

SAMPLE PLAYTHROUGH

Simone and **Gary** play **Det. Enkidu** and **Tlaloc**, respectively. They are already deep into an investigation, after having been conned into obtaining illegal goods for a shady individual.

MC: So, it looks like you have enough information on this fella, Lars Erickson, to assume he is behind the attempt to trick you into stealing that crate. What do you do?

Simone: I think we will head to the Blue Oyster restaurant, where we know he's been hanging out. It's time to confront him.

Gary: Right. I look forward to figuring out *what* exactly this guy is.

MC: Super. You two take Detective Enkidu's squad car and drive down to the light industry district where the Blue Oyster is situated. It's a drab and rainy afternoon. You drive by factories, warehouses, and red-brick office buildings with soot-covered windows. You eventually spot the big sign of the Blue Oyster tucked in a back alley between two factories. It's noisy outside and steam rolls in front of you on the road as you turn into the alleyway. The restaurant is on the second floor of a converted warehouse. You take the elevator, which opens up to a small waiting area with a large open double door. There's a hostess standing there next to a podium where her clipboard is resting. She spots you as soon as you emerge from the elevator. Wafts of seafood and oyster sauce welcome you to the Blue Oyster. Jazz music is heard from within.

Simone: Det. Enkidu is the typical cop, so she's overprotective of Tlaloc who is known to get into all kinds of trouble. She'll say: "Now, watch your step here. We don't know who this guy is, or what's his story. Let me do the talking."

Gary: Tlaloc just shrugs. I'm gonna hang around while Enkidu does her thing and try to swipe the hostess's clipboard to get a look at it. I'm looking for the name Lars Erickson.

MC: Great, that would be an **Investigate** move as you're ultimately after information. Which tags are you going to include?

Gary: I have *shadow and observe* and *sticky fingers*. That's two power tags, so a Power of 2.

MC: Roll away: two six-sided dice as always and add your Power.

Gary: I rolled a 5 and 3, plus 2. That's a 10, so it's in the category of 10+.

MC: Great! The **Investigate** move gives you two Clues which you can spend as you wish. For each clue, ask me any question you want and I will give a you a clue about it. You rolled 10+ so there are no complications this time.

Gary: Awesome. So Tlaloc is circling around the waiting area, chewing on gum, and looking inconspicuous. As soon as Enkidu walks up to the hostess he tries to get her clipboard and take a look, and then put it back. So for

my first Clue, I want to ask "Has Lars Erickson been here?"

MC: Very quickly your eyes catch the name Lars Erickson, on a reservation for two persons today at this time. In fact, he should be here right now.

Gary: Perfect. I also want to ask "Where is he sitting?"

MC: You see a map of the restaurant and figure out where he's sitting. In fact, you can see him through the double door, at the far end of the restaurant. You see a man in his mid-40s, mostly blonde with some gray hair on the sides, wearing a gray suit. There's a hulk of a man standing next to him in a black suit, like a waiter or a bodyguard, you're not sure. And of course, you have no way of knowing if this really is Lars Erickson, but that's his table. Detective Enkidu, what do you do?

Simone: Still unaware of everything wonder-boy here has been up to, the detective walks up to the hostess and flashes her badge, saying: "Good afternoon, miss. I'm am looking for a patron of yours, Lars Erickson." I wait to see her response.

MC: She flicks through lists on her clipboard for a moment and then responds with a fake smile: "I'm sorry, ma'am, there is no-one under that name here today."

Simone: Huh? I look back at Tlaloc, confused.

Gary: I shake my head to indicate she's lying.

Simone: I turn back to the hostess and say, "Look, there must have been a mistake. He's supposed to be here. I need to go in and have a word with him."

MC: She moves uneasily. "I'm sorry, detective, but this is a respectable

establishment. Our customers' privacy is important to us, so unless you have a warrant..."

Simone: We'll see about that. I'm going to try to intimidate her into letting me in. I've got the tags *police badge* and *you're in my jurisdiction*, if that works.

MC: That works. That's a **Convince** move. You're rolling with two power tags, so your Power is 2.

Simone: I say: "Listen, young lady. Do you want to be an accomplice to a convict escaping justice? I don't think so. So step aside." And with a stern face I hang the badge on the buckle of my belt. I roll a 5. That's a total of 7, so that's a 7-9.

MC: For **Convince**, you give her a choice: take a status or do as you say. You rolled 7-9, so she can still protect her agenda if she chooses to do as you say. What status would you give her if she refuses? You rolled with a Power of 2, so the tier of this status would be 2 as well.

Simone: The detective isn't a bad person, but she is brusque. Let's say, if the hostess resists, she'll take *shaken-2*. It's her choice now whether to help me or not, right?

MC: Yup. She looks you up and down, shuddering, trying to weigh whether she should even get into this. Then she looks into the restaurant as if looking for her boss. "Please make it quick. And if anyone asks, tell them you're a customer." She moves out of your way.

Simone: "Wouldn't be the first time..." I go in.

Gary: Tlaloc walks in right after Detective Enkidu, blurting: "I'm with her."

MC: The hostess gives you a confused look, but she stands back.

Gary: I quickly fill in the detective about Erickson as we walk into the restaurant.

MC: Sure. The restaurant is a wide space divided into semi-circular booths facing each other in different angles. The walls and fixtures are decorated with art-deco designs. There is a loud chatter of people talking as they are having their lunch, almost too loud to hear the jazz band playing on the left hand side. Far on the right, there is a swinging double door with two circular windows next to a hatch where waiters are queueing to pick up trays with steaming dishes. With a napkin tucked in his collar, the person you identified as Lars Erickson is having his meal on his own in one of the farthest booths, which is slightly elevated and overlooks the restaurant. As you approach, his manservant, who is standing in front of the booth, says something in a low voice and Lars raises his head to look right at you.

Simone: I walk right up to the table.

MC: The manservant blocks your way. You get a closer look at him – he's a six-foot-four walking mass of muscle, with sallow skin, short cropped dark hair and a Roman nose. "You've got the wrong table. Piss off before you get burned."

Simone: I bare my teeth at him: "We'll see who will get burned."

Gary: While the brutes are measuring each other up, Tlaloc steps up. "Lars Erickson, right? Listen, man, we're the team you sent to steal that crate for you. It wasn't easy to find you, you know? You seem to slip people's minds quite easily. How about you tell us what was so important about that crate? And who the hell are you working for?"

MC: Are you investigating?

Gary: Nah. For now, I just wait to see how he reacts to being called out.

MC: Okay. You see it in his eyes, he did not expect you to find him, and that confirms a little bit that he is indeed who you think he is. As he chews up a morsel of oyster meat, he sets the shell down on the plate – and flips the table over!

Simone: Son of a gun.

MC: Enkidu, you've got other problems to worry about. The manservant's eyes start welling up with something like burning red lava. As he opens his mouth, fumes start rising from his nostrils and his slightly open maw is illuminated by what seems to be lightning and fire down his throat. And, as if that's not enough, his skin starts turning dark and metallic, like wrought iron.

Simone: "What. The hell. Are you?"

MC: Through the cloud of flashing smoke brewing up around his mouth, he says "Vul-can".

Simone: Okay. I'm going to whip out my *thorny tentacles*. He's going down.

MC: Upon seeing the freakshow you two are putting up, the people at the restaurant start panicking, screaming, hiding behind tables, or running for the door.

Gary: Where is Erickson?

MC: You lost sight of him for just a second as he overturned the big round table. Now, as the table falls over, he's not there anymore.

Gary: Darn. I want to find him so I'm going to **Investigate**. I've got no tags that can help here so that's a Power of 0. I roll an 8, so that's 7-9.

MC: Even though your Power is zero, you still get one Clue.

Gray: Great. For my one clue, I want to ask: *Where is he?*

MC: You see him sprinting towards the swinging door of the kitchen, pushing away waiters and customers in his path. You're not quite sure how he got from behind the table in the elevated booth to the floor, but there he is. However, at 7-9, I as the MC get to choose a complication from the list. I choose *Your investigation exposes you to danger*. While you are focusing on your spatial sense, Vulcan starts spewing a jet of burning lava at both you and the detective. You can avoid the jet easily enough but if it even just brushes you, it will give you a status of *nasty-burn-2*. You both get to roll **Face Danger**.

Gary: Yikes! Is there a small body of water nearby? I want to turn into water, dive in and try to escape.

MC: Hmmm. There are oyster ice buckets all around. I'll let you use it because it's a creative idea.

Gary: That's it! I'm going to use *turn myself into water* and *travel between bodies of water* to get out of the way and come out of another oyster ice bucket a few feet away. I roll a 6 plus a Power of 2. That's an 8! So at 7-9, I take the status but with one tier down.

MC: Indeed. Just before you completely liquify, the jet gets you. So it will be tier 1 instead of 2. Grab a tracking card and put down *itchy-burn-1*.

Simone: I'm going to use *feral athletics*. I rolled an 11! So a total of 12 which is in the 10+ category. According to the move, I don't get hit at all and I take no status. I'd say Enkidu is used to dodging in a fight, so she avoids Vulcan's jet by leaping and rolling.

MC: Nice! Vulcan seems caught up in wreaking havoc around him at the moment, which gives you a momentary opening. What do you do next?

Simone: Enkidu is really pissed off, so she's going to destroy this guy. Just as I turn, I fling half a dozen thorny tentacles right at him and at the same time I lunge at him, trying to knock him back. I have a clear shot, so that's **Hit with All You've Got**, I presume? I'll put in *thorny tentacles* and *feral athletics* for a Power of 2.

MC: Would you say Enkidu has a personal stake in this fight now? I'm invoking your weakness tag, *don't get too personal*. This gives you -1 Power but you also get to mark 1 Attention on this theme.

Simone: Shoot! I guess she did mark him as a target and she's not thinking her moves through. So I roll with a Power of 1 then, instead of 2. I roll an 8, for a total of 9. So, I can choose one option out of the list. I choose to *Get him good* and bump up the tier of the status I inflict by 1. The base tier is the same as my Power, which is 1, so I do a tier-2 status, let's say *disoriented-2*.

The MC looks at the stats for Vulcan. He has a *hurt:4* status spectrum, which means he will go down if he takes a tier 4 status of physical injury. However, he also has a custom move, *Metal Skin*, allowing him to reduce incoming statuses of physical harm by 1. The MC reveals the custom move to the players and continues.

MC: You hit him hard. He keels over and falls on his back, making a loud din like an empty cauldron, but it doesn't have the effect you expected — he seems surprised but not quite disoriented. He takes a *dizzy-1* status instead. As he gets up to his

feet, you see several tears in his suit where your tentacles got him. Underneath, the black metal skin is unscathed. Tlaloc, Lars is putting serious distance between his knocked down manservant and himself. He's almost at the door – what do you do?

Gary: I dash after Lars! I want to use the ice buckets again to show up in front of him and trip him over. I'll use **turn myself into water** and **travel between bodies of water** for that, for a Power of 2.

MC: Since this is a competition between you two, you'll be **Going Toe to Toe**. However, you do have an **itchy-burn-1** status that is bugging you when you move to trip him... Take its tier off your Power, so that's -1 Power for a total Power of 1.

Gary: Sure. I roll a 6 – so that's a 7. On a 7-9, I choose one of three: reach my goal – that's to trip him, I guess – protect myself, or give him a status. I choose the first: Tlaloc transports as water to where Ericson is about to pass through the door and trips him!

MC: Ouch! Mr. Erickson comes crashing through the swinging kitchen door and slips on the greasy floor of the kitchen. He lands flat on his face but he quickly rolls over his back and stares at you with a cold icy stare. Since you did not choose to protect yourself, he will throw a status at you. He fumbles in his suit jacket and produces a crooked wooden stick and points it at you. For a moment, it looks rather ridiculous and seems to have no effect. But the more you look at it, the more you feel like you're not sure if he's actually Lars Erickson. In fact, you don't know who this man is and what you came here for. You are about to be hit by the status **forgetful-3**.

Gary: No way! Who is this guy?! Tlaloc screams, "Get out of my head!" Can I use my tag **driven self-promoter** to resist it? I also have a status of **itchy-burn-1**.

MC: **driven self-promoter** doesn't sound like something that will help you resist this. The **itchy-burn-1** also has no effect on this. It looks like you don't have the ability to **Face Danger** so take the full status of **forgetful-3**...

Gary: *sigh* Simone, hand me another tracking card.

MC: You struggle to remember who this man is and why you are after him, but it's slipping your mind. Any actions trying to catch him from now on will incur -3 to your Power.

Gary: "Enkidu! Help!"

MC: She's got her own problems...

Simone: I don't like where this is going. I need to take this Vulcan dude down so I can help Tlaloc. I want to **Change the Game** so that I'm not just berserking. There's a sprinkler system in this restaurant, right? I'm going to hit and break a few of the sprinklers to turn them on. I use **thorny tentacles** so it's a Power of 1. I rolled a 10!

MC: Lucky! At 10+, you get a minimum of 2 Juice. You can spend your Juice on creating tags and statuses or removing them. Normally, it's **temporary** so it works for one action only, but since you rolled 10+ you can spend a point of Juice to make an effect **ongoing**.

Simone: That's it – I want to give the restaurant the tag **cold and wet** and make it ongoing. That's my 2 Juice spent.

MC: That should take care of your temper. The screams of panic are

muffled by the heavy shower unleashed from the sprinklers, and now everyone who was still hiding scrambles for the door, leaving the place abandoned. You and Vulcan face each other off in a ring of damp charred carpet and scorched furniture. He towers over you, and a loud rumble from his belly lets you know he is about to spew hell out. Emboldened by surviving your last attack, he puffs out his chest with pride, as if waiting for your next strike.

Simone: He's not the sharpest tool in the shed, huh? This is my chance to take him out. I quickly draw out my gun and try to shoot him right in his collarbone, where his skin would be thin. I'm going to **burn a tag for a hit** for this. Bye bye, **standard issue pistol**, I'm scratching you out. So I don't have to roll and I get a Power of 3 and a roll of 10. Since he's just standing there, waiting for me to hit him, it's a Hit with All You've Got move. At 10+, I get to choose two options. First, I choose to *Get him good*, for +1 tier. I start with the base tier of my Power 3, so that final tier is 4. Let's say **gunshot-wound-4**. Second, I choose to gain an advantage and get one Juice, using it to give him a temporary status of **pierced-1**.

MC: Wow! In this case, I will rule that the **pierced-1** status prevents him from using his custom move to reduce your status from tier 4 to tier 3. He's hit right in the chest and his metal skin breaks as he gets knocked back into the wall, and drops to the floor unconscious. As the lava gushes out of him, his skin turns white-hot and starts dripping off him to the floor.

Simone: Woot!

MC: Since you did not choose to protect yourself when **Hitting with All**

You've Got, you get hit too. Let's say a splash of the molten rock and metal flies your way, causing you a **nasty-burn-2**.

Simone: I try dodging with **feral athletics** but I just rolled a total of 4 so I take the full status. Ouch! Tracking cards, come to mama.

The MC reviews Vulcan's stats. He has already taken a tier-1 status on the hurt:4 spectrum. Because the new tier-4 status is greater, it will supercede the tier-1 status. At tier 4, this spectrum has maxed out, which means this Danger is vanquished. However, Vulcan has another custom move...

MC: Also, this Danger has a custom move, that reads as follows: *When you defeat Vulcan, if you broke his metal skin, he erupts like a volcano.*

Simone: Whaaaaaaat?! I'd say I broke it all right!

MC: You start hearing a rumble from the limp body of the manservant. Fumes start rising where you broke his metal hide and his normal skin underneath seems translucent, glowing in orange-red as it starts swelling... Tlaloc, in the kitchen, the sprinklers are on and the neon light is flickering and flashing. Lars Erickson gets up to his feet and looks at you warily to see what you'd do. He's still holding that crooked wooden stick.

Gary: I'm losing touch with what I need from him, so I'm gonna fake it. I'll try to distract him with chit-chat while I grab this stick he's holding. That's another **Go Toe to Toe**, but I'm going to burn my **relentless schmoozer** tag. I get a Power of 3 and a total roll of 10. Do my statuses apply here?

MC: They do. I would say both the **itchy-burn-1** and the **forgetful-3** will get in the way of you trying to act

cool, but only the one with the higher tier applies. You have -3 then, so it's like you rolled 7 with a Power of zero.

Gary: That's cool. I say: "Mister, please, I am not looking to fight. Why can't we just sit down and talk like two human beings?" Then I choose to achieve my goal and snatch his stick.

MC: Thrown off, he lowers the stick for a moment, just in time for you to snatch it out of his grip. However, once again you did not choose to protect yourself. You have the stick, but he was able to wiggle it one more time before you snatched it. Roll **Face Danger** against another *forgetful-3*.

Gary: Yeah, I figured as much. I have nothing to protect me from his juju so I take the full status of *forgetful-3*. That's on the same spectrum as my existing *forgetful-3*, so I mark 3 more boxes on the same tracking card, right? That brings me to tier 4.

MC: So you are now *grasping-at-straws-of-memory-4*. You have nothing but a vague recollection of why you are chasing this man. If you reach tier 5, you will forget completely.

Gary: Tlaloc stutters, "Who... who are you?"

MC: "It doesn't matter," says Erickson in a deep calm voice amidst sprinkler rain and flickering neons, "I'm here to tell you about a very serious event in the future of our City. An event that you have seen in your visions: the blotting out of the Fifth Sun."

Gary: Oh no! He's activating my **Mystery!** My character wants to know "*Who threatens to blot out the Fifth Sun?*"

MC: At this point a massive explosion erupts in the restaurant, knocking all of you off your feet. Flames seem to engulf everything and Tlaloc, when you

regain your bearings you see spatter of lava-like substance dripping on the circular glass windows of the swinging doors, melting the glass as it runs down. In the chaos around you, you see Lars Erickson heading to the back exit. "Let's get out of here and I will tell you what I know about the death of the Fifth Sun." While you can't remember who this guy is, you do remember your friend is in that inferno in the restaurant and may need your help. What do you do?

Gary: That definitely qualifies as a hard choice. What to do? I really want to know what information he has and I don't suspect him much more than the usual because I almost completely forgot why I'm after him. On the other hand, I'm not going to let my buddy die.

Simone: I'm not dead yet!

Gary: Yeah, but Tlaloc doesn't know this. To hell with it, I'm gonna go against the Mystery and try to save Detective Enkidu. I guess he takes a big breath, sighs, and says, "I have to help my friend." He's about to turn his back on Lars and go the swinging door. I mark **Fade** to indicate he acted against his Mystery.

MC: Dramatic choice.

Gary: However... before I go, I want to make one final attempt to stop this man. I barely remember who he is and why I am doing it, but something deep inside me tells me he is not to be trusted. I guess he is totally wet by now. I'm going to shock him with a lightning bolt and try to take him captive. **Hit with All You've Got** requires a clear shot – do I have it?

MC: Yes, he seems to think you'll be rushing to help your friend first.

Simone: Oh, really? Why would he think that? Ha ha.

Gary: Don't worry, I'll get to that, I can move through ice buckets. So I have a Power of 3 from *call upon a storm* and *thunderbolt manipulation* and from the sprinklers' tag *cold and wet*. But my negative tier-4 status brings it down to -1. Oh no, I rolled a 5. Eek! Six or less.

For all core moves (except Face Danger), on a 6 or less, the MC gets to make his own move. He scans the MC moves list and chooses "Deny Them Something They Want," which seems apt.

MC: Lightening is fast, but the Mist is faster. By the time you charge up with electric crackle, you already completely forget why you are doing this. A man in a grey suit who you've never seen before stands at the back exit looking rather edgy. He blurts out, "the restaurant is going to collapse, your friend is in trouble!" just before he bolts through the door and disappears.

Gary: Shucks. I'm running to help Detective Enkidu.

MC: We're going to cut it here, saying you both narrowly escaped the burning building. The firefighters, police, and EMTs arrive at the scene. If you hang around long enough, you'd hear the customers give reports of what happened to cops going around. Some of them mention you, Enkidu, as either the person who started the fire or the person who helped put it out by triggering the sprinkler system. None of them, however, mention Lars Erickson. If you have no further business here, it's time for your **Montage (Downtime)** moves.

Simone: Awesome! I will spend the afternoon at the police department's gym, boxing and blowing off steam. I choose to spend my time *giving attention* to my Hard-Boiled Detective theme, so I get one more Attention on

it. I already had one before today, and I got one during the fight, so that brings me up to three, so I can buy an improvement! I think the new power tag *excessive use of force* seems very appropriate!

Gary: Tlaloc will spend the afternoon at the crew's office, sitting at the desk with a strong cup of joe, fiddling with the stick he snatched from Lars. I choose the option *recover from my last activity*. Can I recover from all my statuses?

MC: In this case, you sure can.

Gary: Cool, so Tlaloc treated that burn and that's fine, but as he's sitting at the desk examining that — I guess it's a wand? — he suddenly stops and whispers to himself: "I remember. I remember everything."

MC: To be continued!