

CITY of MIST

ORDINARY PEOPLE · LEGENDARY POWERS



MASTER OF CEREMONIES' TOOLKIT

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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.

VOL 2 OF THE CORE BOOKS

This book contains rules and guides for creating and running *City of Mist* games as a Master of Ceremonies (MC), as well as ready-to-play content. For information and rules for players portraying characters in a *City of Mist* game, see the Player’s Guide.

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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 118). 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

active 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.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

- **Chapter 1: Word on the Street** provides advice on how to imagine the city and what should be imagined in it, as well as describing some of the main City districts, locations, and local Rifts and Sleepers. It's told from the perspective of relatively new Rifts who are only beginning to discover the secret world around them, but also includes some of the secrets the lead characters are going to work hard in order to uncover.
- **Chapter 2: Behind the Scenes** is a detailed breakdown of your roles before and during a game session. It explains the MC moves with a step-by-step guide on how to run sessions, including a variety of tools to help make your game cinematic. It also provides an in-depth walkthrough for creating your own cases and designing your series based on the Iceberg model.
- **Chapter 3: This is MY City!** includes rules for creating and handling Dangers, a Danger Profile directory with ready-to-use Dangers, and a special section on creating and using custom moves with templates and ready-to-use examples. It also contains a comprehensive guide to Avatars and their operations and four Avatar operations.
- **The Appendices** include the playable case *Gambling with Death*, the writing of which is detailed in examples throughout Chapter 2. Also included are the MC summary sheets, as well as tracking sheets for the players' themes, crew and the series as a whole.

PRONOUN USE

Throughout this book, wherever possible, the text refers directly to you, the reader. Mostly, this relates to you as an MC; in some places, it relates to you as the player or as the character you are playing. 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 or no gender.

HIGHLIGHTED TEXT

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

- **Tags** (first explained on page 74 of the Player's Guide) are highlighted in *yellow* (or *purple* in dark pages).
- **Statuses** (first explained on page 218 of the Player's Guide) are highlighted in *green*.
- **Spectrums** (first explained on page 120) are highlighted in *red*.

THE CINEMATOGRAPHY OF THE CITY



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 say it, it becomes 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, for consistency.

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 crew's story takes place. You will know a few things about these specific locations because you will create them when you create new cases (see Chapter 2: 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 one 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.





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 are 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 grimy 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 times, 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.

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 screens, 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 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 and 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.



LET IT GO,
MR. L'ESTRANGE.

IF YOU TRULY WISH TO
UNDERSTAND THE MYSTERY INSIDE YOU,
YOU MUST ABANDON YOUR ORDINARY
SELF.



LET THE VOID
FILL YOU...

"...HUH?"



HA!

PEOPLE IN THIS
CITY WILL BELIEVE
ANYTHING.

GET HIS WALLET.



UH, SWEETIE, HIS EYES ...



DON'T WORRY. YOU JUST TELL HIM HE HAD A DEEP MEDITATION. WE GONNA BE RICH.



ARE YOU TWO ROBBING ME?

AGHHHHH!!!!



RUN! IT'S HIS GHOST!

YEAH, RUN TO MY ZOMBIE ASSOCIATE.



I PREFER THE TERM UNDEAD.

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE KNOCKED HIM OUT. DREAMS ARE KIND OF HIS THING.

SPIT IT OUT. WHAT DID YOU DO TO THE PEOPLE YOU ROBBED? WHERE ARE THEY?

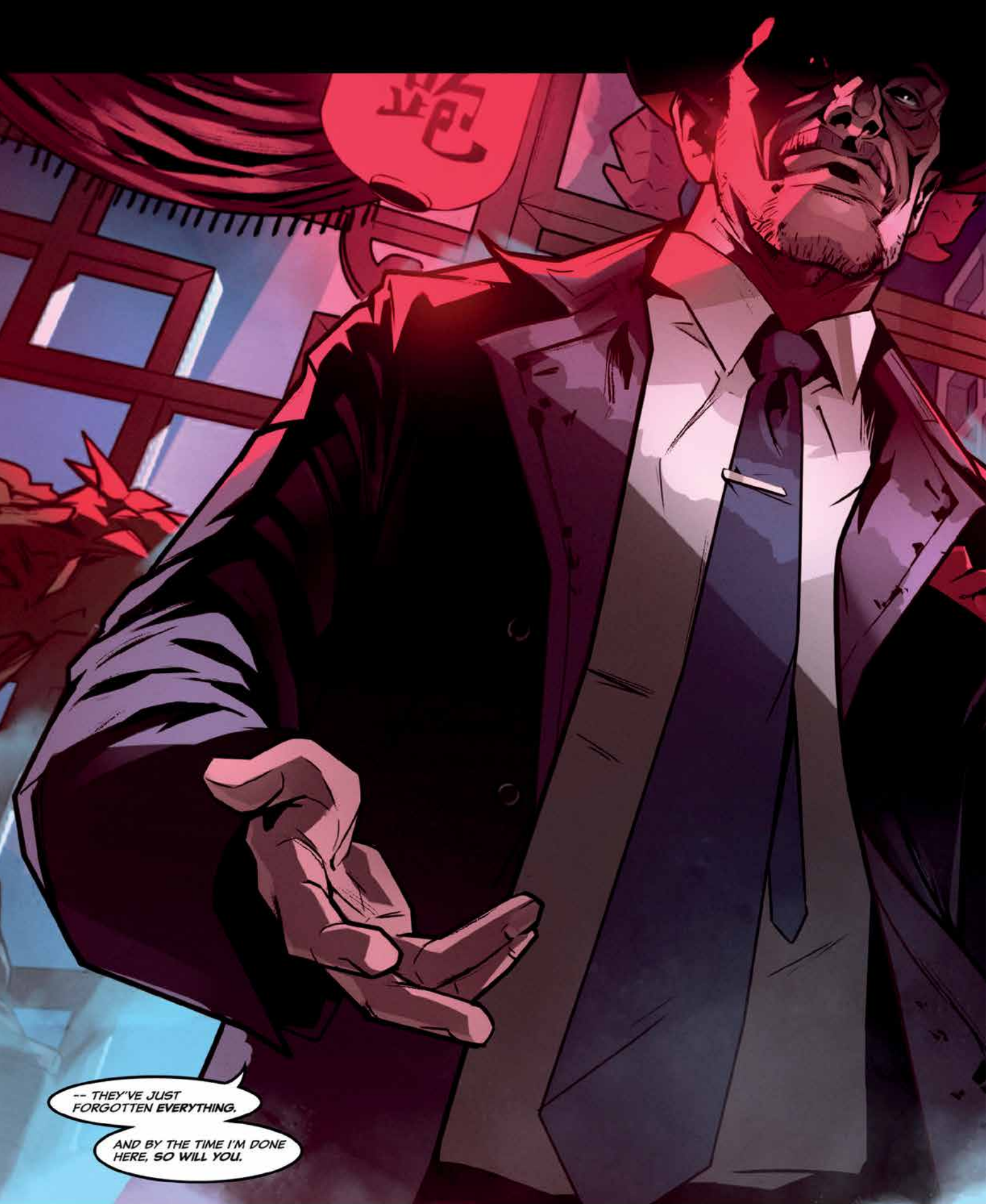


WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO THEM!

THEY JUST WAKE UP AND LEAVE, I GUESS... I ACTUALLY DON'T REMEMBER...

THEY'RE TOO SCARED TO LIE.

THEY'RE NOT LYING--

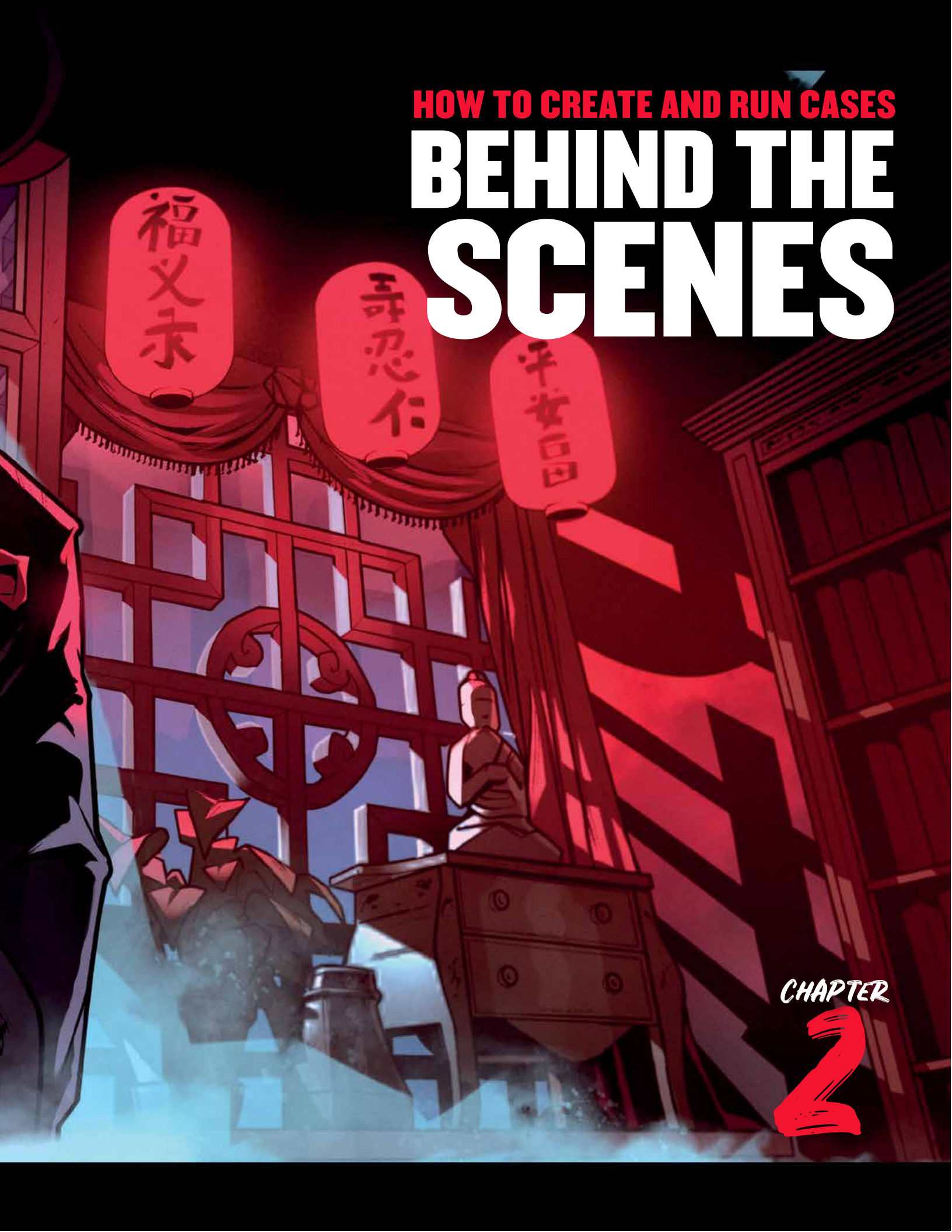


-- THEY'VE JUST
FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING.

AND BY THE TIME I'M DONE
HERE, SO WILL YOU.

HOW TO CREATE AND RUN CASES

BEHIND THE SCENES



CHAPTER

2

RUNNING A SESSION

SESSION STRUCTURE PAGE 65

- **Session Start:** One player makes 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.
 - » **Scene:** Follow the scene flow below.
 - » **Downtime:** All players make the **Montage (Downtime)** move.
 - » **Cutscene:** You set the mood, foreshadow, or reveal information yet unknown to the players.
- **Session end:** All players make the **Geek Out During Credits (Session End)** move.

PLAYING A SCENE PAGE 67

- **Set the scene:** Narrate the opening shot. You can make a soft MC move.
- **Give the spotlight** to the players by asking: “What do you do?”
 - » **During player spotlight:** Listen and **intrude** when the rules require you to.
 - » **On a miss:** Make a hard MC move.
 - » **After a player move:** Narrate how the scene responds to what just happened. You can make a soft MC move.
- **When everyone is waiting:** Narrate what happens next. You can 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.

NARRATION PAGE 78

- Emphasize the atmosphere
- Make your characters real and human
- Keep it a mystery
- Ask provoking questions
- Stay consistent
- Make the City feel alive

MC MOVES

MC INTRUSIONS PAGE 70

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.
- **Reveal a custom move** that has been triggered.
- **Ask for more details** about a player’s action.
- **Tell a player which player move** their action triggers.
- **Intervene when a player determines Power**, e.g., invoke a weakness tag.
- **Choose, describe, and resolve the outcome of a move**, when the choice is yours or when the player foregoes an option.

THE SOFT MOVES PAGE 71

- Complicate Things
- Hit Them After A Fair Warning
- Optional: Activate Their Weakness Tags as Flaws

THE HARD MOVES PAGE 73

- 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

ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGE LEVEL PAGE 82

- Adjust the severity of statuses
- Adjust the range of actions affected by statuses
- Adjust how statuses are removed
- Apply the Grit Mode or Tag Cap optional rules (Player’s Guide, pages 176 and 208)

WRITING A CASE

1. CREATE THE BACKSTORY PAGE 90

? What happened before the crew got involved in the case?

STORY SEED

? RIFT(S): WHO IS INVOLVED IN THIS CASE?

- What is the Mythos of the main Rift(s) involved?
- Who is this Rift in her everyday life in the City?
- How and when did this Rift awaken?
- How awakened is this Rift? (Awakening, Touched, Borderliner, Legendary, or Avatar)
- What drives this Rift more: her Mythos or her ordinary life?
- What does her Mythos want from her?
- What is / was her mundane motive?

? THE TRUTH: WHAT CRIME, WRONG, OR PROBLEM IS AT THE CENTER OF THE CASE?

See a list of examples on page 91.

? THEME: WHAT TYPE OF STORY WILL THIS BE?

Scope (personal, neighborhood, city, etc.), common tropes, and format (whodunit, cold case, clock is ticking)

? HOOKS: HOW DOES THE CREW GET INVOLVED?

- How does the crew hear about the case?
- At what point in the progression of events does the crew come in?

DEVELOPMENT

Think of additional major characters and further complications.

DETAILS

Your final backstory should have a **character roster**, a sufficiently detailed account of **the whole truth**, and **the timeline**.

2. CREATE THE BREADCRUMB TRAIL PAGE 97

CREATE THE ICEBERG

The case Iceberg is made out of locations and people who lead from **the hooks** to **the truth**. It is divided into **Depths**; the greater the Depth, the closer this location or person is to the truth.

- Break down your backstory into the possible locations and/or characters.
- Place all the Hooks at Depth 0.
- Place the locations directly connected to the Hooks at Depth 1.
- For every other location ask yourself:
 - » How can this location bring the crew closer to the truth?
 - » What follow-up location would the clues lead to?
 - » Is this follow-up location significantly closer to the truth? (If so, it should be deeper down the iceberg).
- Place all the other locations on the Iceberg based on your answers.

CREATE THE LOCATIONS

For each location, create:

- A description
- A short list of characters present there
- A list of clues: physical evidence, information gleaned from characters, observations and deductions, paper-trail, or information obtained by legendary means

3. CREATE THE DANGERS PAGE 101

? Who or what could endanger the investigation or interfere with follow-up actions?

See also the Danger creating rules on page 131.

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

Mjöllnir (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 fail-proof. 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 Mjöllnir, 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?

It 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 60 and under Mythos Character Tropes on page 70 in the Player's Guide).

? 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 72 in the Player's Guide).

? 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 29 in the Player's Guide).

DANGER RULES

SPECTRUMS PAGE 120

Spectrums measure how much of a given type of statuses a Danger can take before it changes irrevocably (overcome or transformed). A spectrum is made of a **tag** and a **maximum tier**.

- **Maxing out:** When a Danger takes a status on a spectrum with a tier equal to the spectrum maximum, the spectrum is maxed out.
- **Defeat:** Normally, when a Danger's spectrum is maxed out, the Danger is overcome.
- **Countdown Spectrums:** When these spectrums are maxed out, a custom move is triggered (e.g. when a timebomb explodes).
- **Immunities:** Spectrums marked with “-” indicate the Danger is immune to such statuses and ignores them altogether.
- **Off-Spectrum Statuses:** A Danger can take a status even if it does not match any of its listed spectrums.

EFFECTS OF STATUSES ON DANGERS PAGE 128

When a Danger takes a status, choose one of the following (or more, if appropriate):

- The status counts against that Danger's spectrums to promote its defeat.
- The status applies to player moves against that Danger.
- The status applies to the Danger's own moves.

DANGER DEFENSES..... PAGE 139

- A **defensive status or tag** which applies to players' attack moves
- A move which **reduces the tier of statuses** the Danger incurs (such as a Status Filter)
- **Immunities**, spectrums on which the Danger cannot take a status
- **Active Shield** (see right column), a custom move which hits the attacker before they make an attack

DANGER MOVES PAGE 123

Soft and Hard Danger moves are suggestions for soft and hard MC moves you can make when using a specific Danger.

Custom Danger moves are special rules relating to a specific Danger.

- Most custom moves are **intrusions** and can trigger even during a player's spotlight.
- When a custom move is first triggered, you must reveal it to the players. (You can reveal it earlier than that, if you'd like)

COMMON CUSTOM DANGER MOVES PAGE 136

- **Active Shield:** When a character attacks the Danger, the character first takes a status or faces a negative outcome.
- **Countdown Outcome:** Defines what happens when a Danger's countdown spectrum is maxed out.
- **Starting Status or Tag:** Give a Danger a status or a tag as soon as it enters the scene.
- **Status Filter:** Modify (usually reduce) statuses of a specific type received by the Danger.
- **Status Payload:** Create an additional side effect when the Danger successfully gives a status.

COLLECTIVES PAGE 126

A **collective** is a single Danger representing a group of non-player characters or threats. Every collective has a **size factor** ranging from 1 to 4.

- A collective has the same spectrum and moves as a single individual, but:
 - » **For statuses taken by the entire collective:** Reduce the tier by the size factor.
 - » **For moves made by the entire collective:** Increase the effect by its size factor.
- **Target individuals:** Members of a collective can take statuses and be overcome individually. When sufficient members of a collective are overcome, the MC reduces the collective's size factor.
- **Break apart:** You can break down a large collective into smaller collectives or individual Dangers, if the circumstances dictate so (e.g., a gang splits up).

STEP 1: CONCEPT

- ? CHARACTER:** What are this Danger’s abilities and resources?
- ? RIFT:**
 - What is its mythos?
 - What is its level of awareness?
 - What mythos powers does it possess?
- ? LOCATION:** What is dangerous about this place?
- ? ALL DANGERS:** In what ways will this Danger interact with the crew?

STEP 2: CHOOSE SPECTRUMS

- ? DEFEAT SPECTRUMS:**
 - How can this Danger be overcome?
 - What statuses can bring it to an end?
- ? COUNTDOWN SPECTRUMS:** What dangerous transformation or end is this Danger moving toward?
- ? IMMUNITIES:** To what is this Danger immune?

STEP 3: CHOOSE SOFT MOVES

- ? How can this Danger make life harder for the crew, without dramatic consequences (yet)?**

STEP 4: CHOOSE HARD MOVES

- ? IF THE CREW LETS IT:**
 - How would this Danger influence or hurt others?
 - How would this Danger help itself or its allies?
 - How would this Danger affect the scene or the story?

STEP 5: CHOOSE CUSTOM MOVES

- ? What can this Danger do that has not been described by its other moves?**
- ? What quality does this Danger possess that has not been described by its other moves?**

RIFT DANGER GENERATOR

CHOOSE AN EVERYDAY PERSONA (LOGOS)

CITY RESIDENTS		CRIMINALS		LAW ENFORCEMENT AND SECURITY	
City Official ★	p141	Cat Burglar ★★	p145	Beat Cops / Security Guards ★	p148
Corporate Lawyer ★★★	p142	Con Artist ★★	p145	Detective / Investigator ★★	p148
Helpless City Resident	p142	Crime Lord ★★★★★	p145	Police Squad Car ★★	p150
Mob ★★	p142	Delinquent Teenagers ★	p146	Swat Team / Elite Security ★★★	p150
Mover & Shaker ★★★★★	p143	Getaway Vehicle ★★	p146	Security System ★★	p150
Psyche Ward Nurse ★	p143	Heist Team ★★★ +	p146		
Radical Activist ★★	p143	Hired Thugs ★★	p147		
Reporter ★★	p144	Hitman ★★★	p147		
Social Butterfly ★★	p144	Petty Crook ★	p147		
Troubled Individual ★	p144	Smuggler ★★	p147		
Violent Drunk ★	p144	Street Gang ★★	p148		

CHOOSE A MYTHOS POWER SET

Beast + ★	p152	Leader + ★	p154	Thief + ★	p156
Creature Of Darkness + ★★	p153	Nature Spirit Or God + ★	p154	Trickster + ★	p156
Demigod Or Giant + ★★	p153	Necromancer + ★★	p154	Warrior + ★	p156
Ghost Or Spirit + ★	p153	Messenger Of The Light + ★	p154	Weapon Bearer (Relic) + ★★	p156
Golem Or Elemental + ★	p153	Sorcerer Or Witch + ★	p154	Winged Creature + ★	p156
Hunter + ★	p153	Swift-Footed + ★	p154		
Mind Controller + ★	p153				



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, or 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 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 high tech system of a corporate facility, intrusion countermeasures are used to protect 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 by changing the repercussions 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 a magnetic lock, a keypad, a window alarm, a motion detector, an unexpected safe mechanism, etc.

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

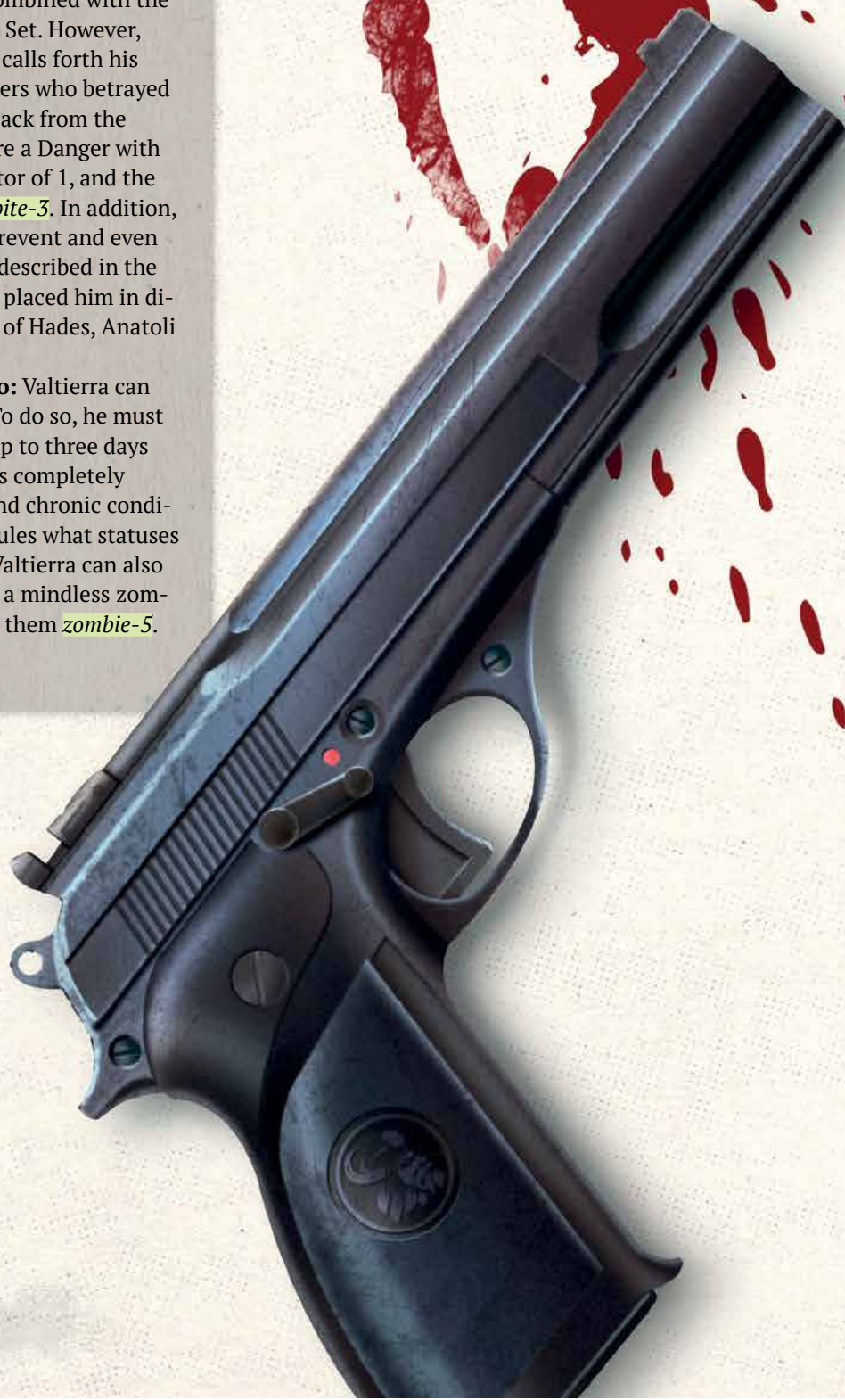
- **Impervious:** When a Mind Controller takes a status resembling her own form of mind control, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
- Influence a person to do their bidding (*beguiled-3*, *hypnotized-3*, *possessed-3*, etc.)
- **(optional +★) Mind Reading:** As an MC intrusion, the MC can reduce the tier of the Mind Controller's influence status by one to have you truthfully answer a question. The Mind Controller now knows your answer.



SAMUEL VALTIERRA **(BARON SAMEDI) ★★★★★**

(Read a description of this character on page 30)

- 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, Anatoli Vidales (see page 174).
- **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*.



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



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. Vidales' 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.

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'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 of the City. When a deceased soul moves to Hades, it materializes 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.

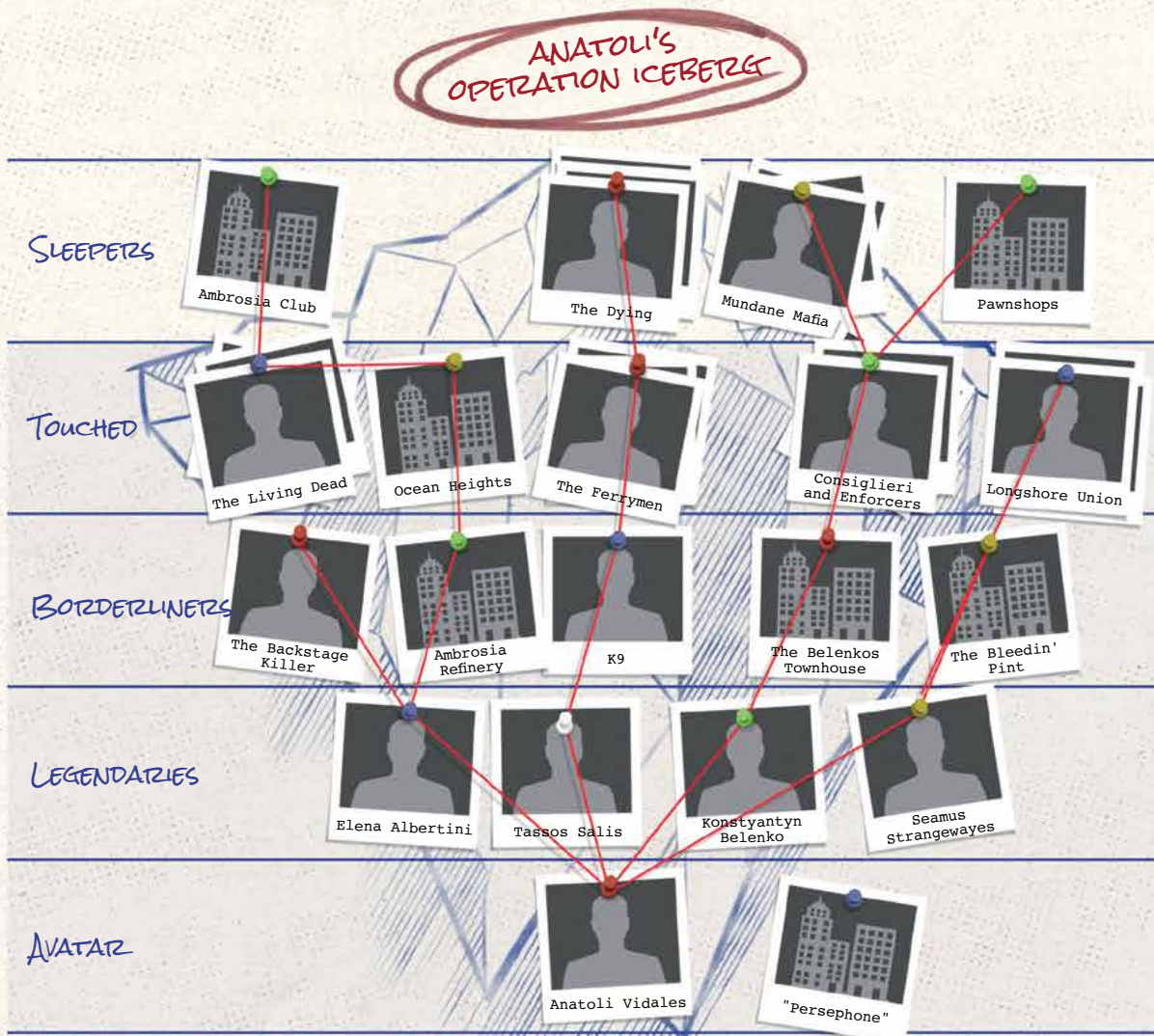
Existing in the City is a boon bestowed by Anatoli on his serfs and it could easily be taken away; if they ever cross him, he can send them to the eternal darkness of non-existence, or worse. There

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.



GAMBLING WITH DEATH

In an attempt to save his life, the ruler of a casino empire who is up to his neck in debt captures a legendary hustler who he hopes could be his salvation. However, not only do her powers fail to stop his debtor, Death himself, from collecting his due, but Death also demands that the ruler sacrifice his fake savior as punishment. Now the casino magnate and his security team scramble to cover up the murder as the crew ventures into the dark secrets behind the glitz and glamour of the Royal Plaza Hotel.

HOW TO USE THIS CASE

Gambling with Death is an introduction to the Dying branch of Anatoli Vidales' Avatar operation. *Shark Tank*, the case included with the new Starter Set, explores the Living branch of Anatoli's operation.

Anatoli is the Avatar of Hades, Greek god of death and the underworld. In this case, he is referred to only as Death and is represented by K9, the Rift of Cerberus, the three-headed dog that watches over the gates of Hades. Read more about the Living and Dying branches of Anatoli's operation on page 177.

You can use this case as a standalone, or as the opening shot for a season focusing on Anatoli, together with *Shark Tank*.

THE BACKSTORY

Gambling with Death is inspired by the fairy-tale *The Nightingale*, by Hans Christian Andersen. In *The Nightingale*, the Emperor abandons his favorite songbird for a bejeweled mechanical bird, but when Death comes for the Emperor, the real nightingale returns and with her beautiful song convinces Death to let the Emperor live.

THE EMPEROR

Kenny Liu (the Emperor) is a hotel and casino magnate, relatively young at forty years of age. He leads a flashy lifestyle, wearing only the finest garments and jewelry and enjoying every conceivable luxury while entertaining a retinue of gold-digging false friends and business partners. Three years ago, his life of debauchery came to a screeching halt when Kenny was diagnosed with terminal pancreatic cancer. Rather than allowing the cancer to kill him, the casino tycoon cut a deal with Death's representative, K9 (Cerberus), to pay a stupendous

Note that Chief of Security Cooper and his team are anticipating someone would be snooping around; if anyone scores 7-9 on their Investigate roll, use the counter question option to allow Cooper to find out important details about the crew.

Here's what the casino patrons can reveal:

Ashley Lind was at the blackjack table as a "floater", hanging around and pretending to be a friend of one of the players.

Ashley's eyes were following a middle-aged man in a mustard-colored suit and big sunglasses, a known sleazebag named **Marty Brooks** (could lead to Marty's place).

Marty was representing a professional named **Théo Blanc** who won a nice sum and cashed out soon thereafter, uncharacteristically.

As soon as Théo Blanc and Marty left their table, Ashley made her way to the mens' room.

She was forcibly dragged out of there by Chief of Security Cooper moments later and walked into the Box.

Billy Cash knows Théo Blanc and can point the crew to his usual haunt, the **Ace of Clubs** (Théo's club). As for Rhonda, she spent the night with Blanc and found an *Ace of Clubs casino chip* (temporary tag) in his jeans back pocket as she was going through his stuff. She hasn't seen him since.

BILLY CASH (JIN CHAN) ★

LOSING STREAK 5 HURT OR SUBDUED 1

- **Okay, Okay, Maybe I Saw Something:** Every time Billy Cash takes a status on his *losing streak* spectrum, he reveals one item from the list below. When the *losing streak* spectrum maxes out, he reveals everything he knows.
- **Lucky Toad:** When Billy Cash enters the scene or as a hard move, give him *lucky-1*.
- **Sticky Prosperity:** When Billy Cash takes a status that would affect his luck, gambling, or money (including *losing streak* statuses), reduce the tier of the status by 1.
- **Paranoid:** When you try to attack or threaten Billy Cash, he has already signaled security (or the cops). Create a new Danger: Beat Cops / Security Guards.
- Win someone's money in a gamble (*a-little-over-budget-1, overspending-2, or financial-risk-3*)
- Look at his hand, then set the cards down, eyes flickering in red



ASHLEY'S PLACE

This is where she lived: a crummy studio apartment tucked under the railway in a rundown neighborhood. This place has all the signs of a lost soul: dilapidated walls, dripping faucet, empty fridge, and an eviction notice from six months ago that was never acted on. What happened to you, Ashley? Why did you fall so low?

Ashley Lind lived in the Blue-Collar Residential, in a small apartment she could hardly afford. She survived mostly thanks to her petty scams, using her abilities to steal money from strangers.

Profiling Ashley or asking around could reveal she lived mostly on her own; friends and lovers came and went. Though she lacked the clarity to see it, Ashley didn't really know who she was. Perhaps having the ability to become what others wanted her to be made it difficult to truly find her own identity.

Searching the apartment (or the computer) would reveal a **folder with incriminating photos** of Ashley with her victims, which may have been used to blackmail her. In each photo, Ashley looks completely different, and in some cases it's hard to recognize her (thanks to her mimic powers). These are the photos Marty Brooks used to entrap Ashley, promising to give her the originals and delete all copies if she helped him with the casino heist.

There are **golden mechanical gears** in the shower and on her bed covers.

Call records could reveal that Ashley made single calls to many various numbers (her fraud victims) but numerous calls to two numbers: one at Marty's place and the other a private number (calls from her sister, see sidebar).

THE REAL NIGHTINGALE

Ashley's older sister, a school teacher named Jenny Applebaum (she change her last name), was Kenny Liu's real Nightingale. Kenny Liu never cared enough about these women's personal lives to connect the dots, but Chief of Security Cooper had suspected the two nightingales were related.

Jenny's powers have made her a potential threat to Anatoli's (Hades) operation because she could prevent people from dying and ward off Death and its agents. It's possible that she was murdered for that and that she now exists in Hades. Perhaps she made herself disappear because she started investigating the Avatar's operation, and if so, maybe she used Kenny Liu as a platform to learn more about K9 and his superiors. She could even be the same person as Perry Kennedy, once Anatoli's wife and his only love (see Anatoli's History, page 177).

If you choose to incorporate Jenny in the story, her involvement may open up a can of worms much bigger than the scope of this case. Ashley Lind may have been searching for her sister when the heist took place, so she may have had additional motives unknown to any of the other characters (perhaps except Cooper). You can drop some vague clues about the identity of Ashley's sister, such as a photo of the two at Ashley's place; leave the big reveal about her to Cooper, Kenny Liu, or K9 at the end of the case.





FLOATING LOCATION

By default, Kenny Liu's private suite is located at the top floor of the hotel and it was there that Ashley Lind was taken before she was forced to jump to her death. However, if the crew somehow penetrates the hotel suite early in the case, you can choose to have Kenny's private suite be in his Downtown penthouse instead. In this variation, the hotel suite where the fateful meeting with Ashley Lind and K9 took place is a separate location from the penthouse, where Kenny Liu usually resides and where the crew finally finds him.

Kenny Liu is not going to roll over and give himself to the crew. He has survived worse enemies than them (or so he thinks). Just like when he aspired to escape Death (twice!), he's willing to use any means necessary to permanently rid himself of the crew and weather the Ashley Lind storm. If the opportunity presents itself, he will try to take

command of a mentally vulnerable crew member and push the crew into fighting themselves, hoping to later spin a story and tack the Ashley Lind blame on the crew members.

Talking to Kenny Liu, the crew may learn about:

Kenny Liu's history with Death, the real Nightingale, and Ashley Lind

His botched gamble that Ashley Lind will be able to save him from Death and the price Death made him pay by sacrificing Ashley

How he made Ashley Lind jump to her Death

At the apartment, the crew may find:

The cogwheel, springs, and pins indicating Ashley Lind was forced to be there

Artifacts of death worshipping, such as an incense holder made of a skull

Medical files about his terminal disease

THE BACK ALLEY

