiriting children away; he wants to add a real-world dimension to this Avatar's work. He decides that Peter Pan can't keep everyone in those Enclaves; instead, he uses "Neverlands" to train a guerilla army of Lost Boys that undermines the 'adult' way of life in the City by sabotaging institutions and infrastructure. Mack decides that the Avatar even has a division responsible for propaganda, calling people to let go of their inhibitions through popular chains of game stores, extreme sports clubs, etc.

STEP 3: PLOT OUT THE OPERATION ICEBERG

First, consider the **branches** of the Avatar's operation based on her modus operandi. Some new Avatars or threats of a smaller scale have only one branch: they only have one way of promoting their agenda and they focus on it completely. Other Avatars lead many-pronged operations that promote their agenda on multiple fronts. Each such aspect of the operation is then a separate branch responsible for its own activity. Branches may intertwine: one division of the operation could be helping another by supplying it with a resource or protecting it. Branches may also have sub-branches, each responsible for a more specific activity that is a part of the greater branch's work.

> Mack the MC sees three branches for Peter Pan's operation: the "Neverlands" training Enclaves, the Lost Boys guerrilla army, and the recreational branch. He decides the recreational branch brings people to the "Neverlands", which in turn increase the ranks of the Lost Boys. Under the "Neverlands" branch, each separate facility is a sub-branch of its own, with its own leader, training methods, etc.

Next, populate each branch with **characters**, **groups**, and **locations**. A standard Avatar's operation has five Depths: Sleeper, Touched, Borderliner, Legendary, and Avatar. (You can create lighter operations that include fewer Depths, for shorter series, or experiment with complex conspiracies that have more than five Depths).

- Usually, a **character** or a **group** on the Operation Iceberg...
  - » is responsible for the part of the operation that is above it on the same branch;
  - » reports to the character or location that is directly below it on the same branch; and
  - » is known (at least in her function in the operation) only to those directly above her or anyone below her, on the same branch.
- Usually, a **location** on the Operation Iceberg is the place of a specific activity that is known (at least in its function in the operation) only to those directly above it or anyone below it, on the same branch.

Therefore:

- An **Avatar** knows all the details of her operation. She usually communicates only with those at the Legendary Depth.
- Those in the **Legendary Depth** are usually responsible for an entire branch of the operation. They answer to the Avatar alone and they are known only by the Avatar and by their subordinates in the Borderliner level. To facilitate better coordination, sometimes those in the Legendaries Depth know about each other and communicate with each other directly.
- Those in the **Borderliner Depth** are usually responsible for a sub-branch of the operation or carry out important tasks themselves. They answer to someone in the Legendary Depth and often do not know of the Avatar. Their subordinates are in the Touched Depth or Sleeper Depth.
- Those in the **Touched Depth** are often Mythos-powered pawns who know only a little more than Sleepers. They are lead or guided by someone on the Borderliner Depth and know nothing of what happens deeper than that.
- Those in the **Sleeper Depth** either work for the operation, victimized by it, or are involved without knowing it. They only know their contacts (or if they are targets, their attackers) from the Touched Depth.

As explained under Story Arcs (page 390), the various Depths of an operation represent how much a character of that Depth knows, not her level of awareness. Characters and locations commonly have the same level of awareness as the Depth they are in (Sleepers in the Sleeper Depth of an operation, Touched in the Touched Depth, and so on) but on occasions this rule is broken. Furthermore, as characters awaken or are overcome by the Mist, they may or may not change their location in the organization. For example, a Sleeper who was touched by an Avatar's influence could become Touched. Depending on the operation, this may allow her to learn more about what's going on (and move to the Touched Depth) or she could remain in the same position (only with newfound Mythos powers).



Once you have all the branches plotted out as an Operation Iceberg, connect individuals on different branches to show what parts of the operation are connected.

> Mack the MC is building the "Neverlands" branch of the Peter Pan operation. He decides the Rift of Wendy is the one who manages the branch so he places her in the Legendary Depth. He then thinks of three locations for "Neverlands" and attaches a leading figure to each. These all exist in the Borderliner Depth of the operation, answering to the Rift of Wendy without knowing who they truly work for. Their subordinates are the Lost Boys trainers (Touched in the Touched Depth) and a host of pirates and pirate ships they use as mythical punching bags and obstacle courses (also Touched in the Touched Depth). Finally, in the Sleeper Depth, there are the children and footloose adults who are brought to these Enclave facilities as trainees. Mack also decides that the leaders of the "Neverlands" stand in direct contact with the leaders of the Lost Boys guerilla army and supply them with trained Lost Boys.

WHAT'S NEXT?

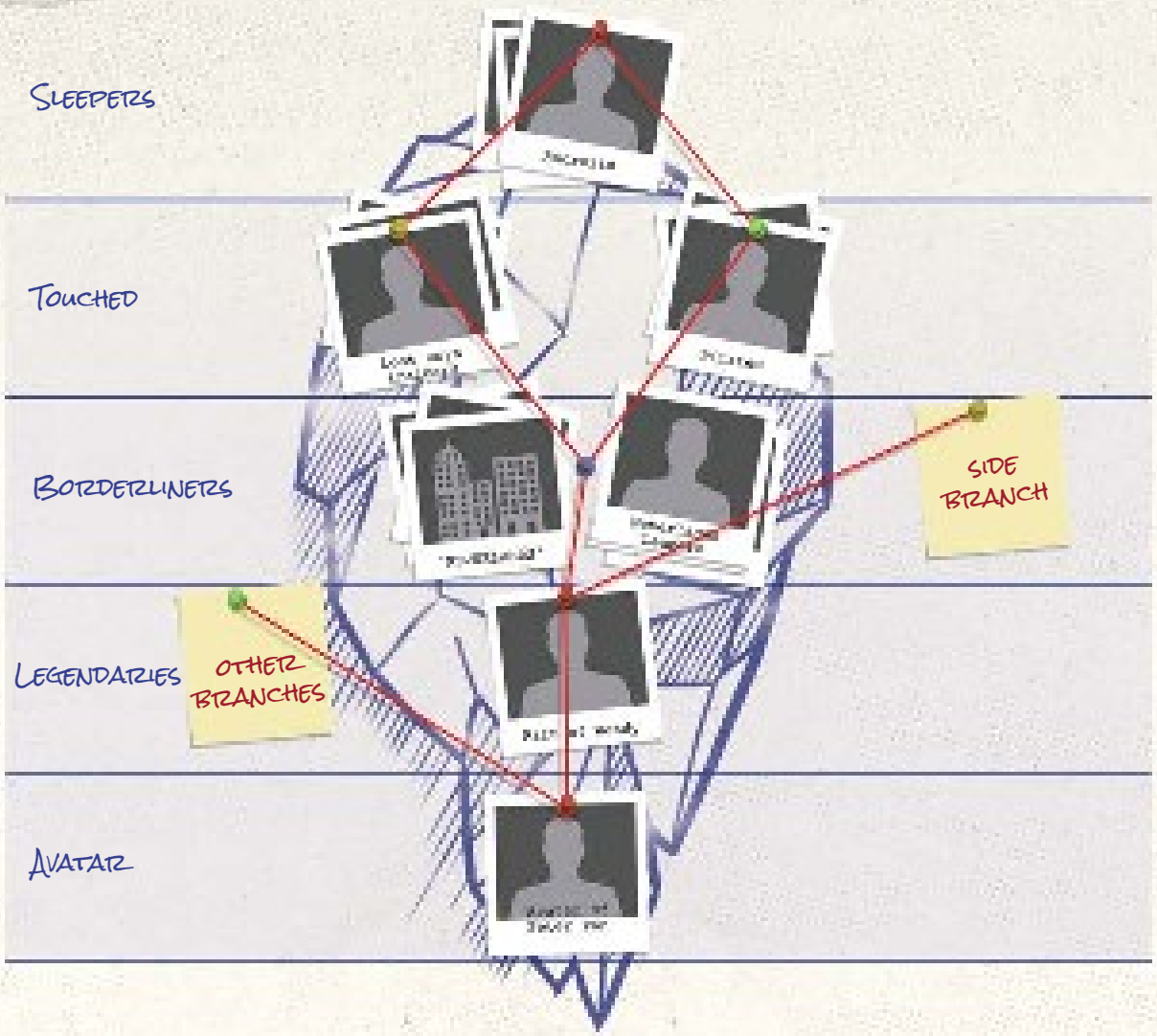
FLESHING OUT THE ICEBERG

Each character, group, or location on your Iceberg needs a few more **details** to become a real part of the operation: a mundane name, a description or image, and the particularities of their part in the operation. In addition, some characters, groups, locations, or situations can be represented as Dangers or custom moves. You can complete the details of your Operation Iceberg at this point or wait until they are needed for a specific case. However, the more knowledge you have of the operation before you start writing the story arc, the more coherent and consistent your story arc will feel to the players.

USING THE OPERATION ICEBERG

Once you have the Operation Iceberg layout, you can use it to come up with **story seeds** for the first case that the crew will investigate in this story arc. The first case begins with some hooks that are related to the Sleeper Depth and may reveal something about the Touched Depth. Subsequent cases delve deeper and deeper into the operation or branch out horizontally to cover more aspects of the same operation. Read more under Story Arcs (page 390).




Sleepers
Touched
Borderliners
Legendaries
Avatar
side branch
other branches

ANATOLI VIDALES

Hades, Greek god of the underworld

"Man, I've boxed in dicey parts of town before, but this… it's not like any place I've ever been. There's a strange silence in the air. People get on with their daily business but you can tell they're just empty shells with no future. It looks like fear but it smells like death. You think I never took money to go down in a fight? I know what these mafia types are like, with their fancy suits and fedoras. I'm telling you – this is no ordinary mafia."
–Mitosis





OVERVIEW OF ANATOLI VIDALES

Agenda: to turn all the City residents into residents of Hades

MO: pushing people into financial and spiritual debt

Emotion: hopelessness, dead-end

Motifs: symbols of death, life without prospects or meaning, mafia trappings

Frontliners: mundane mafia, consiglieri, enforcers, ferrymen, living dead

Stronghold: "Persephone", a Greek restaurant

Anatoli Vidales, Avatar of Hades, is the head of the biggest criminal organization in the City. Often confused with the Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, or Albanian mafia, Mr. Vidale's organization in fact envelopes and employs many such smaller criminal operations. Needless to say, law enforcement authorities in the City have no idea about Anatoli's operation, least of all of the man who heads it.

Indeed, the true purpose of this enterprise is hidden even from most of its members. Being the lord of the underworld and the dead, Anatoli seeks to increase his power by increasing the ranks of his domain: transmigrating all souls into Hades. Since he cannot openly kill the masses (that would result in an all-out war with the Gatekeepers and the other Avatars; and worse, it would not be very conducive to the cause, as explained below), Anatoli's operation revolves around another means of making his victims a part of Hades: by making them indebted to him. His agents have mastered shrewd methods of getting individuals into debt and finally convincing them to give their life in return for (temporary) absolution. The victims of this operation do not pass to the afterlife; they continue to live in the City as living ghosts, but they remain forever under Anatoli's control. Anatoli has been diligently working to secure his grip on the City and has succeeded in transmigrating entire City blocks into Hades. His ultimate goal is to be able to transfer the entire City into Hades, using political corruption and extortion to somehow gain ownership of the City.

ANATOLI'S MODUS OPERANDI

Contrary to common belief, Hades is not a place – it's a state of being. Victims of Anatoli's operation must die in order to move into Hades. However, at the discretion of Anatoli and his servants, people who are in Hades may continue their lives as normal residents in the City. When a deceased soul moves to Hades, it materialize from its resting place, leaving its body behind and assuming a form similar to the one it had in life. The person then returns to her everyday life.

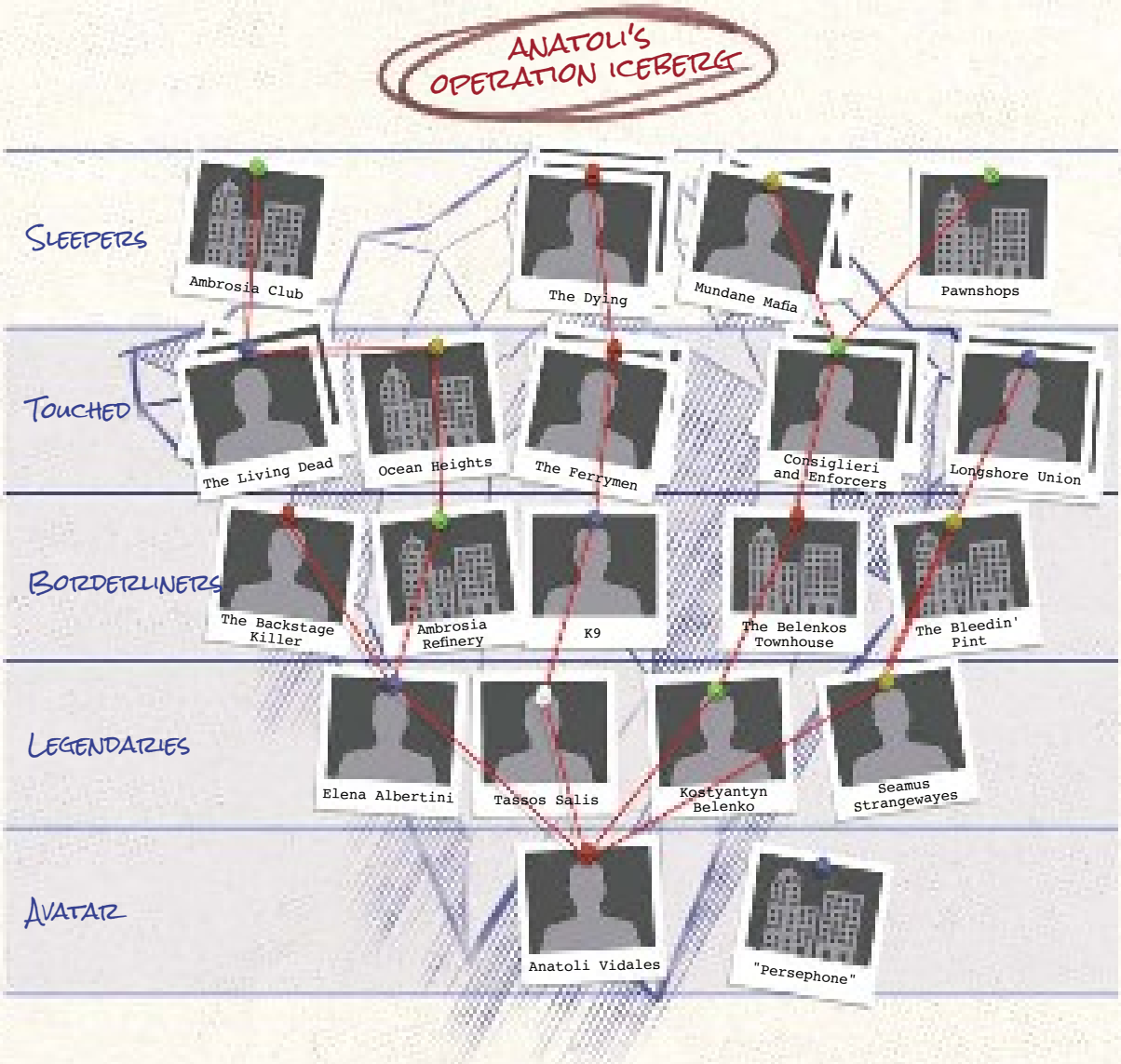
Unfortunately for the residents of Hades, they only *appear* to be normal City residents. In actuality, people in the state of Hades are ghosts, living conglomerations of memories that keep going through the everyday routine they kept when they were alive. They behave just as they always did. They are tangible (although some have learned how to let go of their physical form temporarily) and mostly have no physical indication of being dead, except perhaps for a faint mark of how they died, such as a scar where they were shot. At least outwardly, they can continue their lives normally, if they can somehow mask the event of their death. If they cannot, they find a new life elsewhere in the City under a false name or in Anatoli's employment.

Existing in the City is a boon bestowed by Anatoli on his serfs and it could easily be taken away; if they ever cross him, he can send them to the eternal darkness of non-existence, or worse. There

is a good number of prominent politicians and police captains that Anatoli has brought to Hades and who help him keep his operation under wraps. To their woe, people in Hades also discover that while they still have their old life, they cannot *feel* anything as vividly as they did when they were alive. To truly feel anything, they must consume a substance called *Ambrosia,* which Anatoli's men dispense and charge them handsomely for. The residents of Hades, therefore, are completely and permanently indebted to him.

Unfortunately for Anatoli, people who die in the City do not automatically go into Hades. Due to the limiting effect the Mist has on Mythoi, Hades exists only where the influence of his Avatar, Anatoli, is present. For a soul to transmigrate into Hades, its owner had to be in some way connected and influenced by Anatoli or his minions, most commonly an indebted victim of his racketeers, extortionists, loan sharks, etc. This is one reason why Anatoli refrains from directly attacking the population of the City: he doesn't dislike mindless killing, it just doesn't serve him.

Anatoli aspires to broaden his operations on all levels of society to increase the debt the City residents owe him, individually and as a community. If he could muster enough influence to gain control of the banks or credit card companies, he may be able to welcome swathes of new members and even entire districts to his Mythos' parallel state of existence.



ANATOLI'S OPERATION

Anatoli's operation is divided into three main branches: the living, the dying, and the dead.

The living branch of Anatoli's operation is the largest of the three. It closely resembles a mundane criminal organization and, in fact, includes several recruited organized crime families who do the dirty work on the Sleeper level. It's primary purpose is to make as many people in the City indebted to Anatoli, by any means necessary.

The dying branch of Anatoli's operation is the smallest but most urgent of the three. It involves approaching people on their deathbed with a proposition to evade death and continue their life in the state of Hades. Of course, Anatoli's agents regularly neglect to mention that the dying individual would be eternally in the grasp of their master; then again, the dying individual often doesn't care about any caveats at that point.

The dead branch of Anatoli's operation is the most hidden of the three. It is concerned with managing and employing residents of Hades to fortify Anatoli's control of the City. The dead agents of Hades are everywhere in the City and their forced loyalty to Anatoli is absolute. Whenever one of the other branches gets into trouble, it's the dead branch that pulls them out. This branch also controls Ambrosia production and distribution, especially to the high-flying officials on Anatoli's "payroll".

KEY CHARACTERS

The living branch is further divided into sub-branches, each representing a crime organization that Anatoli's servants are in league with.

One such family are the **BELENKOS**, led by Kostyantyn Belenko. The Belenkos are one of Anatoli's most loyal and efficient "business partners" and manage a significant portion of the branch's street operations. Killed in an internal feud over

ANATOLI'S HISTORY

Almost a century ago, Anatoli Vidale was the eldest son of the nefarious Vidale crime family. Refraining from taking part in the family's illegal business, fun-loving Anatoli lived a life of debauchery and luxury, spending the family's fortune on cars, women, and trips around the world. Unfortunately for him, this all came to an abrupt end with a single gunshot.

Anatoli's youngest brother had shot their father, the head of the Vidale family, and disappeared, fleeing the City. This forced Anatoli to assume his father's position as the new leader of the Vidale underworld; otherwise, the resulting internal war would have not only ruined his father's life work but also ended with the deaths of Anatoli himself and his family members. To stabilize the family, Anatoli had to step up, giving up his joyful life for the world of violence and hate that has always underlined, and indeed funded, his excessive lifestyle. Understanding that death is the source of all life has opened his eyes, and he became the Rift of Hades, taking his position as the City's new grim reaper and expanding his father's empire to an unprecedented scale.

In those days of his ascension to greatness, Anatoli fell in love with a young woman who passed by his window daily. Seeing her, even for only a brief moment at a time, breathed life into his dark existence; sometimes he would smile to himself even as he was wiping the blood of his enemies off his hands. Anatoli managed to use his influence and personal charm to lure this lady, Perry Kennedy, into his world and the two married. However, despite their great love, their life was fraught with tensions surrounding Anatoli's life as a crime lord. Eventually Kennedy left him (some say to the Rift of Orpheus); letting her go freely has broken Anatoli's last hope for a life of his own and he became the Avatar of Hades. To this day, Perry remains the only life Anatoli was ever loathe to take. As far as he knows she has not died yet, at least not within the boundaries of the City.

his relations with Anatoli's organization, Konstyantyn became a citizen of Hades and came back to haunt, torture, and finally eliminate his killers. He revealed his new presence only to his daughter, Ruslana, who is currently leading the organization under his guidance. Konstyantyn is not awakened; he is merely Touched by Anatoli's influence and was chosen for the role due to his immense influence. That makes him one of the very few Touched individuals in the City who intimately know an Avatar. He is completely committed to Anatoli's vision of Hades but has asked for one favor in return to his services: that Ruslana would be spared. For now, he has been given this grace.

Another criminal association that has been known to work with Anatoli are the Longshore Union hooligans (Red Caps, page 53), who answer to **SEAMUS STRANGEWAYES** (Oberon), the little-known king of many other Rifts of goblins and fairies. While not subordinate to Anatoli, Strangewayes's Mythos forces him to uphold the pact they made: if the hooligans ever kill someone indebted to them, their soul goes to Anatoli. In return, the dead branch keeps the police off the Longshore Union's back.

These and other mundane criminal organizations associated with Anatoli focus on generating debt on the street: racketeering, pushing drugs, loan sharking, etc. Their street-level teams are often divided into neighborhoods and headed by a local Touched **CONSIGLIERE**: a clever criminal promoted from the ranks and given the ability to sway people to sign their deals. Some Consiglieri also keep Touched **ENFORCERS** who can deal with any proud Rifts who might try to meddle in their business. Anatoli's Consiglieri and Enforcers are not residents of Hades; they are given their powers by consuming Ambrosia once a year at a special feast held by their bosses.

The dying branch is run by Anatoli's closest confidant, **TASSOS SALIS** (Charon), who among many other powers has the ability to sense anyone who is dying in the City. Tassos then dispatches his emissaries to offer the dying a second chance. If the dying person is a desirable high-profile asset, and especially if they are facing a slow and painful demise, Tassos sends one of his Borderliner messengers, like **K9** (Cerberus), to implicate his targets in debt and then persuade them to trade their lives for debt forgiveness. For more street-level or rapidly-dying targets, Tassos sends the **FERRYMEN**, a fleet of ambulance and taxi drivers and even false clergymen who reach the dying on the scene and try to convince them to sell their soul to Anatoli for a second chance.

Finally, the dead branch is governed by **ELENA ALBERTINI** (Cassandra), reputedly a witch and a fortune teller. Elena can actually see significant parts of the future but her Mythos does not allow her to tell anyone (no-one believes her). She has managed to overcome this problem by simply keeping her prophetic knowledge to herself, using it to protect and promote her operation. Since she cannot share her insights, her subordinates must obediently follow her strange commands to the letter. This works well with the living dead, who serve her unequivocally, but even they sometimes slip and fail to execute Elena's masterful plans.

Elena's armies are the **LIVING DEAD**, hosts of City residents – some prominent, others anonymous – who have transmigrated to Hades and answer to her. Mostly serving as brute force, double agents, or spies, the residents of Hades are indifferent to pain and can move silently. If trained, they are able to become incorporeal and display other powers ascribed to dead spirits and ghosts. Some of the Living Dead even awaken and develop a connection with their own Mythos, usually a death-related tale. **THE BACKSTAGE KILLER** (*The Phantom of the Opera*, page 48) is one of them; he learned how to possess others and manipulate backstage equipment telekinetically. While for the most part he is concerned with his victims in the Theater District, the Backstage Killer is nevertheless a resident of Hades and will answer Elena's call when summoned.

KEY LOCATIONS

As the first line of debt generation and growth, Anatoli's operation includes a chain of **PAWNSHOPS**, convincing their clients to sell something they will later want back. When they fail to procure the needed sum to buy it back, the clients are referred to loan sharks, the next step in their gradual descent into Hades. While most pawnshops are mundane establishments, some contain Relics or are managed by

Touched pawn brokers who can magically influence their clients to part with objects of sentimental value. One such place is "Second Chance Pawnbrokers" in the Blue-Collar Residential.

Every crime family working for Anatoli has several layers of **HEADQUARTERS**, one for each tier of the operation, from the street-level to the family mansion. The Belenkos branch, for example, is run by Ruslana from their fortified townhouse in an old City block they own on the edge of downtown. A warren of narrow corridors covered in Ukrainian iconography and memorabilia, this place is a deathtrap crawling with Mythos-powered Enforcers and counter-intrusion measures, some of them are Familiars and Relics gifted to Kostyantyn for the protection of his family homestead.

Since Hades' population is constantly growing, the dead branch needs a way to easily distribute Ambrosia to the living dead masses. The club bearing the seemingly not-so-secretive name **AMBROSIA** is the epicenter of the drug trafficking operation owned by Anatoli. However, most of the stuff sold here as the club's signature drug is not the real deal but a variation on the City's current hottest narcotic or amphetamine, so there are dozens of different drugs that go by the same name (one of Elena's clever smoke-and-mirrors tactics). The Ambrosia club is just a place for the Living Dead to congregate and contact their dealers; the actual deals to traffic Ambrosia are carried out elsewhere.

OCEAN HEIGHTS is a small seaside housing estate on the beachfront which Anatoli has taken over completely. The developer of this project fell ill and had to sell his soul to Anatoli, whose Consiglieri and Enforcers quickly took over. The buildings now stand empty and dilapidated: the paint on the walls is flaking and most of the the old-fashioned aquamarine decorative tiles are either chipped or missing, exposing a layer of cracked gray plaster. This ghost housing project is always gloomy and overshadowed, even on a clear day. Living Dead who have nowhere to go often end up here. The next stop for such lost souls are the Ambrosia refineries.

The real Ambrosia is produced in a series of secret **REFINERIES** around the City, some small makeshift labs, others huge facilities hidden away in the Industrial Zone. Ambrosia is actually manufactured in a painful process that robs Living Dead of their memories, further dehumanizing them (and occasionally turning them into soulless hungry ghosts who prey on others' memories). This is a form of payment that the more lowly residents of Hades are forced to make, either because they crossed Elena or Anatoli or simply because more Ambrosia is needed.

Anatoli himself likes to dine in a small Greek restaurant he bought and renamed **"PERSEPHONE"**. This restaurant appears in no phonebook, no restaurant guide, and no database. It is located on an undisclosed street in the heart of one of the neighborhoods that are completely under Anatoli's control, surrounded by entire City blocks filled with Living Dead (who would gladly give their undead life to protect Anatoli). No living soul has set foot in the place in decades. The Living Dead who live here behave normally as they pass by Anatoly dining outside of the restaurant. Some even smile at Anatoli and offer him fresh fish wrapped up in newspaper or a bouquet of flowers. He nods with a chilling, heartfelt smile. He is, after all, their humble ruler. He turns over to one of them dining next to him and says with a soft voice, "You should try the souvlaki. It's to die for."

ANATOLI'S STORY SEEDS

- Any Mythoi that feature death and the underworld may be tied to Anatoli's operation. For example, in the case example given in Chapter 5: Behind the Scenes (page 37), which is based on *The Nightingale*, K9 appears briefly as Death's (Anatoli's) representative.
- A classic case for the crew to investigate is that of a pawnshop, such as "Second Chance Pawnbrokers" whose clients end up in debt and sometimes even dead. This could lead the crew down the living branch of Anatoli's iceberg.
- Alternatively, the crew could find themselves indebted to Anatoli if they fail to perform a service for an employer who is then revealed to be representing Anatoli. Transmigrating to Hades then becomes a viable alternative to dying – but at what cost?

- The Ambrosia club and the drug trafficking activity surrounding it could be at the center of a case. However, Elena might fool the crew by allowing them to close a mundane trafficking operation in order to protect the real Ambrosia trafficking ring. If the crew is fooled, they will have to find out about the real Ambrosia from a different source.
- The investigation into the Backstage Killer could start as an independent case but end with a clue that leads deeper down the iceberg.

ANATOLI'S CUSTOM MOVES

Across the River Styx: When you die, if you owed a debt to Death's representatives or agreed to sell them your soul in return for a second chance, you become a Living Dead. Remove the status that killed you. Take the permanent story tag *living dead* and the ongoing status *lost-soul-1*. At their option, servants of Death can incapacitate or kill you again, giving you a death-related tier-5 or tier-6 status of their choice.

(For the MC: Borderliner servants of Anatoli can do so as a hard MC move, Legendaries can do so as a soft MC move, and Anatoli can do so as an MC intrusion).

Ambrosia: When you consume Ambrosia, if you have the story tag *living dead* remove any *lost-soul* or *fading-identity* statuses you may have for the duration of the scene; restore them thereafter. If you don't have the *living dead* tag, choose one ongoing story tag to take: *increased stamina*, *uncanny strength*, *otherworldly beauty*, or *irresistable charisma*.

Ambrosia Refinery: If you have the story tag *living dead* and you are drained of your memories in an Ambrosia refinery, tell everyone what was the memory you lost. You take *fading-identity-2* and mark Crack on one of your Logos themes.

ANATOLI'S DANGERS

LIVING DEAD +★

To represent the Living Dead, combine a Mundane Danger (such as a Helpless City Resident) with this Mythos Power Set.

- **Living Dead:** When a Living Dead takes a mundane physical harm status, ignore it (she can still be physically subdued). If a Living Dead is destroyed using legendary means, she reforms around her resting place the next night, unless her return was somehow prevented.
- **(optional +★) Turn Incorporeal:** As a soft move, the Living Dead can turn incorporeal or materialize. When incorporeal, she ignores any mundane physical subdual or restraint statuses.

ENFORCERS ★★

Enforcers are based on the Hired Thugs Mundane Danger with the addition of the **Juiced Up** move, which represents their enhanced physical state thanks to their consumption of Ambrosia.

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / THREATEN 4

- **Collective:** This collective has a handful of members and a size factor of 1.
- **Juiced Up:** When Enforcers enter the scene, give them *juiced-up-1*. If they lose this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- Bully (*threatened-2*), beat up (*broken-arm-3*), or shower with bullets (*gunshot-3*)
- Eliminate a vulnerable target (*shot-in-the-gut-4*)



CONSIGLIERE ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / THREATEN 6

- **Bodyguards:** When a Consigliere takes a status that his bodyguards can protect him from, the bodyguards take the status instead (use Enforcers for the bodyguards).
- **Callous:** When a Consigliere takes a psychological status, reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- Sway someone to do as he says (*swayed-3*) or intimidate them (*threatened-3*)
- Shoot someone at point blank (*shot-in-the-gut-4*)
- Slowly remove his gloves and scarf, preparing to make a threat

K9 ★★★★

K9 appears as three large and violent dogs walked by an innocuous individual. The walker is a phantom, one of the Living Dead souls K9 devoured; K9 itself is actually the dogs (technically, a sentient collective of Familiars). It can speak and interact normally through its walker, although it is rather brusque and crass, displaying the mannerisms of a pack of feral dogs.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 HURT THE WALKER 4

- **Collective:** This collective has a handful of members and a size factor of 1.
- **Keeper of the Dead:** A Living Dead cannot turn incorporeal in the presence of K9, unless K9 allows it. K9 can impose an *incapacitated-5* or *devoured-6* status on a Living Dead as a hard move, ignoring any defenses they may have.
- **Unleashed:** When you attack K9, if one of the dogs can reach you, you first take *ghost-bite-3* or *crippling-bite-3*.
- **Sacrifice Walker:** When K9 takes a status of physical harm, if the walker can protect the dogs, she takes the status instead. When the *hurt the walker* is maxed out, the walker is destroyed. K9 can form a new walker as a hard move.
- **Dog Senses:** When K9 enters the scene, give it *alert-3*. If it loses this status, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.
- Leap at someone, clawing and biting (*mauled-4*)
- Bare its teeth at someone, showing them visions of death (*terrified-4*)
- Remind a Living Dead that it can destroy them
- Slowly form its new walker, fibers of ghost matter coalescing around it
- Growl at someone

ELENA ALBERTINI ★★★★★

Elena's greatest power is her ability to foresee moments in the future and either use them to her favor or work around them to achieve what she wants. You can use Elena's **Architect of Fate** move to dramatically reveal the outcome of her plans while making a hard move. Note that Elena's planning is not limited to what happens in her vicinity; she can affect the whole City using her Living Dead servants. She could, for example:

Have someone assassinated just when a player spends a Clue to ask a critical question

When a lead character attacks Elena or someone she wants to protect, reveal that a minion preemptively slipped poison into the lead character's take-away meal (burn her tags and/or give her a status)

When the lead characters capture someone in Anatoli's organization, reveal that she preemptively replaced that person with a decoy or planted a bomb in that person's bag

When a lead character is about to take an action Elena wants to stop, reveal that the lead character's loved one is held at gunpoint in Elena's custody

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / BOTCH 4

- **Architect of Fate:** Someone is orchestrating events in the City with an alarming precision. As an intrusion, the MC can make one or more hard moves to reflect the Architect's intervention. The Architect takes *impending-botch-1*.
- **Unreliable Servants:** When the *botch* spectrum is maxed out, one of the Architect's servants screws up. The players may choose to veto the **Architect of Fate** move once. Remove all statuses from the *botch* spectrum.
- **Undead Retinue:** When Elena enters the scene or as a hard move, she can summon the Living Dead to her service. Create any Mundane Danger with a Danger Rating of 3 or less and combine it with the Living Dead Mythos Power Set.
- **Bodyguards:** When Elena takes a status someone in her retinue can protect her from, that someone takes the status instead.

Keeper of the Dead: A Living Dead cannot turn incorporeal in the presence of Elena, unless Elena allows it. Elena can impose an *incapacitated-5* or *dissipated-6* status on a Living Dead as a soft move, ignoring any defenses they may have.

Ignored Prophecy: As a hard move, Elena warns you of a horrible future. You take *unbeliever-5*; you cannot take actions to avert this fate while you have this status. This status also applies to any attempt to remove it (because no-one believes it should be removed).

BARTON

The Spear, the collective symbol of all fabled military leaders

"Take a look at this picture. You see that guy? Over there, by the playground. No, not him, the one behind him, the ice-cream man. Yes. Look at his ankle. I bet that's a gun. Yes, I know he's wearing baggy pants, it only makes it more suspicious. I know a gun when I see one. Why would an ice-cream man carry a concealed weapon? Now look at this. Look harder. You see? That homeless woman has a rifle in her sack. The worst part is I looked them all up and there's nothing special about them. They're a bunch of ordinary people, just… organized."

– Post-Mortem

For every action, there is a reaction. For every trend, there are catalysts and inhibitors. In every situation, there are always at least two opposed forces. Conflict is the very essence of existence; at least according to Barton Canon, Avatar of the Spear.

Throughout history, great strategists and tacticians have led their armies to victory with cunning and ingenuity. These great minds are unified by the symbol of the Spear, which stood for martial superiority since time immemorial. Every one of those fabled military leaders – including Sun Tzu, Joan of Arc, Saladin, Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and many others – now lives inside the head of an unassuming superintendent of an anonymous apartment building in the blue-collar residential neighborhood: Barton. Barton is forever haunted by the voices of the Spear, who instruct him in the ways of war, chiming in and out of his mind in an incessant cacophony of strategic wisdom. Symbols more than personalities, the voices are not truly individuals but a collective made of pure military knowledge and the burning desire to emerge triumphant.

In order to win, one must first engage in battle. The Spear's endless hunger for victory goes hand in hand with an unremitting passion for conflict. As the Avatar of the Spear, Barton is entirely absorbed in the instigation of conflict and strife around the City, in which he takes part indirectly as the commander of his forces and, on occasion, personally. Barton's godlike strategic capacity could easily make him the ruling power in the City within a very short span of time. Luckily for the free residents of the City, the existence of one supreme power eliminates any possibility of conflict. Paradoxically, in order to constantly experience his own marital superiority, Barton must always be on the losing side and lead it to victory.

OVERVIEW OF BARTON

Agenda: to drive the City into a constant state of conflict

MO: instigating conflict on all levels of society

Drive: desire for victory, violence

Motifs: past military leaders, weapons, veterans, PTSD, and hallucinations

Frontliners: mundane veterans, Spearheads

Stronghold: the building at 35 Cedar st.

BARTON'S MODUS OPERANDI

Barton is constantly on the hunt for a more difficult challenge. Employing a network of innocuous yet highly-trained and motivated operatives, Barton watches every conflict in the City. While the myriad voices in his head are constantly pushing him to intervene in the confrontations he sees, he is usually strong enough to keep the voices at bay until a truly worthy challenge presents itself. The Spear isn't picky about who is involved in the conflict or how Barton intervenes; it just wants Barton to use his exceptional combat senses to their utmost potential. When Barton finds a conflict that could possibly pose an interesting challenge, usually a completely lost cause, the game begins: like a calculated chess player, he deploys his operatives and agents to sway the battle in favor of whoever is losing (only because it's more of a challenge). Once the former losers overpower their superior adversaries, Barton loses interest, at least until the new winners become powerful enough to serve as his new adversaries.

The Spear's plans, however, are not limited to challenging Barton alone – it wants everyone to engage in conflict, constantly. Its voices instruct Barton to use his keen analytical abilities to survey the political and social landscape of the City. When he identifies the factions vying for power (legitimate and illegitimate), he subtly intervenes to keep a relative balance of power. The Spear wants no faction or personality to gain exclusive sway over

the City, so it uses Barton to weaken the strong. It once ordered Barton to strike an ascendant street gang; the gang leaders then found one of their members mysteriously beaten and bloody in a dark alley and jumped to the conclusion that a rival gang is responsible. The resulting flashfire war weakened both sides and the hostilities continued for months. Another time, the target was a thriving corporation about to acquire a block of prime downtown real estate that would secure its control over its industry. Barton's team sabotaged the sewer pipes on one of the properties, flooding the area and scuttling the sale.

Barton knows that when the forces at play in the City are at a relatively equal power level, conflict ensues. He eventually plans to turn the City into the battleground of one grand, never-ending, multi-faceted conflict: a war which could never be won by anyone, not even him. That is one strategic challenge Barton has not solved as of yet; it gives the Spear much gratification and keeps Barton's hands and mind full.

BARTON'S OPERATION

Barton's network of operatives, on which he relies heavily, is composed exclusively of war veterans. These men and women first join his network when they begin suffering from moments of clouded vision and hallucinations. People around them tend to ascribe it to shell shock, PTSD, depression, or tremors, but Barton's agents describe it as being overwhelmed by a sense of purpose. They hear the words of Barton guiding them to what they must do.

The veterans working for Barton are regular joes and janes, often the unassuming and silent types. They work as cops, dock workers, hot dog vendors, and other blue-collar jobs; some of them live on the street, in a hovel, or in a dirty van, detached from mainstream society. They are all accomplished soldiers of past wars, but other than that nothing seems to connect them.

In a sense, Barton's operation is much less complex and layered than those of other Avatars. Through the Spear's hallucinations, he summons his veteran operatives to various public locations where they meet each other, talk about their visions and combat experience, and share information from their part of the City offhandedly, sometimes without consciously knowing that they are a part of a large-scale operation. Then, they go on their way and may never see each other again. Many times the veteran they meet with is Barton himself but, due to the increased effect of the Mist on Avatars, they never know who he really is and forget about him soon thereafter.

In another sense, Barton's operation is impossibly complicated: it's constantly growing, shedding, and regrowing branches for each one of its objectives. Whenever there is a job to be done, carefully selected veterans seem to come out of the woodwork, contacted by the Spear's network of visions and flashes. They join up to form cells and carry out the task at hand, only to dissipate again into the population when the job is done.

The moment an objective is achieved, Barton's veterans look like a disparate group of people driven by temporary insanity to take random actions that sadly result in misfortunate consequences for a seemingly unrelated party. None of them has a motive to do what they did and they will never betray their comrades or divulge anything about the visions. Even if they did, they know nothing of value: information is shared on a need-to-know basis so every operative is only savvy to their share of the plan (sometimes that's very little; an operative could even be a pawn to be sacrificed).

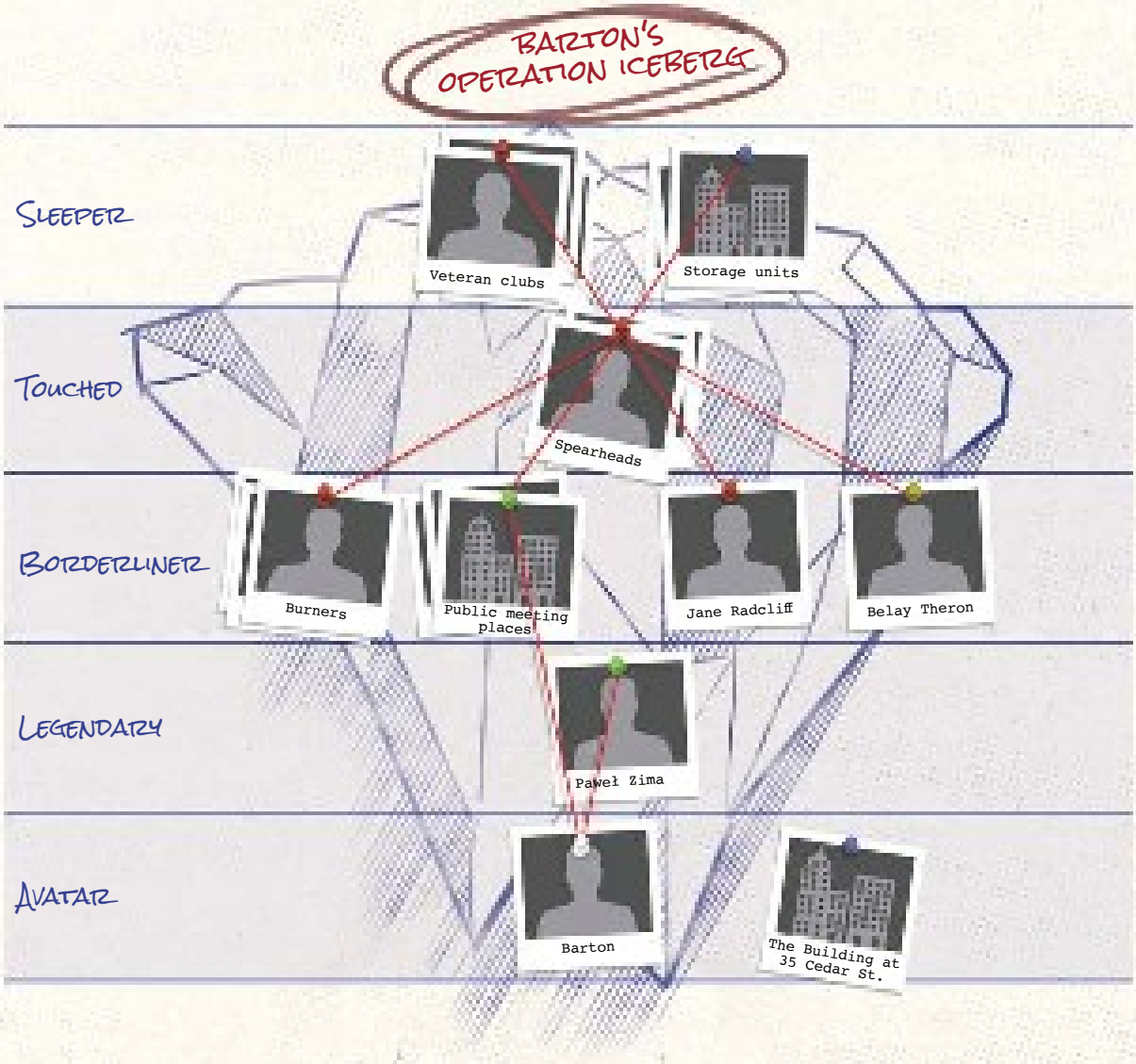
Barton masterfully makes use of his veterans and then discards them to avoid being discovered. The Spear would accept no less. A veteran that was a member of one strike team might never be involved again in any of Barton's operations, so it's virtually impossible to map out the internal connections. Unless someone really digs into the operatives' background and uncovers the veteran connection, it would be a bit of a head-scratcher to make out what connects the network. This keeps Barton's operation under the radar and makes it very costly to track down. In a way, Barton wishes someone worthy would try to expose his operation or infiltrate it; if they somehow manage it, they might prove to be an actual threat; that would be a refreshing change.

KEY CHARACTERS

Barton's operation relies first and foremost on his armies of Touched veterans, the **SPEARHEADS**. These seemingly harmless men and women were trained as weapons of war long before Barton got to them; with the guidance of the Spear, they are truly remarkable combatants, infiltrators, and saboteurs. While proficient with many weapons, each Spearhead usually becomes attached to their weapon of choice, which he or she controls with legendary proficiency. Sometimes when Spearheads experience an extraordinary connection with the Spear, the ghost of the past warrior or tactician guiding their hand may become visible for a moment.

Once they get the go signal, Spearheads form cells, recruiting Sleeper veterans they know or manage to locate. Other times, Barton brings a few Spearheads together. These teams are temporary; once the job is done, they might never see each other again. If they bump into one another on the street, not a word will be said, only a brief exchange of knowing looks.

Being merely Touched by the Spear, Spearheads lack the high-level understanding of the battlefield and the strategic capacity that Barton needs to play out his ingenious attacks on centers of power in the City. They are best at leading small teams of up to six operatives and they can do a good job with up to twenty; anything more than that and Spearheads start dropping the ball (unless they were previously high-ranking military



officers, who are not easy to come by). From what Barton gathered so far, their command abilities max out at about fifty men.

Barton can't lead all of his men alone; the Spear's network of hallucinations is too fuzzy and sketchy to provide reliable communications and even an elite military force needs a leader on the ground. **BURNERS** have much more of the Spear inside them: they are the ultimate combatants, far superior to most Rifts in the City, and they understand Barton's plans intuitively. When Barton is running a coordinated Citywide strike on a major target (or targets), he uses groups of Spearheads led by Burners or, for more challenging targets, teams of Burners.

However, there's a catch. As 'upgraded' Spearheads, Burners aren't ready for that influx of information and aggression that the Spear assails them with; The Spear is a violent Mythos, after all, and it pushes them to do its will. Barton survives as an Avatar because he rolls with the voices of the Spear, but Burners' psyches usually hold up for a single operation before they start to flame out in random acts of violence. That kindly meter maid that inexplicably died in a bloody alley fight? The gang leader that throws it all away in a suicide-by-cop? The businessman who gets into a nasty bar brawl that escalated too quickly? All of them were Burners for whom the siren song for hyper-violence proved too strong.

The positive side-effect of Burners is that they often take the blame for their actions, citing not temporary but permanent insanity. They also save Barton the temptation of using them again in another operation, keeping the organization dynamic and untraceable. Barton isn't fazed by the sacrifice these soldiers make; anything is justified for victory.

On a rare occasion, a Burner may manage to weather the psychic maelstrom of voices and single out one great warrior or military leader to follow. This Burner then awakens with the Mythos of that warrior or leader. So far there were only two such cases out of thousands of Burners Barton made: **JANE RADCLIFF** (Queen Boudica), an aggressive knife-fighter from the Industrial Zone and **BELAY THERON** (Shaka Zulu), a South African mercenary. Being Borderliners, Barton knows Radcliff and Theron have some chance of remembering his face if they ever saw him, so he only communicates with them through visions or through his network of Spearheads.

Barton has yet to have trusted anyone with a permanent position in his operation. It's simply not the way the organization works. Sometimes, however, he might personally contact someone outside of the Spear's network for a specific job. This would usually be a heavy-hitter that can understand the bigger picture and do on their own a job suited for a small army of Spearheads. **PAWEŁ ZIMA** (The White Rose of Wrocław), for example, is a religious monk and an unmatched assassin who targets only those whose time has come (how he decides that remains a mystery). Whenever Barton needs someone taken out, he simply leaves a folder with enough information on the altar of the church where Paweł prays every day at noon. Then he watches the target; if they find a white rose on their seat in the next few days, they are as good as dead. Barton has not yet cracked Zima's motives and so far he has avoided giving him falsified information, even though Zima's skills could have come in handy in a number of cases. Barton knows Zima is a worthy opponent and that Zima has been keeping tabs on him. If Zima finds out Barton deceived him and tries to attack the Avatar, the fight could be devastating. As tempting as the challenge may be, it would be a great loss to Barton's greater plan to have to kill his most valued assassin.

KEY LOCATIONS

Barton's Spearheads keep a chain of **STORAGE UNITS** across the City packed to the brim with weapons, ammunition, and supplies. Most of these are locked with keypads or combination locks; the code, unit number, and address appear in the minds of the Spearheads as a hallucination when it's time for a visit. Every now and then, a random Spearhead would walk up to a unit and add a piece of equipment or a firearm they obtained to the immaculately organized collection. When it's time for a hit, other Spearheads show up at these hidden armories and gear up for the operation, completely depleting the unit of its contents (Barton knows in advance which veteran unit to send to which storage unit and what they will find there). The same unit is never used twice.

Out of the hundreds of public meeting locations Barton employs for the Spearhead meetings, his favorite meeting place is at the **PARK CHESS TABLES**. These concrete slab tables and seats are used for a variety of games and sometimes also for gambling. The place is frequented by all ages but typically by middle-aged men. There is an air of tension and urgency; some games are quiet and intense while other are loud and aggressive. Every so often, a veteran finds his way to the park, compelled by the Spear's hallucinations. There they shake hands with another veteran (who may be Barton himself) and play a game or two while chatting about what goes down in the City. Another favorite location of Barton's are the **MOVIE THEATRES** downtown.

Most days, Barton lives in the sleepy **BUILDING AT 35 CEDAR ST.**, where he works as a superintendent. The building is completely ordinary although, by Barton's design or the Mist's, not a single war veteran lives there or visits there. Barton doesn't need any fancy fortifications or boobytraps. He eagerly awaits the day someone with the intention and the ability to fight him will find him here. He knows this building intimately and he is fascinated to discover how a conflict may unfold here. In fact, he chose the building at 35 Cedar St. exactly because it would make such a fine battleground.

THE BURNER EXPERIMENT

For the large-scale, multi-pronged coordinated attacks that Barton dreams up on a regular basis, he needs better commanders. To acquire such leaders, Barton tried to do what only a few Avatars ever did: push Sleepers to awaken. Normally, Sleepers touched by the powers of an Avatar can reach the level of awareness of a Touched individual. Unlike people Touched by their own Mythos, those Touched by an Avatar return to their Sleeper life once the Avatar's influence is out of the picture. Barton needed more, so he pushed a few poor veterans over the edge. In most cases, the result was unstable to say the least, but Barton soon found that disposable Borderliners can be just as useful to his operations as stable ones



BARTON'S HISTORY

At the age of 40, Barton is a relatively new Avatar. Not so long ago, he served as a black ops officer in some of the army's most secretive operations. His awakening to the Mythos of the Spear was a long and tortuous process that began when he came back from war, suffering from a wide spectrum of post-traumatic conditions as well as an unbearable burden of grief, anger, and guilt. His continued suffering eventually culminated in a planned suicide that he never went through with; when he finally held his old military-issued gun to his head, he had an epiphany. He wanted to overcome and outsmart his depression, just like any other opponent he met in the battlefield, and this decision opened him up to the Spear.

Over the next few years Barton pulled himself out of the rut he was in. He started training again and challenged himself to accomplish impossible goals. He aspired to become a superior strategist and fighter, even better than he was before, and now he had the advice of the greatest masters of war constantly echoing in his head. He fought in the pits of the Industrial Zone, where he lost many times but won even more. After two years, he became the second person to ever overcome Eddie Dreamtime, the champion and owner of the Bowl club (after first losing to him four times during the year before). He was ready to move on.

Drunk on power and superiority, Barton started his habit of siding with the underdog in search of greater challenges. He was personally involved in countless conflicts in the City: gang wars in the slums, hostile takeovers in the stock exchange, defamation campaigns in the media. The Spear drove him to pitch himself against the top professionals of the City and to become better and smarter and stronger. But he soon learned war must take its toll; innocent people were killed in a hostage situation he orchestrated, and worse, he knew it would happen because it was a part of the plan. As he stood over the body of one of those poor souls, Barton realized that while the Spear was freeing him from his weakness, it was condemning him to a restless life of remorse. It was a critical moment; Barton had to choose between victory and peace.

Deep down Barton is weak. As the Avatar of the Spear, he is a badass in any fight. He holds an immense and ever-expanding knowledge base of the City's power players, thanks to his vast network of informants. He is the leader of an army of hard-edged veterans willing to die for him in a heartbeat. But when it comes to confronting the Spear, Barton is beaten down. The voices in his head always win and he always does their bidding. Somewhere deep inside him, there is still a fleck of humanity that doesn't want to be an instrument of war and still craves peace. But Barton has made his choice; in order to always be victorious he had to lose to the Spear.

BARTON'S STORY SEEDS

- A violent conflict between street gangs, the police, criminal organizations, and/or local vigilantes could draw the attention of the crew. If they investigate or even try to mediate, they may discover that a third party has been instigating the conflict, leading them to a cell of Barton's Speaheads.
- An underdog sports team miraculously makes its way to the top of the league throughout the season. Accusations of illegal use of stimulants lead to reports of tensions in the locker rooms. If the crew does not intervene, there will be blood.
- An explosion in a maximum-security Helix Labs facility is being hushed. If the crew is able to penetrate the now-even-more-fortified lab, they may discover that high-tech weapons were stolen by a team of Burners.
- One of Barton's Spearheads could hire the crew to do a job for him. When the crew completes the job, they discover they have been used as an instrument to instigate a much bigger war.
- Barton could take personal interest in the crew, especially in lead characters that show martial prowess or strategic genius. He will then repeatedly try to take the crew out or to cultivate inner conflict in order to expose the truly superior warrior among them.

BARTON'S CUSTOM MOVES

War-Torn City: At the beginning of every session, the crew rolls+[tier of the City's *war-torn* status]. On 7-9, the MC chooses two. On 10+, the MC chooses three:

- A major player or organization in the City is hit by an unknown party, becomes weakened, and then falls prey to its natural opposition. The City takes *war-torn-1*.
- Rival organizations or gangs escalate to open war on the streets and innocent bystanders get caught up in the fight. The City takes *war-torn-1*.
- The police or military use unchecked force in order to restore the order, to no avail. The City takes *war-torn-1*.
- A financial giant suffers a great misfortune and collapses, bringing down the economy. People turn to looting and mugging to find food. The City takes *war-torn-1*.
- A downtrodden population successfully sues the City for compensation. Other under-privileged communities protest and all sides riot and clash on the streets. The City takes *war-torn-1*.

This status can only be reduced by appropriate actions that affect the entire city. At tier-5, the City is effectively in a state of inner war and is shut down. At tier-6 the City is irrevocably transformed or destroyed, MC's choice.

On a miss, your crew gains one Clue regarding the true instigators of these clashes.

BARTON'S DANGERS

SPEARHEADS ★★★

To represent a team of Spearheads use the SWAT Team / Elite Security Danger profile. Increase their tactical advantage move to *tactical-advantage-3* or the removal of three tiers of tactical statuses. In addition, Spearheads have the following moves:

Disappear Into the Population: As a hard move, the Spearheads can disappear from the scene. Whenever someone is looking for them, add *lack of evidence* and *lost in the masses* to the scene.

Single Combat: When a single Spearhead is fighting alone in close quarters, as a hard move, add a tag for her favored weapon such as *axe*, *club*, *combat knife*, *katana*, *nunchaku*, *sai*, etc. While the Spearhead has the tag, she can impose *horrible-wound-4* or *about-to-pass-out-4*.

BURNERS ★★★★

To represent a team of Burners use the SWAT Team / Elite Security Danger profile, reduce its size factor to 1, increase all its move effects by one, and give it both of the Spearheads' moves. In addition, Burners have the following moves:

REGULAR BURNERS

LOSE IT 3

Violent Outburst: When the *lose-it* spectrum is maxed out, the Burner goes permanently berserk and attacks whatever aggravates her most.

Indomitable: When a berserk Burner takes a psychological or subdual status, reduce the tier of that status by 2.

Collect herself and try to power through (remove 1 tier from the *lose-it* spectrum)

JANE RADCLIFF

Improvised Weapon: As an MC intrusion and assuming she's unarmed, Jane can pick up an object in the environment and get a tag to use with **Single Combat**.

Knife Fighter Queen: If Jane has a tag describing a knife, increase the tier of statuses given with **Single Combat** to 5.

Rebellious: When Jane takes a psychological or subdual status, reduce the tier of that status by 1.

Disarm an opponent (burn one tag describing a weapon)

BELAY THERON

Ancestral Nguni Shield: When Belay enters the scene, give him *spirit shield* (in addition to his status from **Body Armor**). If this tag is removed, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it.

Ancestral Iklwa Spear: As a soft move, Belay can create or recreate the tag *spirit Iklwa spear*, which he can use with **Single Combat**.

Bullhorn Formation: Once per session, Belay can summon the spirits of Zulu warriors and become a collective with a size factor of 1 for the duration of the scene.

PAWEŁ ZIMA ★★★★★

The legend of the White Rose of Wrocław tells of a priest who fell in love with a beautiful woman and, after her misfortunate death, planted a bush of white roses upon her grave. The priest himself died when he spent a night in a room where a bouquet of the white roses from the bush was left for him. Since then, anyone who found a white rose on his seat in the cathedral would die in the next three days.

When Paweł Zima places a rose on someone's seat, they die like in the legend. But what drives him to choose one target over the other? Is he an avenger, protecting helpless victims? Is he a religious fanatic, targeting the unrighteous? Is he a representative of Fate?

HURT OR SUBDUE 5

- **Curse of the White Rose:** When Paweł Zima has marked a target, the target will die in the next three days in an accident, due to an unforeseen medical condition, or in the hands of someone else. The MC can **Make Something Horrible Happen** as an intrusion, once, to reflect that.
- **Killer Scent:** As a soft move, Paweł Zima can transform into a colorless cloud of rose odor that is otherwise undetectable and enter any space that isn't airtight. The maximum of his *hurt-or-subdue* spectrum becomes –. He can reassume his physical form as a soft move.
- **Inscrutable:** To ask the MC a question about Paweł Zima, you must spend three Clues instead of one. At the MCs option, you may be able to combine Clues with another player.
- **Deadly Adversary:** When you attack Paweł Zima, he appears next to you from the shadows, if he so wishes. You first take *disabled-5* or *stabbed-through-the-heart-6*, MC's choice.
- **Benediction:** When Paweł Zima takes a status from a source that is inherently evil or dark, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- **Poisoned Daggers:** Once per session, Paweł Zima may use poison on his daggers. Anyone who takes a status from the daggers also takes *poisoned-3*. As a hard move, the MC can increase the tier of a *poisoned* status by one.
- Tackle a threat with martial arts and his daggers (*disabled-5* or *stabbed-through-the-heart-6*)
- Mark someone by placing a white rose on their seat or where they can find it
- Vanish in the shadows and leave the scene (**Deny Them Something They Want**)





ISABELLA AGUILAR

Xochiquetzal, Lady of Feathers and Flowers, Aztec goddess of beauty

"The gig was in full momentum when I got there. Through the smoke in the club I could hear the fangirls screaming and the band was killing it. Things have been, like, different for me since I had that vision, so I was out of sync with the scene. I asked a guy about the band; he looked at me with disdain and said it was Adam Drake's band, and that they've been all the rage this week. Frankly, I thought Drake's music was pretty mediocre, but everyone else seemed hypnotized. Well, it turns out they were."

–Flicker

Everybody knows Isabella Aguilar – she's the City's foremost superstar. Her visage hangs from every building downtown on giant billboards and her music is played on all mainstream radio stations. Fans adore the earth she walks on, TV shows and gossip columnists cover her every move (and outfit), and hipsters love to hate her. Little do they know that the diva Isabella is a real, flesh-and-blood goddess.

Isabella wants the world to be beautiful, for everyone. She envisions a world where mankind lives in harmony with nature, where flowers flourish and bloom everywhere, and beautiful birds with bright and colorful plumages soar through the multi-hued sunrise sky. If she had her way, she would replace all the concrete and metal structures in the City with a lush jungle where people could live happily and all their needs would be catered for. Isabella wants to rebuild paradise, and she has secretly named her vision after the mythical home of her Mythos: Tamoanchan.

No-one could deny that Isabella is using her celebrity status to support a good cause. On every public performance she makes, Isabella calls her fans and indeed the whole world to return to a state of love and harmony, to support the preservation of the planet's ecological beauty, and to protect endangered species (of birds, especially). She uses her influence to promote "green" politicians and initiatives and to pressure the government into action where the wheels of bureaucracy move too slowly, but always with unmatched kindness and grace. Among the mainstream population of the City, she is an absolute consensus; even the few who do not like her music value her contribution to building a better world.

But the Lady of Feather and Flowers, when angered, can be unforgiving. Isabella is hiding a big secret under her beautiful plumage and behind her perfect smile: she has been angry with mankind for a long time over their mindless destruction of natural beauty. For over two decades she has been leading an eco-terrorist organization that has viciously struck the City's infrastructure time after time and brought it down to its knees. No-one knows that this compassionate promoter of love and world peace is also a terrorist and, on occasion, a ruthless killer. Isabella plans to keep it this way, at least until the time is ripe to take over the City and shape it into the paradise she envisions.

OVERVIEW OF ISABELLA

Agenda: to turn the City into a verdant paradise

MO: celebrity philanthropy by day, eco-terrorism by night

Lesson: to embrace nature's beauty

Motifs: flowers, birds and feathers, butterflies, celebrity persona, double-standard compassion

Frontliners: mundane eco-terrorists (Tamoanchan operatives), Swan Maidens, Trendsetters

Stronghold: the Arboretum

ISABELLA'S MODUS OPERANDI

Isabella realizes that the change she wishes to effect is monumental. Enamoured as they are with her, the City residents are loathe to part with their hyper-processed foods and manufactured urban comforts. Since she never took a liking to direct conflict and has no intentions of terrorizing mankind into submission (much), Isabella focuses on securing a deep-rooted sway over public opinion.

Isabella spends every possible moment making public appearances, not only because she is vain but also because it's a major part of her scheme. Her voice, in particular her singing voice, has an enchanting effect on anyone who hears it. As if hearing an irresistible subliminal message, people start adopting Isabella's views and opinions, change their preferences to match hers and little by little alter their lifestyle to align with what she preaches to. Because of the Mist, this alarming magical effect is stronger when people are close to her and can hear her voice directly, but Isabella is powerful enough to

reach out to people over the radio or even through her recorded albums – it simply takes longer and requires repeated exposures to her content. She therefore ceaselessly runs concerts, does benefits, and meets with policy makers and trendsetters. Anything to get her voice out there.

The more cultural exposure Isabella gets, the more the citizens of the City become fond of all things natural, to the point of becoming more protective of plants and animal life than they are of human life or needs. Even the coldest exterminator, after listening to her songs, could have a strange daydream where he runs in green lush fields with birds, rabbits, deer, rats, and cockroaches. Isabella knows this, but she also knows she can't reach everyone with one medium alone. Therefore, she has worked hard to broaden her cultural foothold by erecting a commercial empire around her self-named brand: she sells clothing, perfume, cosmetics, garden furniture; she has her own record label; she runs a chain of health spas and healthy eateries, etc. – all in order to reach more people. She also uses the money from this enterprise to buy property and increase the size of parks and gardens in the City. Most residents are in love with this idea but this encroachment on the City's residential space is affecting the real-estate market, making housing less affordable.

Sadly, however, municipal regulations and public opinion do little to prevent greedy corporations from polluting the natural environment of the City. This aspect of humanity's disrespect to beauty is handled by Isabella's eco-terrorist cell, named Tamoanchan after her vision. Publically, she is outspoken about Tamoanchan needing to come clean and choose the path of compassion. Behind the scenes, she imparts mythical powers on the members of this organization, provides them with ample funding, and equips them with Relics. Tamoanchan are Isabella's dark and vindictive side: they bomb corporate headquarters and assassinate executives responsible for natural destruction; they release algae into the water system, clogging it and sending the public rushing to natural water sources, causing panic and disruption; they have shut down the power to the City a number of times, making outrageous demands. They will stop at nothing to achieve Isabella's goal. In fact, they are working on a biological agent that can rapidly digest cement, a substance that will play a key role in Isabella's plan to transform the City into a lush green paradise.

ISABELLA'S OPERATION

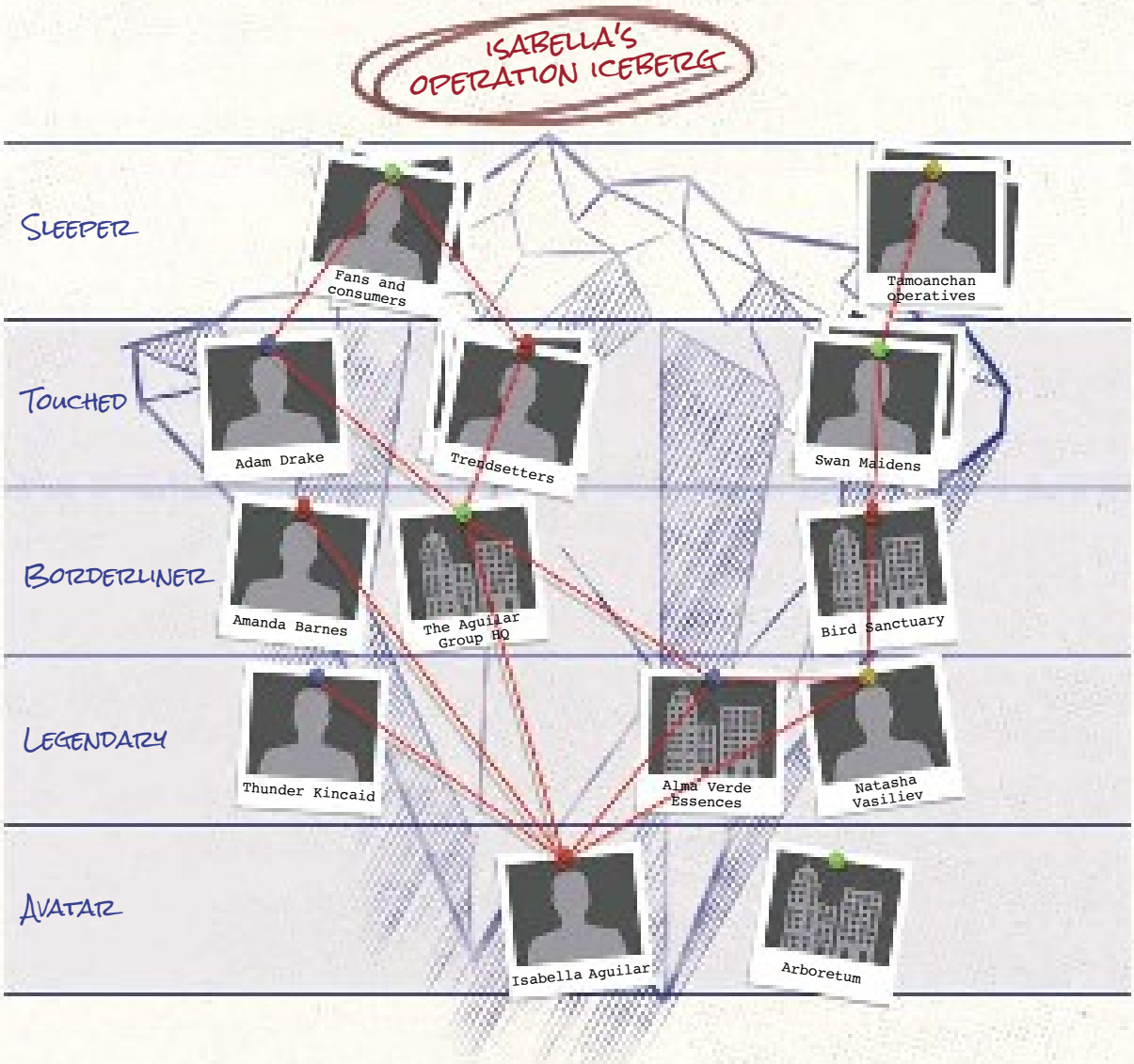
Isabella's operation has two branches: the public branch and the eco-terrorist branch.

KEY CHARACTERS

The public branch is effectively managed by Isabella's personal assistant, **AMANDA BARNES** (Benzaiten, Japanese goddess of everything that flows: water, time, words, and music). Amanda fully subscribes to Isabella's views on ecological issues and is probably her number one fan. She is also one of Isabella's major assets, masterfully managing her tight schedule (a little time-bending goes a long way) and navigating the delicacies of running a successful company. Keeping an air of professionalism has been more and more difficult for Amanda, who has been developing feelings towards her boss. She knows Isabella is more than she lets on and she is aware of her boss's powers but her Borderliner sensibilities tell her exploring any further would tip the balance too much in favor of her Mythos, so she leaves things as they are.

The other person permanently present at Isabella's side is her bodyguard, a former professional wrestler called **THUNDER KINCAID** (Quetzalcoatl, the feathered serpent). As the mythological son of Xochiquetzal and a feathered creature, Kincaid is highly susceptible to Isabella's powers of persuasion and obeys her every order, even though he is not necessarily a proponent of her agenda. As fast as a hurricane and as powerful as the sun, Kincaid is a mighty Rift in and of himself and provides all the protection Isabella needs, even from dangerous Rifts (although the media sometimes questions his ability to protect her, due to his lack of suitable training). For now, Isabella has full control over him, but the destiny of Quetzalcoatl may prove to be beyond her manipulations.

Isabella often selects prominent individuals from her fan base or society at large to serve as her ambassadors by promoting her products and expanding her presence in the City's cultural life. These **TRENDSETTERS** are often gifted with Isabella's



limited-edition garments or cosmetic products that give them a fraction of her powers of enchantment and allure, propelling their popularity and helping them spread the word while making them die-hard fans of Isabella and her agenda. One of these Trendsetters is the folky singer-songwriter and hipster heartthrob **ADAM DRAKE** who is signed to Isabella's label, which also provided the rustic acoustic guitar that helps him conquer audiences Isabella finds hard to reach. Adam exemplifies how Isabella's operation, disguised as The Aguilar Group, uses the mundane entertainment, cosmetics, and recreation industries to manage the Trendsetters without ever getting Isabella herself involved.

Isabella's terrorist branch is run by **NATASHA VASILIEV** (Artemis), a highly-trained eco-terrorist with a rich criminal record. Natasha's Mythos' motives and agenda align almost perfectly with those of Isabella, with the main difference being that Natasha is not much of talker. She is more concerned with how to stop humanity's senseless abuse of nature and she is willing to go to great lengths to achieve her goals. On the field, nothing evades Vasiliev or her composite bow. She can strike nature's enemies with arrows that make them not only bleed, but also contract disease, suffer from misfortune, or lose their loved ones. Besides continuing her campaign of terror against

the City's polluters and their supporters, her most urgent responsibility is to back the development of a mythical substance that could turn the City into a lush forest once again. This includes the procurement of two things that currently belong to Helix Labs: the product of a project dubbed DRYAD – and the project's chief scientist.

Natasha works with different Rifts and Sleeper operatives to accomplish the Tamoanchan objectives. These remote assets, whether an individual or a cell of operatives, are often contacted and managed by handlers called the **SWAN MAIDENS**. Swan Maidens are given feathered garments that allow them to fly as well as to disguise themselves, which makes them quite hard to intercept. Each Swan Maiden undergoes meticulous vetting before joining Tamoanchan and rigorous training thereafter. Once they wear their feathered garments and take flight for the first time, they invariably become staunch believers in Tamoanchan's cause thanks to Isabella's powers.

Under the guidance of the Swan Maiden's, **TAMOANCHAN OPERATIVES** target the enemies of nature in the City, leaving mayhem and destruction in their wake. They are not beyond abducting and threatening family members of decision makers or spraying a City park packed with people with animal blood to get their point across. Most of them don't take pleasure in hurting others but will do what is necessary to protect nature's children from what they perceive as the most unnatural beast of them all: mankind.

KEY LOCATIONS

The public branch of Isabella's operation is centered around **THE AGUILAR GROUP HQ**, a beautiful skyscraper built entirely of durable yet biodegradable materials developed by the Group's own labs and brandishing an ingenious architectural design that combines natural elements and modern amenities. Isabella is still unimpressed by this urban monstrosity, but she acknowledges the role it must play as her legitimate front. Most of the Aguilar Group's activities are managed from here, including a record label, a clothing line, a line of cosmetic products, a brand of musical instruments, a magazine, a chain of spas, resorts, and eateries, etc.

The real "science" takes place at **ALMA VERDE ESSENCES**, an independent cosmetics company that is nevertheless controlled by Isabella and her charms. This is where Isabella's enchanted products are manufactured by herbalists and botanists endowed with her arcane knowledge of the magical properties of flowers. In another facility, Alma Verde Essences also create all the biological agents used by Tamoanchan and they are working to crack the essences needed for Isabella's endgame substance.

An obscure **BIRD SANCTUARY** somewhere at the edge of the park is used to raise all manners of legendary birds and butterflies. These creatures, who hatch from eggs and cocoons stolen by Tamoanchan, willingly stay in this place and serve Isabella. Currently, it holds a roc, two griffins, five cockatrices, and even a phoenix. Their feathers are sewn into Hagoromos, the Swan Maiden's garments, to give them different powers. The Swan Maidens will protect this place at the cost of their own lives – or the lives of others.

With her busy public life, Isabella doesn't have much time for herself. She keeps a few apartments and houses (mostly downtown or in one of the gated communities), but when she needs a respite from the intensity of her operation she goes to the old **ARBORETUM**, an overgrown public garden in the Old Quarter that was abandoned years ago. The place serves as a crossing point to an Enclave of the fabled Tamoanchan (the mythical place, not the terrorist organization named after it). Oddly enough, visitors hold differing opinions on this place. Natasha dislikes it; situated way up in the clouds with winds that cut like razors, it's too windy and wild for her taste and not at all serene, a rather mad version of paradise with a tree that bleeds human blood in its center (Aztec, after all). Thunder Kincaid, on the other hand, finds it refreshing; it's the only place in the City he can let himself go and fully transform into the enormous feathered serpent that he is. Isabella ignores both of them. Still caught in the trappings of a mortal life, they do not understand what true beauty is, judging it only by what is pleasant or unpleasant to them. Isabella is no longer limited to this form of thinking; she intends to show the world the meaning of awe-inspiring magnificence.

ISABELLA'S HISTORY

Despite what her youthful look might suggest, Isabella has been in the Avatar game for a few good decades. Xochiquetzal awakened within her when she was a teenager, singing along to the latests hits in the blue-collar residential neighborhood while people stopped to listen below her window. She knew then that she wanted to bring beauty and love to the world, to everyone. A record label picked her up soon thereafter and she became a hit overnight.

Despite her secret life as a Rift, Isabella married several times and had a child, Paloma, whom she loved more than anything. As the years went by, Paloma grew up and became more and more beautiful. Xochiquetzal, in the meantime, wanted Isabella to fight for a paradise on Earth. Isabella started speaking her opinions more publicly, protesting in rallies, burning tires on the streets. She was arrested, released, and had to fight for custody of her daughter with her ex-husband, who thought she was unfit to be a parent. Her success and money made all these problems go away but they didn't satisfy Xochiquetzal.

She was protesting against the bulldozing of a park in the Old Quarter with Paloma at her side when the real-estate developers decided they had enough and sent the bulldozers to scare the protesters away. Isabella would not budge, holding her daughter behind her. Nobody really knows what happened that moment, perhaps not even Isabella. The bulldozer hit the child, mortally wounding her. Was it an accident? Was someone else involved? Or did Isabella sacrifice her sweetest bird to save the park? She knew she could not save her, not as a mortal, so she allowed Xochiquetzal in and, using her powers, transformed Paloma into a tree. That tree then became the center of the Enclave of Tamoanchan. The park to be demolished was the Arboretum.

Even as she was overcome by grief, Isabella was overwhelmed by the beauty of Tamoanchan. She could not escape the realization that true beauty requires the greatest sacrifice, a lesson she swore to impart to the inhabitants of the City.

ISABELLA'S STORY SEEDS

- An up-and-coming rock band's gigs repeatedly erupt into violent riots, attracting the crew's attention. The crew investigates backstage and discovers the band's manager is a Trendsetter and that he has tampered with the sound system to include the music of a mythical musical instrument.
- The crew could be recruited by a Swan Maiden to attack and shut down a factory in the Industrial Zone that is illegally polluting the City's drinking water. They may or may not discover that while they were keeping the factory's security team occupied, the Swan Maiden stole an experimental serum from a safe in the factory lab.
- In a charity gala funded by the Aguilar Group and attended by crew members, a few of the guests take everyone present hostage until the City municipality answers their unrealistic demands. The crew must resolve the situation and find out if this is a spontaneous uprising (work of the Trendsetters and Isabella's products) or an organized infiltration and attack by members of Tamoanchan.
- A body shows up in the crew's turf covered with fungus-like green blotches. If the crew investigates it would lead them to a testing ground for an unstable version of the DRYAD biological

agent: an abandoned high-rise project on the outskirts of the City, where entire buildings collapse and turn into bioactive dirt that aggressively sprouts plant life.

- Natasha Vasiliev herself tasks the crew with a mission to find a one-of-a-kind legendary flower, vital to the completion of her DRYAD project. In return she promises them fortune, fame, or a potion that one of them needs desperately. The flower is virtually impossible to find or to retrieve. It may be hidden in the castle of another Avatar, deep within a dangerous Enclave, in the hands of the Gatekeepers, or even outside of the City.

ISABELLA'S CUSTOM MOVES

A New Trend: Every time you have downtime and choose to give attention to a Logos theme, someone related to that theme starts talking about the ecological state of affairs in the City, what more can be done for animals and wildlife, or a new public figure that is calling to regulate pollution and construction. They take *following-2*.

ISABELLA'S DANGERS

For Tamoanchan operatives, use Hired Thugs or a Heist Team.

TRENDSETTERS ★★

To represent a Trendsetter use the Social Butterfly Danger profile. In addition, a Trendsetter has the following moves:

Popular: When you publicly shame or threaten a Trendsetter, you first take *humiliated-3* as her fans boo you.

Influence an audience and turn them into her followers (*following-2*) or beguile an individual with her charms (*charmed-2*)

ALMA VERDE HERBALIST ★★

Alma Verde's herbalists are usually confined to their labs. They depend on security or Tamoanchan operatives to get them out of trouble but when the going gets rough they can also use their strange pseudo-science to their advantage.

CONCOCT 3 / HURT OR SUBDUE 3

- **Regenerative Serum:** As a soft move, if the herbalist is not dead and can ingest her regenerative serum, remove any physical harm statuses the Herbalist has.
- **It's Ready!:** When the *concoct* spectrum is maxed out, the herbalist can use one concoction from the list below. Remove any statuses on this spectrum.
- Gather *ingredients*
- Work on a concoction (*I'm-working-on-it!-1*,or *almost-there-2* if she has the *ingredients*)
- Try to escape or call for help

Concoctions:

- **Sleep Gas:** Everyone around except the Herbalist takes *knocked-out-5*.
- **Feathery Escape:** The Herbalist transforms into a human-bird hybrid and escapes.
- **Aphrodisiac:** Everyone around except the Herbalist takes *romantic-5*.
- **Fungus Monsters:** Create a new Danger with a *hurt-or-subdue:4* spectrum, a handful of members (size factor of 1), and the ability to creep over and consume targets (*biodegraded-flesh-3*). Thanks to pheromones the herbalist applied, these monsters avoid her.
- **DRYAD Prototype:** One target takes *fatally-biodegraded-5*.


ALMA VERDE

SWAN MAIDENS ★★★

CATCH 4 / HURT OR SUBDUE 3

- **Evasive Maneuvers:** When a Swan Maiden enters the scene, give her *evasive-3*. If she loses this status, the MC can renew it as a hard move.
- Put a spell on someone (*beguiled-3*)
- Shoot someone with a submachine gun (*gunshot-3*) or hit them hard (*bruise-2*)
- Take flight and disappear (**Deny Them Something They Want**)

In addition, each Swan Maiden's Hagoromo has one special power, depending on the creature whose feathers it is made of:

- **Griffon:** The Swan Maiden can grow ironlike talons (*mauled-4*, hard move)
- **Cocatrice:** The Swam Maiden's touch turns people to stone (*petrified-3*, hard move).
- **Roc:** The Swan Maiden grows larger and gains supernatural strength. Give her a size factor of 1 (treat her like a collective).
- **Nightingale:** The Swan Maiden's song can heal wounds and repel death (remove up to 2 tiers from physical harm statuses, hard move)
- **Pheonix:** When the Swan Maiden's *hurt-or-subdue* spectrum is maxed out, she goes out in a great conflagration and turns to ashes. Everyone around her takes *burns-5*. The Hagoromo reforms at the bird sanctuary but the Swan Maiden does not.

AMANDA BARNES ★★★

BRIBE OR THREATEN – / LEGALLY BIND 4 / PARADOX 4

- **Divert the Flow of Time:** As an MC intrusion, Amanda can escape any move made by someone who is not a time bender. She takes *paradox-1*.
- **Make the Impossible Happen:** Amanda takes *paradox-1* whenever she strains to accommodate Isabella Aguilar's busy schedule.
- **Space-Time Paradox:** When the *paradox* spectrum is maxed out, Amanda passes out or becomes involved in a time-bending accident. Remove any statuses on this spectrum.
- **Corporate Wording:** When you spend a Clue to ask a question with Amanda as your source, the MC can choose to give answers that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false (as in the 7-9 option of **Investigate**).
- Amanda can control the flow of water, creating *undercurrents*. She can have someone *sucked-into-a-whirlpool-4* if they are in a body of water that is deep enough.
- Call security or the police (create a new Danger: Beat Cops / Security Guards)

NATASHA VASILIEV ★★★★

CATCH OR OUTRUN 5 / HARM OR SUBDUE 4

- **Hunter Goddess:** When Natasha enters the scene, give her *alert-4*, *stealthy-4* and *evasive-4*. If she loses any of these statuses, the MC can renew some or all of them as a hard move. These statuses cannot exceed tier 4.
- **Bow of Artemis:** When you take a status from Natasha's arrows, you take an additional tier-3 status of the MC's choice representing the arrow she used, e.g., *poisoned-3*, *sick-3*, *unlucky-3*.
- **Alma Verde Pouch Kit:** Once per scene, Natasha can use one of the Alma Verde Herbalist concoctions as a hard move.
- **Vanish:** Once per session, Natasha can escape the crew as a soft move.
- Fire a volley of arrows, hitting any number of targets (*arrow-wounds-3*) or one lethal arrow (*mortal-wound-5* or, once per scene, *arrow-through-the-heart-6*)

THUNDER KINCAID ★★★★★

CATCH OR OUTRUN 6 / HARM OR SUBDUE 6

- **Invincible:** When Thunder Kincaid takes a physical harm status, reduce the tier of the status by 5. When Thunder Kincaid takes a physical subdual status, reduce the tier of the status by 3.
- **Unwavering Destiny:** Thunder Kincaid is unaffected by any moves that tamper with his destiny or predetermine it, including moves that disturb the flow of time or foresee his actions.
- **Feathered Serpent:** As a soft move, Thunder Kincaid can transform into a giant feathered serpent or reassume his human form. Thunder Kincaid can fly in both forms.
- **Faster Than the Wind:** Once per scene, an MC intrusion, Thunder Kincaid can interrupt one move and make a hard move.
- Claw, bite, buffet with tail, smite with a thunder punch, burn with a lightning strike, or frighten someone to death by revealing his true face (*dying-5* or *all-but-destroyed-5* and burn one defensive tag)
- Be amused at attempts to harm or outmaneuver him

KWAKU

Anansi the Spider, spirit of all stories

"The spider… *thing*… was hunched in the shadows of the upper corner of my bedroom, with its long legs stretched across the walls. When it spoke, it hissed with many voices speaking different words in weird languages, but I understood. I told him what he asked for was too dangerous. He said that my parents were hiding something from me, something that belonged to me, my destiny. He told me to go to the home office and he showed me how to override the security system and open the safe. Then it left, but everything had already changed forever."

–Lily Chow

Everyone loves a good story, but none more than Kwaku Noble, Avatar of Anansi the Spider. He sits at the center of his web, spinning tales and listening to the stories coming back to him as tremors on the gossamer threads. Kwaku is pleased when a story he made is being told over and over again. He ponders how to make his stories better and then weaves them into the fate of the City.

Some people are entertained by comedy while others enjoy a tragedy; some want action while others want drama or horror. Kwaku knows this better than anyone. Anansi doesn't mind what a story is about, only that it is entertaining and compelling enough to be told again and again. He is looking for that one special story, a tale of epic proportions that will be told throughout eternity and he chose Kwaku to dream up this story for him. Kwaku's mission is to engineer entertaining stories all throughout the City, cultivate them, and spin them, until one of them emerges as the legend he was looking for.

Kwaku knows that only truly mythical events could provide the basis for a legend such as the one he seeks. In his visions, Anansi has told him that he should deceive and capture three animals: a vain python, a gullible leopard, and a self-serving nest of hornets. Kwaku wants to unravel the true identity of these proverbial beasts in the City. Knowing his Mythos, he suspects at least one of them is an Avatar; if that's true, luring them into his web may very well be the epic tale he was looking for, with him in its center. However, Kwaku knows Anansi better than anyone; he knows the old spider doesn't like to stay in one place or support the same protagonist for long. Kwaku wonders if his own Mythos is deceiving him, making a story out of him. The more he considers it, the more he is sure of it; but since they are now one, he too is curious to see how his own story will unfold.

OVERVIEW OF KWAKU

Agenda: to use the City to tell entertaining and compelling stories
MO: a private media network that not only covers stories but also engineers them
Desire: to be entertained
Motifs: spiders, media, technology, trickery
Frontliners: mundane informers, mundane heist teams, Webflo reporters, Tar Babies, Nightcrawlers
Stronghold: None

KWAKU'S MODUS OPERANDI

To find the most compelling stories in the City, Kwaku, who is a master of technology, constructed a web like no other, a web of words and images: a media network dubbed "Webflo". This news outlet, focusing mostly on celebrity news and gossip, has grown to be one of the City's most resourceful investigative agencies, digging up the most well-hidden scoops and then going public with them. Webflo has exposed hundreds of scandalous scoops so far and they are not slowing down. There isn't a politician, a businessperson, or a celebrity who isn't looking over her shoulder when she does something morally wrong or socially reprimandable to see if a Webflo reporter is snapping her picture.

Webflo's network is an elaborate one. Informants in every strata of society listen in on local word of mouth and report back. Rumors from barber shops, nail salons, bookstores, and bars are Kwaku's bread-and-butter, providing him with an intimate knowledge of the City's going-ons. No secret is safe from him. The phones in the agency's call center are constantly ringing off the hook with exciting news or hot leads. Many informants are regulars and are practically a part of the Webflow team but many others are spontaneous callers who just saw something weird and felt the urge to tell Kwaku. If a happening was witnessed by more than one person, it is very likely to find its way to a report on Kwaku's web. He particularly likes the strange stories, the ones he knows are about Rifts (even if the informant is a total Sleeper). These have the most potential of exploding into something big.

Depending on your series concept and the era in which you are playing, Webflo may be using different technology to disseminate information. However, it should always be using the most advanced technology available.

If you're playing in the roaring 30s, Webflo is a radio broadcasting agency and its reporters take notes in a notepad. If you're playing in the 80s, Webflo is a popular TV channel with camera crews driving vans with satellite dishes all over the City. In modern-times, Webflo is an internet company whose vloggers capture news with their mobile phones.

As reports from his network stream into Kwaku's center of command, he sifts through them to find which ones could evolve into a story worth telling. Webflo reporters don't just look for finished stories, they also look for potential stories. When Kwaku's people see potential in an emerging situation in the City, their master's storyteller aspect kicks in. Kwaku uses his operation to actively intervene in a story to make it better. From his experience, adding a chaotic and unexpected twist to a story makes it surprising and exhilarating for the audience. Kwaku loves throwing a wrench into a developing story and watch how it turns into something completely different. If a successful power couple is rapidly ascending the City's social ladder, he might run an embarrassing story about one of them to see how they hold up or nudge their child into going on a dangerous adventure. If somewhere in the blue-collar residential neighborhood kids are being bullied by a teenage Rift, Kwaku is not beyond orchestrating the awakening of one girl who will stand up to the bully.

Kwaku has a natural affinity for underdogs and underserved populations – that "rising from the gutter" spin may be trite but everybody loves a tear-jerker. He doesn't envy the heroes he makes; people tend to get lazy when the work is being done for them and the more they rely on Kwaku's help, the greater his temptation is to leave them hanging and see how they fare (that "hero loses her powers" spin is another favorite of his). Kwaku rarely hurts his protagonists directly, but he certainly makes sure their lives are interesting, sometimes more interesting than they would like them to be.

An admirer of technology, Kwaku likes to gift his proteges with Relics. Relics can be given and they can be taken away, which makes things more interesting. Kwaku's people are always on the hunt for new Relics to add to his collection. When the time comes, Kwaku picks out the most suitable inanimate Rift he possesses and drops it unexpectedly into the hands of a Sleeper in need and *voila!* A new legend is born.

KWAKU'S OPERATION

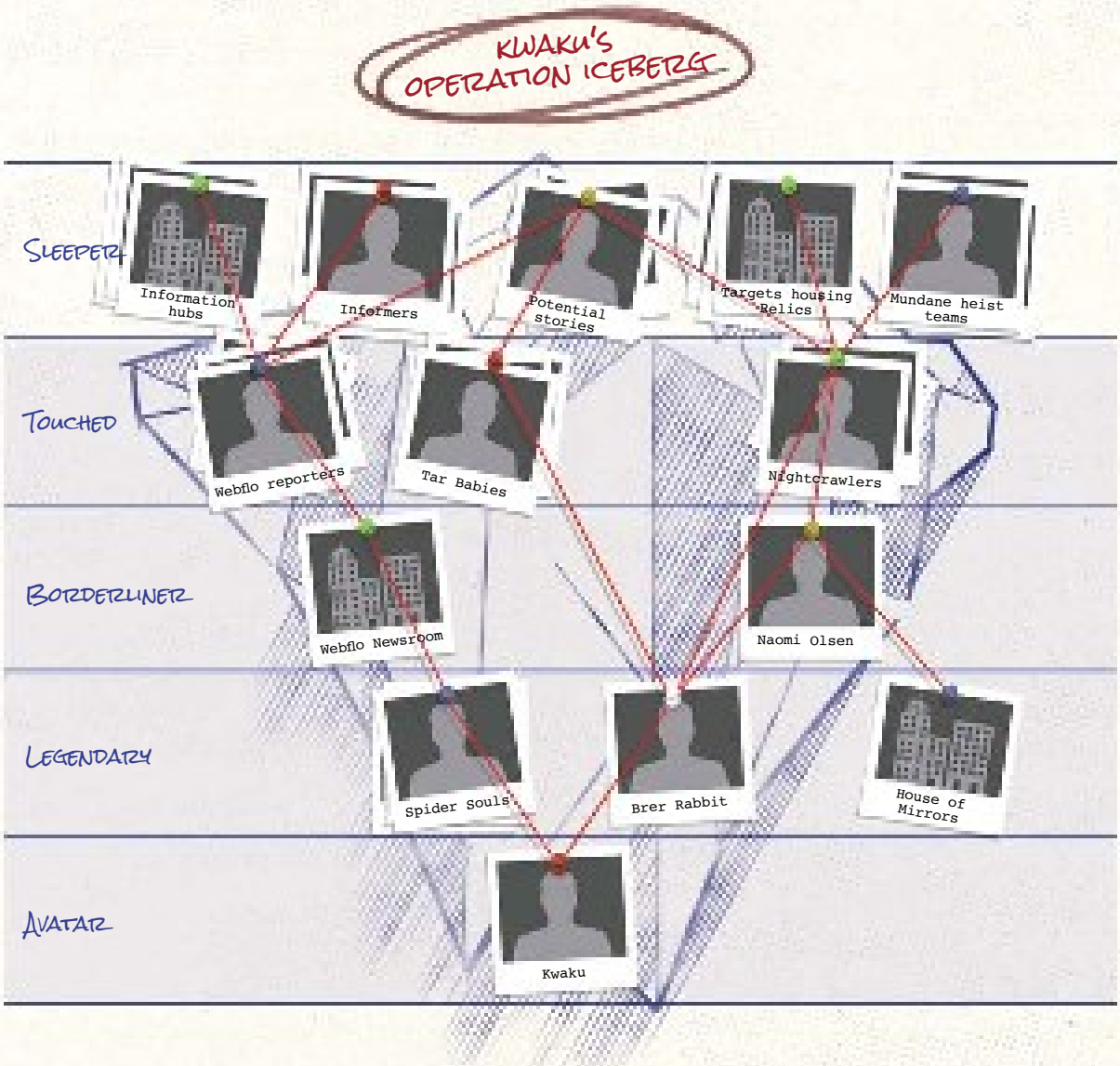
Hiding behind the Webflo front, Kwaku's operation uses the same main branch

both to collect information and to engineer stories, with different side branches of the operation responsible for specific activities. In the spirit of its creator, Anansi, the operation is extremely fluid and adaptive: in one case, the same reporter can investigate a story, then intervene in it, and then cover the consequences, whereas in another case ten different operatives of Kwaku's could be involved in different roles, all depending on the circumstances.

KEY CHARACTERS

Kwaku's stories start with a lead from an **INFORMER** on the field. Informers are most often Sleepers but they can be anyone in Kwaku's operation who runs into an incident worth reporting. The story is then picked up by a **WEBFLO REPORTER**, who usually lets the newsroom know they are working on something. Webflo Reporters are crafty and manipulative and can make themselves appear innocuous or forgettable (raising suspicions among other Avatars that Kwaku is cooperating with the Gatekeepers). The reporter investigates the case and profiles the story, assessing its potential entertainment value for Kwaku.

Once the potential of a story is established, the reporter may decide to intervene herself or, if it seems the story is out of her league, pass it back to the newsroom. When the stakes are exceptionally high, **ADANKO GYASI** (Brer Rabbit) takes over from the newsroom and ensures that the story will turn into a delightful mess. Often in a smart-casual linen suit and a straw boater hat, Gyasi is a smooth



operator and a master of deceit, almost as cunning as Kwaku himself. He gets very creative when choosing predicaments for the protagonists in his stories and can orchestrate complex operations to make them happen. He is also a master of escape and has emerged unharmed out of several extremely sticky encounters with other Avatars' heavy-hitters.

Adanko uses his very own invention, the **TAR BABIES** (Tar Baby), when it's time to implicate a protagonist in some trouble. These sticky creatures are best described as animated webs of accident dressed in an innocent human form; once a passerby greets them, they will follow this person everywhere and get them into any sort of trouble and mishap possible. It takes a Tar Baby no more than a few hours to tarnish the name of a respectable member of society and up to a week to implicate a more shrewd individual. The target must never suspect that the Tar Baby is working for someone else; when cut, Tar Babies bleed out the pitch black viscous substance they're made of. Their other downside is that they are costly to make; Adanko hasn't been able to conjure one up without Kwaku's help, at least so far.

The side-branch of Relic acquisition is run by **NAOMI OLSEN** (Loki), a fence and a master thief from the Old Quarter. Olsen has been collecting Relics since before Kwaku recruited her. Back then,

she funded her hobby by selling other valuable artifacts she acquired in similarly illegal ways. She uses Webflo's resources and her own research to find out where Relics are being held in the City. Once she marks a target, Olsen will send her own **NIGHTCRAWLERS** to retrieve it. These stealthy criminals wield some of Kwaku's abilities such as clinging to walls and producing small amounts of sticky filaments, just enough to pull an artifact into their hands. Olsen also hires mundane heist teams made of con artists, security system experts, masterminds, etc. If the job is a dangerous one, she recruits suitable Rifts or does the job herself. Once a Relic is obtained, it is usually put to good use by Adanko Gyasi, who uses the Nightcrawlers (or, if necessary, a Spider Soul, see below) as a delivery service to get the Relic over to the right candidate and alter the course of their fate.

Since Kwaku remains forever in the shadows and since most of his operation is built out of self-serving two-timers, he needs reliable messengers to communicate with Webflo and make sure his interests are protected. For this, he created the **SPIDER SOULS**. Like the Tar Babies, Spider Souls are not Rifts, nor are they human beings; they are conglomerations of gossamer and shadows that Kwaku conjured from the snuffed souls of those who tried to trick him and were tricked in return, to their doom. Able to materialize or turn incorporeal at will, Spider Souls are made of smoky shadows that are impossible to capture or track. They can assume any form, but when stripped of their illusory appearances they appear as tall spindly humanoids with jet black skin, eight long limbs, and a face covered in glassy green orbs that serve as their eyes. No-one knows how many of them exist or even if they are multiple individuals; perhaps they are all a single conjuration that can appear in multiple locations in the City at the same time.

KEY LOCATIONS

Webflo's informers and reporters often operate in local **INFORMATION HUBS,** from trendy bars downtown to tenement stoops in the slums. Any rumor that crosses lips in these monitored locations will make its way to Webflo.

The **WEBFLO NEWSROOM** is situated in the 53rd story of a prominent downtown skyscraper connected to a few other skyscrapers with sky bridges. Most people working here are Sleepers, who do a good job pushing the information along and managing the reporters on the ground. There is also a production team and a studio here that is used by different members in the organization to broadcast important stories. Kwaku and Adanko Gyasi track the work here remotely and chime in when they spot a story with enough potential. At least one of the employees here is a Spider Soul, keeping an eye out – or eight – for Kwaku.

The process of matching a Relic to one of Kwaku's downtrodden potentials is a tricky one. Kwaku must find a candidate that the Relic would accept as its bearer and the Relic must be useful in pushing the candidate towards the story development Kwaku is planning. When the acquisition branch gets a hold of a Relic for which Kwaku doesn't have an immediate fitting candidate, it is sent to the **HOUSE OF MIRRORS**. This is an actual house of mirrors which appears periodically in different parts of town: sometimes in a fair in the Old Quarter, other times on the boardwalks or as part of a circus that sets up in an empty lot in the Industrial Zone. The visible part is used normally by Sleepers, but when Adanko Gyasi or a Spider Soul enter they can step through some of the mirrors into a phantom plane. Following a secret pattern along the mirror maze, they can eventually emerge in a secure room, guarded by a host of Spider Souls. In its center stands a barrel-sized emptied out calabash (a dried squash-like fruit used as a receptacle). Kwaku's servants can reach into it and store or take out a Relic; to do so, one must be able to trick the calabash into giving away its contents.

Kwaku himself has no permanent home; he is a wanderer and a storyteller, and so he loves nothing more than to walk the streets of the City and mix with the heroes of his stories. One day he is a rich man dining in a fancy restaurant with a homeless person he picked up on the street. The next day he could be that homeless person strumming on the guilty conscience of a privileged college girl. Even Kwaku doesn't know where he will be tomorrow and he doesn't want to know. Where's the fun in that?

KWAKU'S STORY SEEDS

The crew or one of the crew members can become investigative reporters working for Webflow, either as freelancers or as Webflo's employees. As they investigate their assignments they could uncover Webflo's own involvement in the stories it brings to light.

A safe in the vault of the City Central Bank may be marked as a target by the Nightcrawlers, who think there is a valuable Relic inside. If the hit was successful, the crew must investigate the crime, find the elusive Nightcrawler et al, and retrieve the artifact. If it was not successful, the crew has a chance to lure some spiders into their trap.

A helpless individual who is at the center of a Webflo story (possibly a Tar Baby victim) could ask the crew for help in getting out of the mess he or she got into. When the crew gets in the way of the story, Kwaku and his agents find a way to spin it in their favor.

Kwaku or Adanko Gyasi could single out one of the lead characters as the up-and-coming star of one of their stories, showering him or her with Relics, Tar Babies, and complications to bring about the most spectacular circumstances possible – at the lead character's expense.

KWAKU'S HISTORY

Several decades ago, Kwaku Noble was a brilliant and mischievous kid growing up in a poor neighborhood. As an illegal immigrant to the City, he had to take care of himself and his twin sisters by making money under the table. He began to use his talent for mechanics to soup up unusual cars for drag races, gaining a reputation in the racer circles as the go-to guy for that something extra.

Not long thereafter, one of Kwaku's sisters fell ill. While his other sister tended to her, it fell to Kwaku to get her medicine, but that required a lot more money than he had. Out of options, Kwaku decided to enter one of the biggest drag races himself. As he pulled up in his car, Kwaku looked into the car on the left and saw a bald man with a skull painted on his face grinning back at him with coal-black eyes. The flags dropped down and the cars took off. Skullhead in the lead, Kwaku took off a split second later when suddenly something strange happened. The faint intuition that had always guided his mechanical manipulations, electronic modifications, and practical pranks suddenly amplified into a thundering voice, a voice that spoke to him.

The voice told Kwaku that the man in the car is Death who has come personally to take his sister. If he, Anansi, were allowed to live through Kwaku, all will be well. Kwaku knew he had already consented. As if in a dream, he recalled tampering with the Skullhead's engine before the race.

Gas started to leak out of the Skullhead's smoking car and it slowed down. Kwaku Anansi crossed the finish line. As Skullhead and his gang rushed up to Kwaku, they were tripped by invisible hands. Kwaku escaped with the money and bought the medicine for his sister.

Skullhead, as it turned out, was the young Anatoli Vidale. In the following years, as both men grew strong and powerful, Mr. Vidale continued to hunt for the sister he felt was his while Kwaku repeatedly fooled him. But the stronger Death became, the harder it was to evade him and the greater the sacrifices Kwaku had to make to succeed. Finally, Kwaku devised the ultimate act of trickery, one which would forever ensure the safety of his family: he would hide his sisters even from himself so that they could get on with their lives and no-one would ever bother them again.

As he bid his sisters farewell for the last time, Kwaku's responsibilities and bonds evaporated. He was now a footloose trickster, ready to roam the City, trick whoever comes in his path and tell stories, tell countless stories. Kwaku was all but gone; Anansi was reborn. But sometimes he still wonders if he could outsmart his old self and find his hidden sisters again. So far, he hasn't tried once.

KWAKU'S CUSTOM MOVES

The Lying Calabash: Whenever you wish to take something out of the calabash or put something inside it, you must first **Sneak Around** and fool it. With every attempt the calabash adds to itself a permanent story tag that works against you (*prank*, *trick*, *ruse*, *stunt*, etc.). On a hit, you can choose one item to leave in the calabash or take one item out of it. If you take an item out, the MC will give you an appropriate permanent story tag, if relevant.

The Lying Calabash, Part II: The first time you take something out of the Lying Calabash, it's a decoy that will only work once. When you first use the item, it works to some extent but then crumbles to dust. If you received a tag for this item, the tag expires after one invocation.

The Lying Calabash, Part III: The second time you take something out of the Lying Calabash, it's the real deal, but it has a charm that will make it disappear and go back into the calabash after a short while. If you received a tag for this item, the tag expires when the scene ends.

The Lying Calabash, Part VI: The third time you take something out of the Lying Calabash, you really got it.

KWAKU'S DANGERS

WEBFLO REPORTER ★

To represent a Webflo Reporter, use the Reporter Danger profile. In addition, a Webflo Reporter has the following moves:

Sketchy at Best: When you spend a Clue to ask a question about the reporter, the MC can choose to give answers that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false (as in the 7-9 option of **Investigate**).

NIGHTCRAWLERS ★★

To represent a Nightcrawler, use the Cat Burglar Danger profile, but note that a Nightcrawler's mystical nature allows it to override mystical as well as mundane security measures. In addition, a Nightcrawler has the following moves:

- Climb a wall to evade pursuers (giving herself *out-of-reach-2)*
- Shoot a web at someone (*sticky-2*) or to snatch an item from a distance (as long as it's not firmly fixed in place; this can be used to **Deny Them Something They Want**)

TAR BABY ★★

A Tar Baby always looks and behaves like a real person. It has a false name, a backstory, and sometimes even the trappings of a life: an apartment, a car, a bank account, etc. When you present the Tar Baby's moves to the players, don't expose its nature; instead, use its false name. If the players overcome the Tar Baby but still think she is human, the surprise will await for later.

A Tar Baby can be overcome by physically bursting it open, by using sorcery to dissipate or banish it back to whence it came from, or by exposing it as a threat, in which case its victim might be wise enough to avoid it completely (leading Kwaku's people to recall it).

BANISH 2 / BURST 3 / EXPOSE 4

- **Sticky Situation:** When you first greet [the Tar Baby], she sees you as her soulmate, her best buddy, her savior, or her golden opportunity and wants to follow you wherever you go. You take *bad-luck-2*.
- **Sticky Situation, Part II:** At the end of every scene, downtime, or cutscene [the Tar Baby] spends time with her object of admiration, they take *bad-luck-2*.
- **Sticky Situation, Part III**: When [the Tar Baby]'s object of admiration reaches *bad-luck-5*, [the Tar Baby] involves them in a disaster or a tragedy. The MC makes the move **Make Something Horrible Happen**. [The Tar Baby] is never seen again.
- **Sketchy at Best:** When you spend a Clue to ask a question about [the Tar Baby], the MC can choose to give answers that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false (as in the 7-9 option of **Investigate**).
- Beg the object of her admiration not to leave her
- Show up again after someone got rid of her

NAOMI OLSEN ★★★

To represent Naomi Olsen, use the Smuggler Danger profile. In addition, Naomi Olsen has the following moves:

- **Decoy:** When you catch Naomi Olsen without first verifying it is her, you have one of her decoys instead; it dissipates when you catch it.
- **Hard to Tell:** When you try to **Investigate** to verify whether Naomi Olsen is real or a decoy, calculate your Power but postpone the roll. If you or your crewmate catch her, roll the dice. If you score 12+, you can trade your Clues to make it the real Naomi Olsen.
- Conjure lifelike illusions to confuse her pursuers or enemies (*can't-tell-what's-real-3*)

ADANKO GYASI ★★★★

Adanko Gyasi should be used as a colorful presenter for Kwaku's agenda. He is not an aggressor; if someone attempts to initiate a conflict with him, he will just finish what he has to say and disappear or mysteriously swap places with a Spider Soul in his form, leaving the Spider Soul to handle the fight. He is more interested in instigating a good story, so when he comes in contact with the lead characters, he will likely have several plans underway that will force them to undertake an impossible task, confront a powerful adversary, or **Make a Hard Choice**. If appropriate, use the move **Ruinous Turn of Events** to reflect Gyasi's ability to engineer "interesting" life situations for his targets.

BAD LUCK – / HURT OR SUBDUE 5 / RESTRAIN –

- **The Shell Game:** As an MC intrusion, Adanko is revealed to be Spider Soul in disguise.
- **Uncatchable:** As an MC Intrusion, Adanko leaves the scene.
- **Lucky Bastard:** When you try to affect Adanko with a negative effect (except for one causing forgetfulness), you first take *bad-luck-4*.
- **Ruinous Turn of Events:** Three times per scene in which Adanko is present, the MC can make a hard move as a soft move.
- Reveal to a lead character how he has made her life more interesting

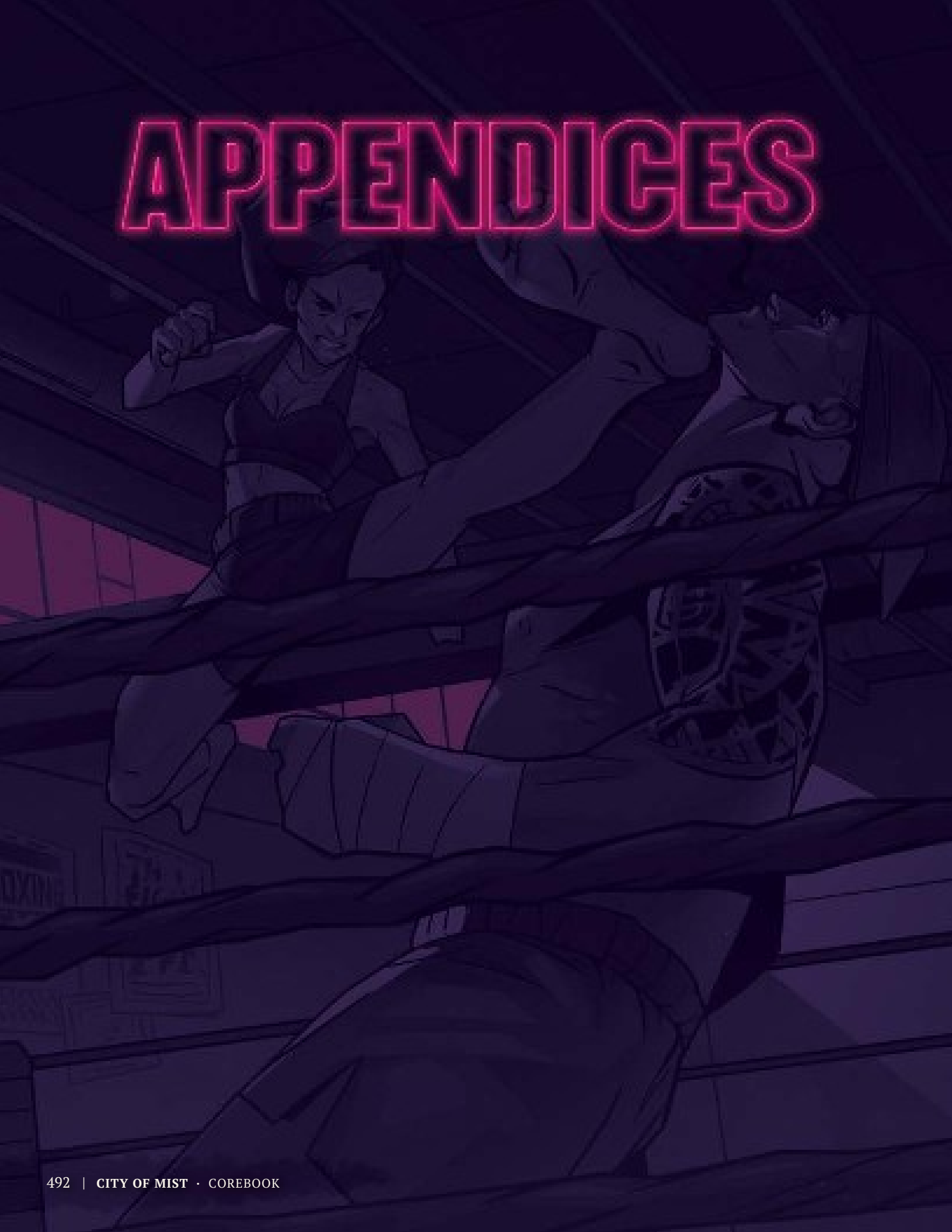
SPIDER SOULS ★★★★★

Spider Souls sometimes take a mundane guise created by their illusory powers (similarly to the Gatekeepers using the Mist). You should narrate this false identity as a perfectly normal and unsuspicious character. When you want to give the players a chance to expose the Spider Soul, you can drop faint hints about the false identity character. Use the move **Creepy Feeling** when the lead characters are already suspecting something and decide to **Investigate**; it reflects the difficulty of obtaining concrete information about the Spider Soul. When you reveal **Creepy Feeling** to the players, use the name of the Spider Soul's false identity (instead of "Spider Souls") to avoid automatically exposing the Spider Souls.

BANISH 6 / CONVINCE OR TURN – / HURT OR SUBDUE –

- **Creepy Feeling:** Whenever you try to **Investigate** to learn more about [false identity], you get a strange feeling that he / she is impenetrable. [False identity] takes *unknowable-4*. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- **Shadow Being:** When a Spider Soul reveals itself as one, give it *hidden-4*. If it loses this status, the MC can renew it as a soft move after one player makes a move without it. It can also impart this status to one more objects or persons it is holding. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- Mysteriously push people into action with its strange presence (*compelled-4*)
- Impale up to six targets with its spidery limbs (burn one defensive tag and then give *impaled-4*) or impale one victim with multiple limbs (burn two defensive tags and then give *pin-cushion-5*)
- Spray sticky web (*restrained-4*) or acidic venom (*poisonous-burns-3*) on an area
- Disappear into the shadows, possibly taking something or someone with it (**Deny Something They Want**)
- Creep along the walls silently like a fluid shadow

APPENDICES



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Burners ★★★★	472
Crime Lord ★★★★	425
Jane Radcliff (Boudica) ★★★★	472
K9 (Cerberus) ★★★★	462
Lily Chow (Prince Of Iron Hans) ★★★★	443
Magic Sword (Flaming Sword Of Eden) ★★★★	440
Mover & Shaker ★★★★	423
Natasha Vasiliev (Artemis) ★★★★	483
Alice (Alice In Wonderland) ★★★★★	437
Elena Albertini (Cassandra) ★★★★★	463
Paweł Zima (The White Rose) ★★★★★	472
Samuel Valtierra (Baron Samedi) ★★★★★	440
Spider Souls ★★★★★	491
Thunder Kincaid (Quetzalcoatl) ★★★★★	483

DANGERS IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Adanko Gyasi (Brer Rabbit) ★★★★ 491
Alice (Alice In Wonderland) ★★★★★ 437
Alma Verde Herbalist ★★ 480
Amanda Barnes (Benzaiten) ★★★ 482
Beast +★ 432
Beat Cops / Security Guards ★ 428
Belay Theron (Shaka Zulu) ★★★★ 472
Burners ★★★★ 472
Cat Burglar ★★ 425
Chinthe Statues (Chinthe) ★★★ 444
City Official ★ 421
City Resident, Helpless 422
Con Artist ★★ 425
Consigliere ★★ 462
Creature of Darkness +★★ 433
Crime Lord ★★★★ 425
Delinquent Teenagers ★ 426
Demigod or Giant +★★ 433
Derelict Building ★ 431
Detective / Investigator ★★ 428
Elena Albertini (Cassandra) ★★★★★ 463
Enforcers ★★ 460
Epidemic, Citywide ★★★ 432
Gatekeeper Agents ★★★ 444
Getaway Vehicle ★★ 426
Ghost Or Spirit +★ 433
Golem Or Elemental +★ 433
Heist Team ★★★+ 426
Hired Thugs ★★ 427
Hitman ★★★ 427
House Fire ★★ 431
Hunter +★ 433
Jacqueline Brown (Jack And The Beanstalk) ★★★ 438
Jane Radcliff (Boudica) ★★★★ 472
Junkyard Compactor ★★ 432
K9 (Cerberus) ★★★★ 462
Lawyer, Corporate ★★★ 422
Leader +★ 434
Lily Chow (Prince Of Iron Hans) ★★★★ 443
Living Dead +★ 460
Magic Sword (Flaming Sword Of Eden) ★★★★ 440
Messenger Of The Light +★ 434
Mind Controller +★ 433
Mob ★★ 422
Mover & Shaker ★★★★ 423
Naomi Olsen (Loki) ★★★ 491
Natasha Vasiliev (Artemis) ★★★★ 483
Nature Spirit Or God +★ 434
Necromancer +★★ 434
Nightcrawlers ★★ 490
Nurse, Psyche Ward ★ 423
Paul Dumont / "The Gargoyle" (Quasimodo) ★★★ 441
Paweł Zima (The White Rose) ★★★★★ 472
Petty Crook ★ 427
Police Squad Car ★★ 430
Rachel Delaney (Rapunzel) ★★ 438
Radical Activist ★★ 423
Reporter ★★ 424
Samuel Valtierra (Baron Samedi) ★★★★★ 440
Security System ★★ 430
Smuggler ★★ 427
Social Butterfly ★★ 424
Sorcerer Or Witch +★ 434
Spearheads ★★★ 471
Spider (Spider Grandmother) ★★★ 441
Spider Souls ★★★★★ 491
Street Gang ★★ 428
Swan Maidens ★★★ 482
Swat Team / Elite Security ★★★ 430
Swift-Footed +★ 434
Tar Baby ★★ 490
The Reeds (Nature Boy) ★★★ 438
Thief +★ 436
Thunder Kincaid (Quetzalcoatl) ★★★★★ 483
Time Bomb ★★★ 431
Trendsetters ★★ 480
Trickster +★ 436
Troubled Individual ★ 424
Violent Drunk ★ 424
Warrior +★ 436
Weapon Bearer (Relic) +★★ 436
Webflo Reporter ★ 490
Winged Creature +★ 436

MYTHOI IN THIS BOOK

Mythos	Logos	Description	Danger
Aboriginal Dreamtime	Eddie Dreamtime	66	437
Alice in Wonderland	Alice	48	-
Anansi the Spider	Kwaku Noble	484	-
Artemis	Natasha Vasiliev	477	483
Baba Yaga	Old Mirna	60	-
Baron Samedi	Samuel Valtierra	53	440
Big Bad Wolf	Lisa Monroe	67	-
Boudica	Jane Radcliff	468	472
Brer Rabbit	Adanko Gyasi	486	491
Captain Ahab from Moby-Dick	Heath Lark	70	-
Cassandra	Elena Albertini	458	463
Cerberus	K9	458	462
Charon	Tassos Salis	458	-
Cinderella, Fairy Godmother	Sister Mary	70	-
Circe the sorceress	Ella Kirky	61	-
Ebisu, Japanese god of wealth	Sheryl Fisher	47	-
Enchanted Forest	The Public Park	53	-
Flaming Sword of Eden	The Museum	58	440
Frog Prince	Judah Wells	47	-
Guardian Lions (Chinthe)	Chinthe statues at Wong Lo Trading Company	69	444
Hades	Anatoli Vidales	454	-
Harpies	The Harpies	69	-
Iron Hans, the Prince	Lily Chow	66	443
Ixchel, Mayan goddess of midwifery and medicine	Vanessa La Bruja	69	-
Jack and the Beanstalk	Jacqueline Brown	54	438
Loki	Naomi Olsen	487	491
Magic Cauldron	Joe's Burgers & Stews	52	-
Masamune, the legendary swordsmith	Nico Tokugawa	65	-
Nature Boy (jazz song)	"The Reeds" jazz club	46	438
Oberon	Seamus Strangewayes	458	-
Peter Pan's Lost Boys	The Junks	69	-
Phantom of the Opera	The Backstage Killer	48, 458	-
Pied Piper of Hamelin	Hugh Flynn	53	-
Poltergeist	The Watcher	55	-
Quetzalcoatl	Thunder Kincaid	476	483
Rapunsel	Rachel Delaney	-	438
Razor House (Mayan mythology)	The warehouse on 44 Killory Ave	64	-
Red Caps	Longshore Union	53, 458	-
Shaka Zulu	Belay Theron	468	472
Sleeping Beauty	Colette Jenkins	73	-

Mythos	Logos	Description	Danger
Spider Grandmother	Colm "Spider" Jameson	67	441
Sylph, the alchemical air elemental	Diamond Davis	70	-
Tamoanchan	Arboretum	478	-
The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, Frollo	Ralph Dumont	61	-
The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, Quasimodo	Paul Dumont	61	441
The Spear	Barton Canon	464	-
Thoth	Fadi Malek	60	-
White Rose of Wrocław	Paweł Zima	468	472
Witch of Endor	Rodney	74	-
Xochiquetzal	Isabella Aguilar	474	-
Benzaiten, Japanese goddess of everything that flows	Amanda Barnes	476	482

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Maxime Mougeot , May Smith, Merry Crystal, Mfmage, Mia 'Bunni' Duff, Micael Fryksäter, Michael A Guerra, Michael Baumbach, Michael Bowman, Michael Bradford, Michael Busuttil, Michael Dodd, Michael Endo Weil, Michael G. Potter, Michael Gleeson, Michael Goldsby, Michael Haire, Michael Hill, Michael Hunt, Michael J Curtis, Michael J. Cramer, Michael Kaplan, Michael Kreggen Wuttke, Michael Masberg, Michael McConnell, Michael Mendheim, Michael Moceri, Michael Parker, Michael Pelletier, Michael Pineda, Michael R. Smith, Michael R. Underwood, Michael Sandlin, Michael Scott Mears, Michael Smith, Michael V O'Connor, Michael Van Dyke, Michael W. Mattei, Michael Willows, Michael Zenke, Michał '.Xaos' Lewandowski, Michele Gelli, Mick Bradley, Miguel Ángel Arnaiz Guimet, Miguel Maria Duran, Miguel Torija Mora, Mikael Dahl, Mikael Tysvær, Mikayla Anya G. Cahiwat , Mike Gerdes, Mike Munsil, Mike Osredkar, Mike Quintanilla, Mike Schmitz, Mike Shema, Mikhail Tsarev, Mikko Västi, Mischa D. Krilov, Mitchell M. Evans, Mitchell Shipman, Mohel Lipshitz Katz, Morgan pelkey, Morgan Weeks, Morten Kronqvist, Mr Paweł Sęczkowski, MrJPStilts, MV, N Schoenholtz, Nate Newlon, Nathan Gandy, Nathan Reed, Nathan Rudd, Nathan Tolbert, Navot Ram, Neal Tanner, Neil Ditchfield, Nelson Ruger, Nesox Kalim, Nessa, Nestor D. Rodriguez, Niall O'Donnell, Nicholas Arroyo, Nicholas Barton , Nicholas Bootsman , Nicholas Greder, Nicholas Green, Nicholas K. Swanson, Nicholas Stinchcombe, Nick Clements, Nick Fovargue, Nick Hopkins, Nicola Corticelli, Nicola Urbinati, Nicolás Brian, Nicolas Vandemaele-Couchy, Nicole Michalak, Nicolette Tanksley, Nimrod Back , Nina Menkes, Ninjar, NJ Glassford, Noah Jay-Bonn, Noam Roth AKA Celebrity Noam, Noble A. DraKoln – CEO Arvada Labs, LLC – Www.arvadalabs.com, Nodsgrimly, Noel Warford, Noelle Fandel, NoJa, Nomad, Norman Arthur Brumm IV, Nullpunkt, Nurit Guthrie, Oakarms, Ofer Metuki, OhlookitsMatty, Oliver "Ahrimanius" Summers, Oliver Lind, Oliver Lipton, Oliver Lopez, Oliver Morris, Oliver Shead, Ollie Gross, Ols Jonas Petter Olsson, Omar Amador, Omer Golan-Joel, Omer Ran, Omer Raviv, ONE SHOT Podcast, Orla Byrne, Oscar Iglesias, Oscar Ulloa, Otavio Araujo Costa, Our Hero Andy, Pablo "Hersho" Domínguez, Pablo Palacios, Pablo Saldaña, Paladin von Korff, Pangur Ban, Paolo Vitiello, Parker Abbott, Patrice Mermoud, Patrick Heagany, Patrick Knowles & Tyler Lominack, Patrick Walter, Patrik "Figure4" Andersson, Patryk Adamski 'Ruemere', Pau Blackonion, Paul "Fatpob" Goldstone, Paul "LostLegolas" Leone, Paul & Tiggy, Paul Allard, Paul B. Currie, Paul Chavarria, Paul Francis, Paul Haban "XpresoAdct", Paul Houlihan , Paul Hudson, Paul Johnson, Paul Kießhauer, Paul Messenger, Paul Sheppard, Paul Townsend , Paul Umbers, Paul Wilson, Pável Ojeda, Peanut, Pedro César Díez Ramón, Pedro J. Rosales, Penon Victor, Perverseness, Pete Griffith, Pete Woodworth, Peter Askling, Peter D. Clark III, Peter Sotos, Petri Leinonen , Phil Doud, Phil McGregor, Phil Pestinger, Philip "xipehuz" Espi, Philip C. Robinson, Philip Jack, Philipp "Sp3c1" Hinrichsen, Philipp Neumann, Philippe Racine, Phillip Bailey, Phillip Burkholder, Pieta Delaney, Pietro Pugliese, PigletinBooties, PK Sullivan, Pokivim Kenvay, pookie, Porter Williams, President Good Boy, Preston Poland, PrometheusUB, Prudence Greenwood, Pudjiono Jaya Saputra, Quasi, R. Sean Callahan, Radoslaw Bozek, Rafael da Cruz Martins, Rafael Ferreira, Ramiz Latif, Randy Cronin, Rane Staten, Rani sharim, Raphael Ekiert, Rasmus Nicolaj West, Ravnos Phantom, Ray M., Raymond Nagle, RED RAVEN, Reginald puttknee, René Schultze, Renee M. Solberg, Reuben Israel Beattie, Rev. Keith Johnson, Rhys A Davies, Rhys Chiari Jones, Ric Baines, Ricardo Esteves Alves, Rich Bailey, Rich Fowler, Rich Kummer, Richard 'Scylld' Comfort, Richard 'Vidiian' Greene, Richard Allex Bethke, Richard Allred, Richard Baldwin, Richard Evans, Richard Frolkovič, Richard Frost, Richard L. Skinner III, Richard Morales, Richard Schwerdtfeger, Rick Blanco, Rick Neal, Rickard Elimää, Riley Crowder, Rob Abrazado, Rob Deobald and Rachelle Shelkey, Rob Donoghue, Rob Nadeau, Rob Wieland, Robert Bealer, Robert Burson, Robert Carnel, Robert Charles "ScytheKnight" McPherson, Robert D Rosenthal, Robert De Luna, Robert E Kennedy III, Robert G. Male, Robert H. Hudson Jr., Robert J. LeBlanc, Robert Kosek, Robert M. Everson, Robert Scott Pacheco, Robert Smith, Robert Woford, Roberto Nieves, Robin Frederick Foale, Rochelle Herrick, Roderick Cardwell, Rodrigo Miranda, Roe Portal, Rogue Blade Games, Romain Darmon, Ron Beck, Ron King, Ron Müller, Ronald Lumsden II, Ronald Nealy, Rory "The Big Deal" Ward, Ross Johnson, Ross Richards, Ross Wilkin, Ruben Navarro, Rui Ramalho, Runi Arnsbjornson, Ryan Begerman, Ryan Gustafson, Ryan Holdbrooks , Ryan Patterson, Ryan Percival, Ryan Sublett, Ryan Willemsen, Ryan Z. Rogers, S J A Heerdegen, S. Clay Smith, S.R. Davey, Saajan Patel, Sabina Mårdenkrans, Sabrina Klevenow, Sakditat Kwanchaitunya, Salvatore L

Puma, Sam “ThunderHead” Carter, Sam Birnbaum, Sam Brian, Sam Bruun, Sam Littell, Sam Zeitlin, Samuel Klingensmith, Sanchit Sharma, Sandy Julien, Sara Boldrighini, Sara Engström, Sarah Nakao, Sarah Williams, Saverio Iacono, Scot MacNaughton, Scott Baker, Scott E. Robinson, Scott Gaeta, Scott MacDonald, Scott McIntosh, Scott Paquette, Scott Raby, Sean “Archon” Campbell, Sean Brady, Sean Elliott O’Donohue, Sean Holland, Sean Kelly, Sean M Smith, Sean Parson, Sean Pitty, Sean Toland, Sean Trader, Sean Werner, Sean Winser, Sebastian Bengtsson, Sebastian Dzierzek, Sebastian Koller, Sebastian Schreier, Sebastian Sixten Kjærulf Schmidt, Sebastian Steenbock, Sebastian Stein, Sébastien Célerin, Sekh Burd, Selaquet Guillaume, Seth “WhiteFox” Glenn, Seth Halbeisen, Seth Hartley, Seth Tims, Seth Zeren, Shane Walden, Sharon and Jake, Shaun Hamilton, Shawn Campbell, Shawn Isenhart, Shawn Lamb, Sheleg Spalter, Shelly Alon, Shelton Windham, Shervyn , Shlomi Elgart, Siddharta Govindaraj, Simon Brake, Simon Brunning, Simon Cavanagh, Simon Clark, Simon Proctor, SirRageALot, Sivan Kotek, SK Lim, Skylar Simmons, Smith Holloway, Solistia, Soloran Lunaterm, son of zion - benzi lederfein, SonnyJ, Sophie Lagacé, Søren B. Holm, Sören Kohlmeyer, Sorukie, Spencer Hobson, Spencer Krigbaum, Steegs, Steel Thul, Stefan Mühlinghaus, Stefan Riewe @sternenpfeiler, Stefan Struck, Steffan Thomson, Stephan Braster, Stephane Pouderoux, Stephanie mca, Stephanie Mullendore, Stephanie Reed, Stephen Baird, Stephen J Kilgour, Stephen Jack Cullen, Stephen Joseph Ellis, Stephen Smith, Sterling Brucks, Sterz Sebastian, Steve “Bearly Normal” Discont, Steve Christensen, Steve Lord, Steven A Robbins, Steven D Warble, Steven K. Watkins, Steven Moy, Steven Rutkowski, Steven Thesken, Stras “Hunter” Acimovic, Stuart Chaplin, Susan Jozwiak and John Dupras (Serpentine Games), Sven Geißner, Svend Andersen, Svenja Schröder, Sylvain “VanGTO” Alessandrini, Szymon quad Gosek, T R Lee, T. Iwata, T.J. Finch, T.J. Tague, Talya and Aviram Shahal , Tam & Danks, Tamar Levanoni, Tammy Ninyo, Tamsyn ‘Destroyer of Worlds’ Kennedy, Tanya Itkin, Taylor Fisher, Tealeaf Frenziedrat, Ted Sanne, Ted Wallerstedt, Tegan Victoria Smith, TERRENCE Patrick “MAGI” Joseph MICHEAU, Terry L. Gilbert, Jr., Thalji, That Damn Mouse, The Bloody Daggerites, The Fox, The Great Amir, The Link, Theron Teter, Thiago Goncalves, Thierry Michaux, Thomas (Darkling) Wittkowski, Thomas Behrens Jr, Thomas Faßnacht, Thomas Frank, Thomas Jetzfellner, Thomas Piekarski, Thomas Ryan, Thomas Zuliani, Thorsten Dellbrügge, Thozmp, Tiffany Korta, Tiger D. Swan, Tim Craft, Tim Czarnecki, Tim Ellis, Tim Gonzalez, Tim Lund, Tim Mcbu, Tim Wojcik, Timo J. Sand, Timothy Carroll, Timothy Fredricksen, Timothy Lutz, Timothy McGowan, Timothy Totten, Timothy Walsh, Tobias Niemitz, Tobin Snelling, Toby Chang, Todd Biggs, Todd Gibel, Todd Tucker, Tom, Tom “palfrey” Parker, Tom “the Monster” Hoefle, Tom Daniel Brooks, Tom Le Tissier, Tom Miskey, Tom Snow, Tomas Burgos-Caez, Tomas Enrique Diaz, Tomer Bar-Shlomo | תומר בר-שלמה Tom-Ar.com VRDate.com, Tomi Sarkkinen, Tommaso De Benetti, Tommy “Night Eye” Rayburn, Tony and Bethany Aguad, Tony Ridgway, Torben ‘LeGit’ Jones, Torben Bellinghoff, Tore , Tr, Travis Stodter, Travis Stout, Travis Tessmer, Trefor Davis, Trent “Ax_kidson” Boyd, Trever Harwell, Trevor A Wirgau, Trevor Hannon, Tristan O’Neil, Troy “Wrongtown” Hall, Troy Ellis, Ty Prunty, Ulf “McWolfe” Andersson, Ulf Hillebrecht, Uri Shilo - 20 Tivee, Uriel Joe Haran, Uriel Shashua, Vaillant Rafael, Valentin Roussel, Vance Rawson, Vegar Fristad, Victor Diaz, Victor Lopes, Victor W Allen, Victor Wyatt, Vince Usher, Vincent Arebalo, Vincent Baker, Vincent Bezic, Vincent BÉZIÉ , Vincent Henrotte, Vladimir Filipović, Volker Bugl, W Ryan Carden, W. David Pattison, Wade Jones, waelcyrge, Wai Kien, Walter PERSECHINI, Warren Finnie, Wayne “Darkslayer” Harris, Weidlich. Michael, Whitney Mattson, Whitt., Will, Will Blankenship, Will Goring, Will Kertz, Will Phillips, Willard Rafnsson, Willem Sullivan, William Adams , William Beckwith, William Cuthbertson, William Grimaldi, William Helms, William Palmer, William S. Tolliver, William Weiler, Willy kaceres, Wim Deca, “Wrincewind Windsor” , Wyldstar, Xantos, Xavier Brinon, Xavier Spinat, Yael the III of House Rosen, Yehuda Halfon , Yiftach Raphael Govreen, Yiu-cho Jason Chan, Yoki Erdtman, Yonatan Shtorchan, Yonni & Michelle Mendes, Yu Tsai Su, YupUMad, Yuriy Volkov, Yuval Sapir, Zac Braddy, Zach Brown, Zachary Balgeman & Cody Johnson, Zachary Coleman, Zachary Norton, Zack Schwartz, Zack Wenning, Zeb Walker, Zed Lopez, Zeke Hubris, Zeraphita, Zivp, Zoe Farr.

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PLAYER MOVES

CONVINCE

When you use your abilities **to talk, threaten, or seduce someone into doing something,** roll+Power. On a hit, choose a relevant status with tier=Power. Your target can choose either to take the status or:

- on a 7-9, to give in a little, but protect their own agenda.
- on a 10+, to change their agenda to include yours, at least for the time being.

CHANGE THE GAME

When you use your abilities **to give yourself or your allies an advantage,** roll+Power. On a hit, you get Juice=Power. Spend your Juice to gain the following effects, one-to-one:

- Create a story tag
- Burn a power tag or a story tag
- Give or reduce a status (one tier per point of Juice)

On a 10+, you get a minimum of 2 Juice, and you can also use your Juice to choose:

- Scale up the effect (greater area or more targets)
- Prolong the effect (make it ongoing)
- Hide the effect
- Any other improvement you and the MC agree on

FACE DANGER

When you use your abilities **to avoid an incoming hit, endure harm, resist a malign influence, or hold it together,** the MC (or player) will name a status with its tag and tier. Roll+Power. On a 10+, you fend off the effect and take no status at all. On a 7-9, you take the status, but with -1 tier. On a miss, you take the full status.

GO TOE TO TOE

When you use your abilities to overcome someone or something in a struggle for control, state what your goal is. Your opponent can describe how they respond, at their option. Roll+Power. On a 7-9, choose 1. On a 10+, choose 2:

- You manage to achieve your goal, e.g., take something they hold.
- You get them good, giving your opponent a status with tier=Power.
- You block, dodge, or counter their best attempts. If you don't choose this, they can impose a status on you. If they are a PC, its tier=their Power.

HIT WITH ALL YOU'VE GOT

When you have a clear shot and you use your abilities to hit someone or something with all you've got, roll+Power. On a hit, you give the target an appropriate status of your choice with tier=Power. On a 10+, choose 2. On a 7-9, choose 1:

- You take cover or secure a superior position. If you don't choose this, they can impose a status on you. If they are a PC, its tier=their Power.
- You get them good or get many of them (+1 tier).
- You control the collateral damage.
- You hold the target's attention, if possible.
- You gain the upper hand. Take 1 Juice.

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INVESTIGATE

When you use your abilities to seek answers to burning questions, roll+Power. On a hit, you get Clues=Power. Spend your Clues one-to-one to ask the MC a question about the subject of your investigation or ask another player a relevant question about their character. They must give you either a straight answer or a solid lead. On a 7-9, they can also choose 1:

- Your investigation exposes you to danger.
- The clues you get are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false.
- Whoever or whatever you are asking the question(s) can ask you one question as well. You answer on the same terms.

SNEAK AROUND

When you use your abilities to act secretly or deceptively, roll+Power. On a hit, everyone that should fall for it falls for it. On a 7-9, it's complicated. The MC chooses 1:

- Someone unimportant noticed you, but that just made them important, right?
- You are perceived only by a secondary sense (someone picks up your scent while you're stalking them; you're seen whispering a message but the message is not heard).
- You must leave something important behind – or be discovered.

TAKE THE RISK

When you perform a daring, risky, or outright stupid feat, roll+Power. On a 10+, you do it, somehow. On a 7-9, things get messy. The MC will offer you a hard bargain or an ugly choice.

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FINALLY, SOME ANSWERS

When **you find answers to your Mystery**, choose one, two, or all three:

You gain a deeper understanding of your Mythos, of the subject of your Mystery, or of the link between your Mystery and your Mythos. Mark Attention on the theme to which this Mystery belongs.

You are shocked by the discovery to the point of rejecting your Mythos or an aspect of your ordinary life. Mark Fade or Crack on any theme.

Your questions are answered. Choose a new Mystery for this theme.

END OF THE ROAD

If **your Identity ever becomes resolved**, rephrase it in the same spirit to describe a new goal, a greater scope, a new angle, etc. Alternatively, if this aspect of your life truly ended, you may replace this Identity's theme.

MAKE A HARD CHOICE

When **answers to your Mystery are within reach, but you forego them**, mark Fade on that Mystery's theme.

When **your Identity demands you act or speak in a given way and you don't**, mark Crack on that Identity's theme.

When **you sacrifice something you truly want in order to abide by your Identity**, mark Attention on that Identity's theme.

MONTAGE (DOWNTIME)

Whenever your character has some downtime, choose one way to spend it:

- **Give attention** to one of your Logos (or extra) themes. Tell everyone at the table how you do it and mark Attention on that theme.
- **Work the case.** Tell everyone at the table how you do it, and gain 3 Clues with a method and a source based on your description.
- **Explore your Mythos.** Tell everyone at the table which Mystery you explore and how you do it. You gain 1 Clue with a method and a source based on your description. Mark Attention on that Mystery's theme.
- **Prepare for your next activity.** Tell everyone at the table how you prepare and choose one: recover all your burnt power tags OR gain 3 Juice with a method based on your description. You can choose from the effect improvements under **Change the Game**.
- **Recover from you last activity.** For each ongoing status still affecting you, the MC will tell you if and how it can be reduced during your downtime and by how many tiers. Alternatively, the MC can allow you to reduce any or some of your statuses by one tier for each relevant tag you have.

The MC can cue into any of the montage events and continue them as scenes.

FLASHBACK

Once per session, when you have the spotlight, choose 1:

Describe an action carried out by your character in the past and make a move for that action. The outcome of the move affects the current scene.

Describe events from your character's backstory that become relevant now. The MC can award you with 1 Juice or 1 Clue based on your description.

STOP. HOLDING. BACK.

When you **use your powers in a new and never-before-seen way or scale**, tell the MC what you hope to achieve. The MC will tell you the sacrifice it will take from you. Then roll+Logos. On a hit, you achieve exactly what you wanted to achieve and pay the price:

Significant: On a 7-9, mark Fade/Crack and burn all the power tags on one theme. On a 10+, mark Fade/Crack on one theme.

No Return: On a 7-9, replace one theme. On a 10+, mark Fade/Crack and burn all the power tags on one theme.

Ultimate: On a 7-9, you are killed, destroyed, or transformed forever (for now). Take a tier-6 status. You cannot **Face Danger**. On a 10+, replace one theme

On a 6 or less, you pay the price given for 7-9, but you also lose control over your powers or fail to use them as planned. The MC will decide how, and what the consequences are.

GEEK OUT DURING CREDITS

At the end of the session, when the credits roll, go around the table. Each player can answer one or more of the following questions:

- **How has the crew grown this session?**
  Recover a burnt crew power tag or mark Attention on a crew theme.
- **Which character had the most meaningful interaction with your character this session?**
  Add one Help point or one Hurt point next to their name on your character card.
- **Which of your themes is under the most strain? If it collapses, what new aspect will show up in its place?**
  Write down the answer under FLIPSIDE on that theme's card.

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CHARACTER SHEET



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SERIES RESOURCES SHEET

BURNING QUESTIONS

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STORY ELEMENTS

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PLOT IDEAS

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STYLE GUIDES

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THEME CARDS SHEET (FRONT)



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THEME CARDS SHEET (BACK)



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MC MOVES SHEET

MC PRINCIPLES

- Communicate with the group
- Play to find out
- Be the characters' biggest fan; make their lives interesting
- Think cinematic

MC INTRUSIONS

At any point in the game, even when a player has the spotlight, you may intrude...

- ... to translate the story into rules, e.g., add a story tag.
- ... to reveal a custom move that has been triggered.
- ... to ask for more details about a player's action.
- ... to tell a player what player move their action triggers.
- ... to intervene when a player determines Power, e.g., invoke a weakness tag.
- ... to choose the outcome of a move, when the choice is yours or when the player foregoes an option.

SOFT MC MOVES

- Complicate Things
- Hit Them After A Fair Warning
- Optional: Activate Their Weakness Tags as Flaws

HARD MC MOVES

- Complicate Things, Bigtime
- Deny Them Something They Want
- Make Something Horrible Happen
- Turn Their Move Against Them
- Give a Status
- Reduce or Remove a Status
- Burn a Tag
- Force Them to Choose

NARRATION

- Emphasize the atmosphere
- Make your characters real and human
- Keep it a mystery
- Ask provoking questions
- Stay consistent
- Make the City feel alive

NOTES

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MC TRACKING SHEET

CHARACTER TRACKING

CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER

MYSTERIES & IDENTITIES

WEAKNESS TAGS

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CHARACTER TRACKING

CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER

MYSTERIES & IDENTITIES

WEAKNESS TAGS

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CHARACTER TRACKING

CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER

MYSTERIES & IDENTITIES

WEAKNESS TAGS

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CHARACTER TRACKING

CHARACTER NAME

PLAYER

MYSTERIES & IDENTITIES

WEAKNESS TAGS

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TRACKING CARDS



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THE PRIVATE OFFICE
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