

A man with dark hair and red-tinted glasses sits on a ledge. He is wearing a dark suit, a light-colored shirt, and a striped tie. The background is a stylized, high-contrast scene with a blue sky and a red ground. The title 'CITY of MIST' is written in a large, white, stylized font, and 'QUICK START RULES' is written in a smaller, red, cursive font below it.

CITY of MIST

QUICK START RULES



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



WELCOME TO THE CITY OF LEGENDS MADE FLESH.

In a corrupt and haunted metropolis, individuals from all walks of life become rifts to mythical powers from beyond, torn between their personal lives and the legend growing within them.

In the shadows of shiny skyscrapers and derelict residential blocks, ancient stories and urban legends assume physical form, seeping into the City through Rifts in mortal form. But **the Mist**, a mystical veil known only to a select few, prevents the unwitting denizens of the City from ever acknowledging the miracles they witness daily, hiding their true nature from one another. Distracted by their everyday hopes and fears, the people on the streets remain oblivious to the clash of mythical forces that drive and control the very life of the City.

You were an ordinary person, until the seed of the legendary awoke within you. Now you seek answers to questions about your powers, but the truth always seems to elude you. At the same time, you still want what every human being wants: love, money, power, peace of mind. Together with your ragtag crew of gifted individuals, you work to reveal the powers operating in the dark smoky alleys of the City, just as those very powers seek *you* out for what you are. You will hit the streets in search of the strange cases, loose ends, and unsolved mysteries that will lead you to the truth, inevitably clashing with other legends in mortal form, agents of the powers beyond the Mist.

Be warned – the truth is as dangerous as the forces that hide it. Only when you find yourself sacrificing that which is dearest to you will you truly learn the answer to the ultimate question: ‘who am I?’. But will it be worth it?

WHAT IS CITY OF MIST?

City of Mist is a role-playing game of film-noir investigation and super-powered action. It is set in a modern metropolis rife with crime, conspiracies, and mysteries. The protagonists are **Rifts**, ordinary people who became the living embodiment of a legend, their **Mythos**. While your Rifts may seek to strike a balance between the mysterious nature of their Mythos and their mortal aspirations, the powers within them always threaten to tear their lives apart. They have unwittingly become a part of a secret world of clashing stories, and soon other legends will come looking for them, with demands.

The *City of Mist* game system focuses on cinematic action, drama, and investigation. It emphasizes narrative roleplaying by introducing the following features:

- **Rich character motivations built around compelling Mysteries and Identities.** Play to your character's themes to gain their benefits and evolve them or go against them to discover new aspects within you, with a unique non-linear character evolution system.
- **Know no limits for powers, abilities, traits, gear, or allies.** Everything in *City of Mist* is described by free-text tags, so you can create exactly the character you want.

- **A narrative engine with an edge.** Every action you take in the game is based on the interpretation of your tags, using moves to deliver dramatic outcomes that drive the story forward.
- **Status spectrums, a new system of 'narrative damage'.** Use descriptors to create any imaginable setback or advantage so that every action in the fiction, in and out of combat, can have significant gameplay implications.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

In this set, you will find everything you need in order to run your first few games of *City of Mist*, including:

- This PDF, containing a brief review of the setting and the basic rules
- Seven pre-generated character playbooks
- Two sample cases: *V is for going Viral* and *Demons in Cross End*
- Printable game aids: the player moves sheet, tracking cards, and MC sheets

Before you start playing, the game host or **MC** (Master of Ceremonies) should read this PDF and become familiar with the game. All other players can read the player chapters or leave it to the MC to explain the rules. Then, get together with ample free time and snacks, pick your characters, have the MC start the first scene of *V is for going Viral*, and enter the shadowy alleys of *City of Mist*.

THE NEW "ALL-SEEING EYE INVESTIGATIONS" STARTER SET

There's a new way to bring *City of Mist* to your game night!

The new *Starter Set* is designed to launch your game with as little prep as possible, learning as you play.

Hard-boiled detectives and cunning mob lords hold the mythic powers of characters from the Sumerian saga of Gilgamesh, Greek and Aztec mythology, German fairytales, the Bible, Fijian folktale, and more. But the mysterious force of the Mist makes everyone who isn't a legend forget their magic, leaving legends to terrorize the City from the shadows. Can your crew uncover the truth about who is really behind it all?

- Learn as you play, following short "exhibits" that gradually introduce game elements only when you need them for your investigation!
- Learn the role of the Master of Ceremonies with *Shark Tank*, a case designed to walk you through your first steps, building up your MC skills from scene to scene.
- Protect your neighborhood from Mythos-powered mobsters and expose the hidden forces trying to take over the streets!

Find the new Starter Set in our store: cityofmist.co/store

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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 as well as strong themes of violence, crime, and immorality. Parental guidance is advised.

PRONOUN USE

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 may be of any or no gender.



SETTING

A GUIDE TO THE CITY

Two worlds exist side by side in the City. There's the world you see: the world of coffee stains and rush hour traffic, of nervous drug dealers and smug politicians. Look around you, what do you see? A plumber plodding along on the rainy streets after a long day of work, or a homeless woman aimlessly wandering the subway train.

Then there's the world of legend: myths and stories, symbols and ideas, swirling in a vastness you cannot fathom. They're more real than reality itself, the foundation of all life. The truth is there, but you cannot see

it: the trafficker is literally a vampire; the politician is Narcissus himself. The plumber is a primordial reptilian from a time when fire and water were still one. The homeless woman is a revenant, an angel of death waiting for a destined soul.

The veil of the Mist hides the true world from us. The Mist envelops us all in familiar forms, distracts us, and makes us forget the wonders and horrors that lie beyond it. In the City, the Mist makes all legends seem filthy, creased, and washed-out. They wear a crust of mundanity, and forget what they are.

But you, you are a Rift through the Mist. You are hope and despair. You can bring your legend to life, if you dare let go of the illusion you call a life.

THE RIFTS

This set includes seven pre-generated Rifts. In the following descriptions, bold words indicate **themes** (explained in *The Cinematics* chapter). For more information on each character's specific abilities, see the character playbooks.

FLESHING OUT YOUR PRE-GEN CHARACTER

The pre-generated characters leave a lot of details unexplained. You can add background details to your character as you please, starting with her or his real name. Other open questions such as "What was the artifact L'Estrange found?", "Who was in the car with Mitosis when he crashed it?" and "What did Flicker see in her life-altering vision?" are up to you and the MC to decide.

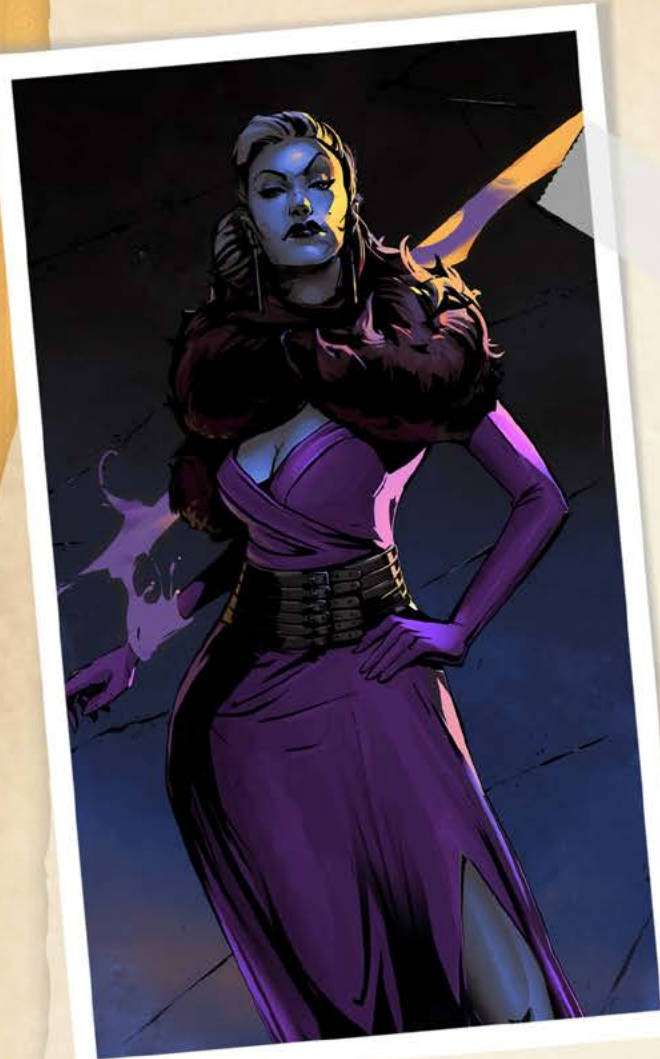
Name: **THE RIFTS**



DECLAN L'ESTRANGE

L'Estrange, a **Dubious Antiques Dealer** and **Gun-slinger**, has **Been Around** long enough to know his way through the world. Always searching for the truth behind the veil, he is convinced the ancients had secret knowledge. When he finally found the key, an artifact that was later stolen from him, he began **Living in a Dream**, sensing limitless possibilities that sometimes manifest through him, though he hasn't quite been able to control it.





EXCALIBUR

Contrary to what many may think, there's more to Excalibur than just a bitter **Rich Old Dame**. True, she was born to a **Wealthy and Dysfunctional Family** if there ever was one. But as a secret **Activist for Social Change**, she has her own plans for the City, plans that became possible when she found a silver bracelet which turned out to be **The Ultimate Weapon** in disguise.



FLICKER

All her life, Flicker was engrossed in her **Hipster** lifestyle and her **Mad Hacker Skillz**: who to be, what music to listen to, how to crack the digital world. It wasn't until she literally stumbled into a vision of the horrible future of the City, while walking down the street, that she realized she is part of something greater. She doesn't know where her **Expanding Senses** and **Time-Space Warping** abilities will take her next, but she intends to follow.



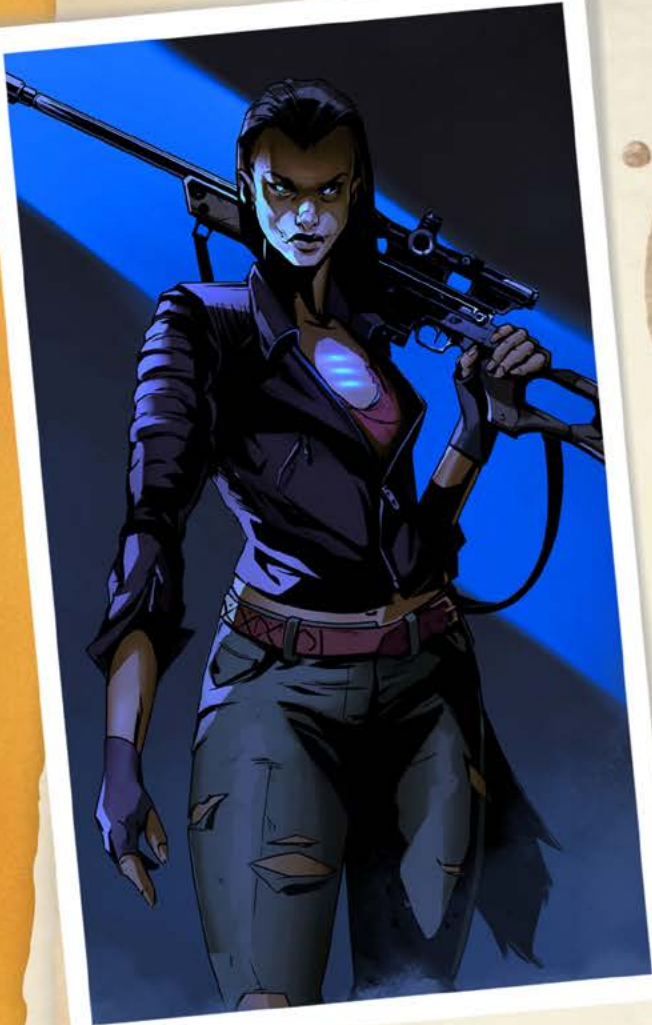
KITSUNE

Dressed as some cross between a high-school student and a **Ninja**, **After A Fashion**, Kitsune seems to most people as a teenager going through a phase. That works fine for Kitsune, who is really a **Trickster Fox Spirit** sent by the gods as a **Messenger of Good Fortune** to help mankind. There's only one thing in the mortal world that Kitsune cares about as much as their mission: a boy named **Kaito**.



MITOSIS

An **Ex-Boxer**, Mitosis' glamorous career and celebrity life came to a grinding halt when he became involved in a **Biochemical Accident**: driving while intoxicated, he hit a truck carrying vats of biohazardous substances. Mit's body went into a rampage of **Rapid Cell Growth**, transforming him into a monster while increasing his **Survivability** in all conditions.



POST-MORTEM

Post-Mortem doesn't know who she was before she died. She woke up as a **Walking Dead** body in an abandoned Helix Labs facility, animated by an unknown force. With the help of special **Helix Labs Gadgets** found at the lab and her newly (re?) discovered training as an **Assassin**, she began hunting those who operate in the shadows as the City's **Angel of Vengeance**.



SALAMANDER

An all around good guy and serious **Heartthrob**, Salamander was just a **City Water Worker** before he started having dreams about a burning lizard-like creature made of a substance which was both fire and water at the same time. He became capable of producing this substance as a **Nimbus of Primordial Plasma** and, having realized its potential, started his activity as an **Up-and-Coming Crime Fighter**.

LIFE OF A RIFT

WHO AM I?

You are just trying to eke out a living in the City like everybody else, right? You have your home, your loved ones, your things, and whatever it is you do with your time. But, without even knowing it, you're also a gateway to a strange legendary force: a **Mythos**.

Nobody really knows what the Mythoi are, or for that matter, what Rifts are. The vast majority of people in the City don't even know the Mythoi are real. In all likelihood, you are still one of those people.

What you do know is that lately you've started feeling a strange presence inside of you: something unknown and yet immensely familiar, like an old childhood memory. Maybe an accident triggered it or maybe it was something you discovered within yourself gradually. Now it's a part of you, and when you connect with it, wondrous and horrible things happen as the power of your Mythos is unleashed into the world.

WHAT DO I WANT?

You want a lot of things. You want to keep your job, you want to make your mom happy, or maybe you just want to find the *best* blueberry muffins in the City. You might also want to take revenge on those who have hurt you, or to show your true worth to someone. There are different sides to your **Identity**, each desiring different things.

Then, there is your Mythos. It wants you to go deeper, beyond your petty human desires and beyond what you know and so habitually cling to. There is a story inside you, a legend that transcends your personality and the circumstances of your life. It's calling to you to find it, to unravel it. It's a **Mystery** that you feel compelled to follow.

WHO IS AFTER ME?

Many Rifts – after realizing there's something strange going on – ask themselves, “How about I just forget about all this and focus on my life?”. In theory, that would be a good idea. But even if you could resist the call of your Mythos, there's one fact you can't ignore: there are *other* Rifts out there. People like you, perhaps of a less savoury nature, driven by their Mythos, looking for new opportunities to further their goals. They may be scheming in the shadows or going on an open rampage through the City streets; sooner or later, one of these legends will find you.

Other Rifts might be as new to the game as you are, or they might be almighty legends who have been around for a long time, gaining power and influence in the City. Some of them might even have a personal interest in you, especially if there is a relationship between your Mythoi: your stories may be connected, whether or not you realize it.

Not all Rifts pose a threat, though. The City has enough shades of gray to accommodate a wide spectrum of motives, and you may find Rifts who will be willing to help you out for their own reasons. Learn to be flexible – enemies and allies can change sides faster than you think.

OF MYTHOI AND MIST

A Mythos is a story that is trying to manifest itself in the City. It can be an existing myth or legend, like Excalibur, Salamander, or Kitsune. It can be a theory or a concept, like an evolutionary leap or the idea of omnipresence. And it can even be something vague and abstract, a feeling or a sensation, like anger itself or the spirit of well-being.

The Mist prevents the Mythoi from directly influencing the City. This allows the City to exist as it exists now; otherwise, it would become a chaotic canvas where stories mix, clash, and rip each other to shreds.

To influence the City, Mythoi must manifest through Rifts, portals through the Mist. Some kind of awareness or an

awakening of the soul is needed to become a Rift, so the most common form of a Rift is a human resident of the City. However, even animals, places and objects can be infused with enough awareness to serve as Rifts, known as Familiars, Enclaves, and Relics.

Nevertheless, the Mythoi are not an alien force trying to invade the City – they are its heart and the blood that runs through it. Everything in the City only exists because the Mythoi live inside it and animate it, despite the Mist. It's possible that without the Mythoi the City would simply cease to be.

CREWS AND CASES

Being a Rift means having questions in a city where all answers are hidden. You live in a city where countless forces and interests collide; like it or not, you will get involved in a **case** that at least at first might seem completely mundane and unrelated to your Mythos.

Scratch the surface just a little, though, and you'll find that the evidence doesn't always add up. This is the nature of your condition, your destiny – you're simply attracted to these bizarre incidents and unsolved mysteries, the mark of the presence of other legends.

To find the answers you are looking for, you will need a broader spectrum of skills, abilities, and resources than you possess. This is why you will team up with other Rifts who are seeking the same answers or at least need your help with their own questions: **your crew**.

It's up to you to decide what kind of crew you want to set up, but here are a few examples.

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. When you get involved in this line of work, you invariably become mixed up with people who know people and who can lead you to what you're looking for. But remember who you're working for – one wrong turn and your powerful employer will be coming after you.

MASKED VIGILANTE INVESTIGATIONS

There's too much crime in this city and your damn conscience won't let you just turn your head the other way. One way to tackle crime is to set up a facade that will allow you to snoop around places where you're not supposed to be: start a private investigation business! Later, at night, you can catch up with the bastards and ask the interesting questions, give or take a few broken bones.

DABBLERS IN THE MIST

For generations, the more aware residents of the City have tried to figure out the Mythoi, and fortunately for you, they've left a heap of toys to play with: artifacts, manuscripts, ruins, and relics. Dabbling in such things has the immediate effect of attracting other, older individuals or groups who have been dabbling for much longer, so consider yourself warned.

CONSPIRACY BUSTERS

It's an ugly job, 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 mysteries of the City and high-ranking government officials, filthy rich tycoons, and power-hungry crimelords. If you blow the lid, you better be prepared for some serious heat.



THE CITY

The City is a burgeoning metropolis, home to millions of people. Everything you have learned to expect of a modern city can be found here: economy and business, culture and recreation, society and art, education and technology, law and crime.

But there's something more. Every part of the City hides a story: not just dry historical facts but something *alive*, something that's struggling to exist – not unlike what is growing in you. 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 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 having breakfast together there.

The parts of the City that were abandoned by the mainstream, however, are those that most reek of something eldritch. Go under a highway bridge and you might find a hovel where something big and roughly human lived. Way up by the spires of a forsaken church, stone statues of angels, weighing several tons, occasionally go missing, only to reappear after a day or two. 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.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Locations for *City of Mist* are designed to inspire your story rather than strictly define the setting. You can create them yourself, based on popular noir tropes, and decide whether to plot them on a map or simply reference them as you tell your story.

The *City of Mist MC Toolkit* contains expanded content for the districts found here, with suggestions for local legends, their Dangers profiles and places of interest for your crew to investigate.

IS THE CITY OF MIST BASED ON AN ACTUAL CITY?

You can place the *City of Mist* anywhere in the world or leave it as its own context. You can give it a name, real or fictional; fashion it based on an existing city or make it up entirely from scratch. You can have a map of the City or just reference different locations as you go. It's all good, because the City is only the backdrop for your story. What really matters is who's in the story and what's going to happen to them on the streets when the cameras of the mind's eye start rolling.

Residents of the City simply call it 'the City', and refer to anything outside of it as 'out of town' ("Oh, Johnny? Johnny's out of town. But he'll be back...", "This stuff is weird, definitely came from out of town."). Their world view is so centered on the City that they don't really bother thinking about what's outside. Is that because of the Mist or is it just everyday absent-mindedness? You'll be the judge of that.



THE MIST

The public knows nothing. The mysteries you will encounter every night on the streets will never really be brought to light. When the work of legends is reported in the media, it's usually either completely skewed or purely anecdotal.

People on the street know that something is going on, but most of them excuse it as something mundane or just forget about it. They're *Sleepers*; they'd much rather sink back into the drama of their lives, be it a boyfriend's possible infidelity or a TV show they just love to watch. Why? And why aren't you entirely like them?

Like the Mythoi themselves, the nature of the force that keeps them hidden is largely unknown, as is the reason for its existence and power over humanity. Different esoteric traditions mention it and give it their own names, like the Indian *Maya* or the kabbalist *Ester*,

but these ancient lores aren't exactly common knowledge in the City. The vast majority of the residents of the City remains under this spell, ignoring or excusing even the most blatant miracle in their paths.

Not so for those touched by a Mythos. To the extent their awareness allows, Rifts can see with open eyes, remembering the wonders they witness. Unfortunately, they too are subject to the pull of the Mist; even the greatest of legends has mortal aspirations and attachments that may eventually bring her to forget her Mythos, if she does not keep them in check.

It is theorized that there is another player in this game of Mist and Mythos. Sometime, somewhere, someone must have known the origin of the Mist, enough to derive its name from the Greek word *μύω* (*miyó*) - "to conceal", and perhaps they are the only ones in the City who actually know it by this name. Who they are and what they know is a mystery for you to unravel.

SO I CAN DO ANYTHING, AND THE MIST WILL CLEAN UP AFTER ME?

Overall, Rifts can operate quite freely in the City as their Mythos powers are masked by the Mist. A thunder god's lightning bolts can be excused as a freak power surge or the hellhound companions of a succubus are later remembered as really big and really nasty dogs. Deep in their hearts, Sleepers know what they saw, but they just can't bring themselves to acknowledge it, so they get distracted, make up excuses, or simply forget.

There are, however, several reasons for Rifts to watch their step and curb the use of their Mythos powers on the streets of the City:

- **The Mist hides legendary powers, not their consequences.** For example, if a Rift trashes a bar using her powers, the powers may be dismissed but not the destruction – she will still be held accountable for the mess (even though it might be hard to prove how she did it).
- **You never know who is watching.** Not everyone is affected by the Mist the same way. Though the vast majority of the City residents are Sleepers, many others are awakening. Even at the very beginning of awakening, individuals can remember miracles they see, at least partially. Anyone, from your girlfriend to

an unassuming bank clerk, could be one of those people, so you may find yourself surprised if you rely on the Mist too much. And, of course, there are plenty of other legends roaming the streets, so unchecked use of your Mythos powers has the potential of exposing you to great danger, attracting the attention of the ancient and powerful.

- **Exposing Sleepers to Mythos powers may awaken them.** It's hard to tell what exactly makes a person awaken, it's different for everyone. But there is no doubt that witnessing something extraordinary can break the Mist's hold over someone and birth a new Rift. What this new Rift will do with their powers is now indirectly your responsibility.
- **The Mist can bite back.** The Mist is an elaborate conscious force constantly working to maintain the ordinary reality. Normally, it works by making Sleepers forget, but if faced with a threat to its very fabric it may somehow intensify its efforts and try to permanently seal the offending Rift. How this actually manifests is up to the MC to decide.

LOCATIONS IN THE CITY

DOWNTOWN

If you're not careful, the bright city lights will blind you. By day, the crowded plazas and broad streets are home to flashy super-stores and tourist attractions. When the sun sets, the real illumination reveals itself: from neon signs to jumbo screens, passers-by are bombarded with fluorescent light and mesmerizing commercial messages. The smokey side streets are laden with theaters, clubs, and bars, their signs flashing in the dark. Downtown never really takes a break, so it often seems to blur into a high-exposure time-lapse of days and nights.

What really happens in the shadow of the neon signs? From mad preachers raising support for their cause to pushers selling designer drugs with a mysterious logo, Rifts with big aspirations often operate here. If you're a legend trying to get at the masses, downtown is your place.

But there's a deeper side to that. There is something in this dark marketplace, in the subliminal urges pumped into unaware minds. All these people so frantically seeking relief generate a lot of angst. Who's profiting from it? Is there someone behind all the reckless hedonism and blind consumerism, painting the night in colorful strokes of 'want' and 'have'?

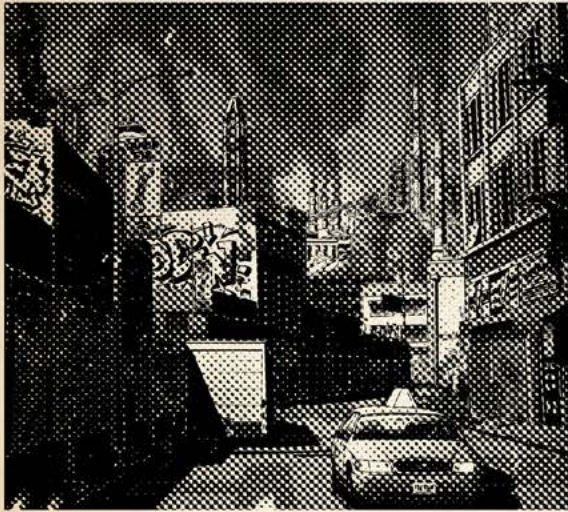


THE BLUE-COLLAR RESIDENTIAL

Life doesn't always go the way you plan it. This slum is full of people who thought they'll get rich, find love, and live happily ever after—and then life punched them right in the face. People who live here work hard all their lives; by now, they've either given up on their dreams or are still looking for a golden opportunity, both equally dangerous. This neighborhood breeds most petty criminals in the City and a pretty good share of its organized crime too. It's a warren of derelict apartment blocks dotted with local businesses and venues: a dusty pawn shop, an old church, a cinema in ruins.

Hope – even false hope – is a good place for a legend to strike roots. Maybe it's the kid who sees dead people or the lady whose apartment feels like an icy cool lake, even in the summer. It could be the aspiring local politician who is always carrying a flute around and is followed by a crowd of reporters, or the car mechanic who you once saw pick up four wheels like they were pizza trays. This neighborhood is made of the little stories, each capable of becoming much more... for better or for worse.

But why is it so tough to break out of the cycle of poverty and debt around here? Is it that the jobs pay less and the rents are high? Are mobsters and loan sharks thriving on protection money and high interest paid by individuals with no other choice? Or are there some other, greater forces at play – ones that wish to perpetuate stories of tough luck and perseverance?



THE INDUSTRIAL ZONE

The noise of heavy machinery and the wafts of chemical fumes welcome you to this district of workshops and light industry. Here you'll find small factories, warehouses, and ample empty derelict buildings with office space to rent, views to the junkyard and all. Forlorn diners and labourers' pubs stand empty most of the time, except for a precious few hours before and after work and during breaks. The nights are silent and tense, and underneath the sullen backstreets all manners of illegal entertainment can be found.

Sometimes, you can hear unusual grating and screeching coming from the machinery, as if the engines were speaking to each other, or far away laughter in another factory; but then you think it's probably just the wind caught in the empty silos. Or your eyes follow a wolfish silhouette running on the rooftops only to see a drunk fellow stepping out from behind the dumpster where the beast landed just a moment ago.

The authorities almost never bother themselves with this district, since it has almost no formal residents (i.e., voters), so Rifts treat this place as a free-for-all zone, especially at night. Entire blocks are claimed by one legend or another, transformed into whatever most pleases them, be it the dank dwelling of the Spider Queen or the luscious hallucination of the Endless Green Meadow. Any Sleeper who accidentally stumbles across them may never see the light of day again.

THE OLD QUARTER

With paved streets and wrought-iron lampposts, the old quarter sometimes feels like a place out of time. The aged stone houses seem to be piled up one on top of the other, forming a labyrinth of back alleys and passageways in which one could easily become lost under the watchful eye of black ravens. A bohemian hodge-podge of artists, writers, musicians, and new-age practitioners have set up their galleries, museums, and posh recording studios here, alongside funky bistros and night-clubs. But it's the indigenous inhabitants of this quarter that you need to watch out for.

A place as old as this holds a wealth of opportunities for Rifts. From stories of archaeological treasures containing caches of gold and cursed relics to local superstitions and legends of black magic, the Mist does not seem as thick in this place. A souvenir shop may only be the facade for a room draped in velvet where a fortune-teller will read your future, for a price. A beautiful old house could be boarded up and sealed as a crime scene after yet another potential buyer was brutally murdered there, and the word on the street is the devil in the attic got him, too.

Whatever it may be about this place, there is no denying that some of the oldest and greatest Rifts operating in the City reside here or at least take an interest in the quarter. Buried deep within it (or underneath it) may be the answers that everyone wants and yet no one is able to find.





BASIC RULES

THE CINEMATICS

City of Mist is a cinematic role-playing game that is played as a conversation between the Master of Ceremonies, or MC, and the players, who take the role of the protagonists.

The conversation starts with the MC setting the first scene (time and place), describing what happens around your characters. You and the other players respond by (a) saying what your characters do, (b) saying what your characters say, and (c) asking for more details about the scene. Sometimes you roll dice and use the rules to determine the outcome of your actions.

The MC follows up by saying how the other characters respond and what else happens in the scene, to which you respond again and so on until the scene is concluded and the next scene begins.

There is no defined order to the conversation. As the host and director of the game, the MC makes sure everyone gets to talk and take actions as their characters. Think of it as moving the camera between the protagonists to make sure all of them get some screen time in the story. The MC can even cut between different scenes or action shots to add more suspense by switching between the players, just like in a TV show.

ANATOMY OF A RIFT

THEMES

Player characters (PCs) in *City of Mist* are made of four **themes**, each representing one of the character's major aspects. The themes are divided between **Mythos** and **Logos**:

- **Mythos themes** (purple) represent mythical and supernatural aspects
- **Logos themes** (red) represent ordinary life: what your character knows, values, and loves.

The number of Mythos vs. the number of Logos themes your character has says a lot about her; characters with more Mythos are more open to their legend and less attached to their everyday persona, while characters with more Logos are the opposite.

TAGS

All themes have **power tags**. These tags both *describe* your character and *power* the actions your character takes. They can describe qualities, abilities, gear, allies, or assets.

Each theme also has one or more **weakness tags**, which impede your actions but also earn you Attention when you use them.

ATTENTION

Each theme has an **Attention** track with three boxes, indicating how this theme is evolving. Every time you mark three Attention on a Mythos theme, you choose an **improvement** for that theme and reset Attention to zero. You can gain Attention by using weakness tags as said above or by spending your downtime developing a theme (training, meditating, spending quality time with an ally, etc.)

CREW THEMES

In the *City of Mist Player's Guide*, your group can choose or create a **crew theme** to represent the kind of crew you are and the types of cases you engage with.

Any crew member can invoke their crew theme's power tags to power their moves, but doing so burns the tag. A used tag is only recovered at the end of the session.

You can download four sample crew themes at cityofmist.co/download.



MYSTERIES AND IDENTITIES

The make-up of your character in *City of Mist* is dynamic and can change based on the decision you make as a player.

Every Mythos theme also has a question, called a **Mystery**, which defines what your character wishes to discover about her Mythos, and a **Fade** track with three boxes. When your character's Mystery calls to her, but she ignores it, you mark Fade. If your character continues to ignore her Mythos and mark the third Fade box, you replace the theme with a new Logos theme.

Every Logos theme also has a statement, called an **Identity**, describing something your character believes about herself, and a **Crack** track with three boxes. You mark Crack when your character's Identity demands something of her, but she fails to deliver. If your character continues to ignore her Identity and mark the third Crack box, you replace the theme with a new Mythos theme instead.

STORY TAGS AND STATUSES

During the game you may receive additional **story tags** which can be used as either power or weakness tags, or **statuses**, which represent conditions that affect your ability to act.

CHARACTER CREATION

But what if you want to create your own characters?

With the *City of Mist Player's Guide*, you can create your own characters using Themebooks, questionnaires that help you create your themes. There are 7 different Themebooks for Mythos (Adaptation, Bastion, Divination, Expression, Mobility, Relic, and Subversion) and 7 for Logos (Defining Event, Defining Relationship, Mission, Personality, Possessions, Routine, and Training). These Themebooks give you great versatility in customizing your character.

The *Player's Guide* also provides you with the option for a quick-start character creation process by picking-and-choosing themes from a multitude of predefined 'character tropes'.

Expression



NIMBUS OF PRIMORDIAL PLASMA



ATTENTION FADE

Mystery:

"HOW CAN FIRE AND
WATER BE ONE?"

Salamander's skin can produce a nimbus of a burning substance that is neither fire nor water, but has something of both.

POWER TAGS

Burning nimbus whips
Plasma barrier
Better in damp conditions

NEW POWER TAG OPTIONS

- Bright flare
- Underwater propulsion
- Heat resistance

WEAKNESS TAGS

Weaker in dry conditions

TAKING ACTIONS

As the drama and mystery in your story unfold, you'll want your character to take actions and influence the story in various ways.

Moves determine the outcome of your actions. Most moves start with the words "When you..." followed by a condition. Whenever your character takes an action in the story that matches the condition of a move, the move is triggered and you need to roll for the move and follow its description to determine the outcome. That's called "making a move". Whenever you want to make a specific move, your character must take an action in the story that matches the condition of the move.

To make a move:

(1) Describe what your character is about to do. You can get some ideas from your tags (what your character is good at) or you can simply think of what is the most suitable or exciting thing for your character to do at this point in the story.

(2) Choose a move that fits your action (or ask the MC).

There are eight core moves in the game. Each move is explained in further detail below.

THE CORE MOVES

When you, as your character, are using your abilities...
... to give you or your allies an advantage, you **Change the Game**.
... 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 overcome someone or something in a struggle for control, you **Go Toe to Toe**.
... to take a clear shot at someone with all of your power, you **Hit With All You've Got**.
... to seek answers to burning questions or gain information, you **Investigate**.
... to do something discreetly or deceptively, you **Sneak Around**.
... to perform a feat of daring, you **Take the Risk**.

WHAT, NO INITIATIVE ROLL?!

That's right. *City of Mist* is played as a flowing conversation between the MC and the players. The MC as the host governs which character acts next by giving the stage to one of the players. However, if a player wants their character to take action before something else happens, the MC can ask them to make a move (see below) to see if they got the drop on the competition.

3) Invoke relevant tags to determine the Power of your action.

Scan your character playbook for tags relevant to this action (see text box).

- Each **power tag** that *directly* helps you carry out your action increases your Power by 1.
- Each **weakness tag** that *directly* impedes your action decreases your Power by 1, but you get to mark Attention on the theme of that weakness tag. The MC can also choose to activate one or more of your weakness tags this way.

The result is the **Power** of your action.

(4) Factor in beneficial or impeding statuses:

If your character (or the target of your move) has statuses that help or detract from your action:

- Add the tier of the highest beneficial status to your Power.
- Subtract the tier of the highest impeding status from your Power.

(5) Roll two six-sided dice (2d6) and add your Power to the result.

This is called **roll+Power**. Compare the total to the move as explained in the moves sheet to determine the outcome.



OUTCOME CATEGORIES

Different moves have different outcomes, such as giving statuses to your target, forcing them to cooperate, discovering clues, or even allowing you to temporarily create new tags. However, all moves follow the same pattern:

Both 10+ and 7-9 are considered a **hit**, or a success.

- Scoring **10 or more** (10+) is a great success.
- Scoring **7-9** is a mild success, or a success mixed with a complication.

Scoring **6 or less** is called a **miss**. It implies something disadvantageous happened instead of what you tried to do or that things got a lot more complicated. A miss allows the MC to make one of her moves, usually against you. For example, the MC could tell you that your character got into trouble or give you an impeding status.

BURNING A TAG FOR A HIT

When your character performs a dramatic action that *really* matters to you, you have the option to **burn a tag for a hit**. Choose one tag relevant to the action you are taking and scratch it out (or mark the Burn icon next to it). You cannot use it again until your recover it using the **Montage (Downtime)** move (see below). Instead of rolling+Power for this move, treat the move as if you rolled a total of 7, with a Power of 3. No power or weakness tags can be applied to these numbers, but any statuses you have may increase or decrease your Power, as in Step 4 above. Then, follow the move description as usual.

HOW TO DECIDE IF A TAG IS RELEVANT

A tag can be invoked in a move when it directly helps or impedes the move's action. For example, when throwing a punch, being *strong* helps the action, being *clumsy* impedes the action, while being *blue* is irrelevant so it does not apply. Being *smart* or being *brave*, while related, do not directly help the act of punching; they can be used in a separate action, before punching, to find an opponent's weakness or to shake off fear.

If you still find you need more structure, the MC can introduce the optional rule of capping each roll at a maximum of 3 tags per roll. More tips and pointers on how to play with tags are included in the *City of Mist Player's Guide*.



STATUSES

Statuses reflect temporary conditions that affect your character such as *chained-2*, *sick-1*, or *hypnotized-5*. Each status is composed of a **tag** and a **tier**: the tag defines the nature of the status, while the tier defines how limiting and debilitating (or how enhancing) the status is.

- **Tiers 1-4** represent increasing levels of intensity for the status: mild, minor, major, dramatic.
- At **tier 5**, the status is so damaging or intense that your character is **out** – you can't even attempt to take any actions affected by this status.
- If a status reaches **tier 6**, marked as **MC**, the character may die, enter a coma, permanently add or lose tags or even themes, etc. The MC will decide what happens to your character, and it won't be good.

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 cured or worsened), change the tag accordingly to match the new tier.

Note that some statuses are **temporary**: they affect only the next relevant action and then they are removed. Other statuses, however, are **ongoing**. They can be removed during scenes using the **Change the Game** move (if one has the relevant tags to get rid of the status) or during downtime using the **Montage (Downtime)** move (see below).

GIVING STATUSES

Some moves allow you to give a status to a target you are trying to affect, for better or worse. The move determines the tier of the status, while you choose the tag of the status, based on the nature of the action you took to create it.

TAKING STATUSES

When your character is about to take a status, if she can somehow avoid it or protect herself from it, you can use the **Face Danger** move to reduce the tier of the status or completely ignore it. Otherwise, or if you fail to Face Danger, you take the full tier of the status. Take a tracking card, write down the tag, and mark the tier:



If you already have a status similar to the one you received, they stack:

If the new status has a **higher tier** than the one you have, it **replaces the existing status**. For example, *drowsy-3* replaces *tired-1*.

If the new status has **the same tier** as the one you have, it **bumps up the existing tier by 1**. So *shamed-2* bumps up *shamed-2* to tier 3, presumably *humiliated-3*.

If the new status has a **lower tier** than the status you have, it **slowly adds pips to the existing status** until the next tier on the scale is reached.

For example, if you were already *shocked-3*, taking three *zapped-1* statuses one after the other, you would first mark the box on the right side of tier 3. (This does not affect the tier, yet.) Then the next box to the right. (This still does not affect the tier.) Then the next box to the right, which is tier 4. From this point on, the tier has upgraded to tier 4. The tag changes accordingly, presumably to *electrocuted-4*.

RECOVERING FROM STATUSES

Statuses can be reduced or removed by using the **Change the Game** move. This can represent shaking off fear, healing an ally, etc. Statuses can also be removed during downtime, using the **Montage (Downtime)** move: the MC determines which of your statuses you can reduce and by how much.

STORY TAGS

Some moves, especially **Change the Game**, allow you to create story tags. The MC can also create story tags whenever it seems appropriate. Story tags are used just like power and weakness tags: if they're relevant to a move, they affect its Power for better or worse in whatever way seems most appropriate (however, they do not earn you Attention, even if they decrease your action's Power).

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*.

When you create a story tag write it on a tracking card and hand it to the person who owns it, or place it in the middle of the table if it's communal.

Most story tags are temporary, which means they can only be used once and cannot be burned for a hit. Story tags that are made ongoing (by the **Change the Game** move, for example) can be used multiple times and expire when it makes sense in the story. They can also be burned for a hit like power tags, but when burnt they are removed from play.

IS IT A STATUS OR A STORY TAG?

When you need to describe something from the story using the rules, it's almost always either a story tag or a status. How to decide which is which?

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.

THE CORE MOVES

The Core Moves are also available in a summarized sheet for easier use during play, available at cityofmist.co/download.

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 | CONJURE, SUMMON OR RALLY ALLIES | GAIN OR GIVE A TACTICAL ADVANTAGE | SET UP A DEFENSE | CREATE OR ACQUIRE A USEFUL OBJECT | WEAKEN THE OPPOSITION | ETC.

Changing the Game is the most versatile of the core moves. It applies whenever a character is trying to gain an 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.

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*.

The effects created using this move must match the narrative description (and therefore tags) that the player used. For example, a player cannot invoke tags related to healing and use their Juice to inflict a harmful status on someone.

Change the Game is commonly used right before other moves, for example, to add a status or a tag that would improve your **Face Danger**. However, a tag can only be used *once* within a set of such linked moves. This applies even if the tag is available and relevant to more than one move in the set. For example, if Salamander uses his *plasma barrier* tag to set up a defensive barrier using **Change the Game** (gaining a defensive status), and later tries to block an incoming explosion, the MC may rule that since the barrier is already in place, the player cannot add the tag to the **Face Danger** move as well.

You can save some of the Juice generated by this move and use it later, for example to remove tiers from statuses that get past your **Face Danger** moves. However, the Juice is only as good as the method used to generate it: if you use your *summon a snowman* tag to create some Juice during a fight, any unused points disappear the moment the snowman melts.

Examples: Salamander engulfs himself with his nimbus to incinerate incoming bullets (creates an ongoing tag *incinerating bullets*); Kitsune guides Flicker how to parkour around the alleyway to avoid being hit by gunfire (gives her a temporary tag *dodging*); Post-Mortem towers over a secretive city official to loosen him up a bit (inflict status *cooperative-1*); Mitosis puffs out a cloud of spores to put the people in the room to sleep (inflict status *sleepy-2*, scale up the effect to a small group).

CONVINCE

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.

BRIBE AN OFFICIAL | CLOSE A DEAL | FLIRT TO GET WHAT YOU WANT | THREATEN WITH VIOLENCE OR A PROMISE OF FUTURE PAIN | BLACKMAIL SOMEONE | ETC.

The **Convince** move applies when your character openly tries to influence another character to do something she wouldn't normally do. When a character tries to use these methods to get information from someone, use **Investigate**. When a character tries to influence someone deceptively, use **Sneak Around**.

If you have some kind of extra leverage on the person you are trying to convince, the MC may grant you a temporary status or story tag to reflect that. This could apply, for example, when you have an artifact they really want or you discovered a dirty secret they want to keep quiet. The tier of the status depends on how much they want what you have and how much they trust you to give it to them if they do as you want.

Examples: Mitosis uses his deformed appearance to scare away some hooligans; Excalibur tries to charm a high-ranking official into signing papers; Kitsune rallies abducted high school students to help them break out of captivity.



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 kicks in whenever any kind of harm or negative effect is about to influence a player character who has a chance of avoiding it. The MC names the worst effect the incoming influence can inflict in the form of a status (tag and tier), and the player makes the move to see how well his character defended herself. This move is often activated passively, which means the MC will tell you to make it when you are about to take a status.

Note that not every status can be avoided. As an MC move, the MC can apply a status the character cannot avoid, e.g., she can be suddenly surrounded by enemies, not realizing it before it's too late (*cornered-3*). In such cases, the character does not get a chance to **Face Danger**.

Examples: Salamander forms a barrier with his nimbus to block an explosion; Declan L'Estrange uses sheer willpower to resist a poltergeist trying to possess him; Kitsune tries to dodge the slashing swords of a ninja assassin; Mitosis musters all available resolve to overcome his rage.

ROLL WITH NO POWER

Your character can try any action a normal person can take, even if she doesn't have any relevant power tags. In most cases, simply being a human being means she can jump out of harm's way, talk sense into someone, or try to avoid being seen. When you take an action for which you have no power tags, simply roll with a Power of 0. Weakness tags and statuses still apply.

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 | FIGHT SOMEONE FOR CONTROL OF A POSITION OR OBJECT | OUTSHINE OTHERS AT A SOCIAL GATHERING | TRY TO OUTFRAN 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 competition between your character and anything else. 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**, first state the goal your character is trying to achieve. The options in this move build upon this goal: you can get what you want, hurt the competition, and/or avoid being hurt yourself. If your goal is to hurt your opposition, you can swap the first option for gaining a secondary advantage, like blocking their escape (if you choose this option). The options you *don't* choose are those that you need to worry about.

Examples: Flicker tries to stop an escaping crook on a motorcycle by placing obstacles in front of him, but he dodges; Declan L'Estrange tries to focus his premonitions on a group of hostages but a dark force is obscuring his view; Kitsune battles a ninja assassin in a close-quarters martial arts clash; Mitosis confronts a virus on the genetic level to remove it from a victim's body.

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. It requires some kind of clear shot or opportunity; if you're in close-quarters combat or exchanging fire with fortified targets, you should use **Go Toe to Toe**.

On a hit, you inflict a status with a tier equal to the Power of your action. You then choose from the options presented in the move. The options you don't choose in this move are just as important as the ones you do: if you don't take cover, the MC can throw a status at you; if you don't control the collateral damage then the MC does; etc.

Fighting groups in *City of Mist* is identical to fighting individuals. Foes that are represented as a collective simply inflict statuses with higher tiers and can take higher-tier statuses before they are defeated. Hence, the option of raising the tier of the status you give by 1 can also be interpreted as hitting more members of a collective.

If you choose to gain the upper hand, you receive 1 Juice that you can immediately use to add or remove statuses and tags, just like in the **Change the Game** move.

Examples: Mitosis throws a car at a flying surveillance drone; Salamander focuses his nimbus on an armored door; Declan L'Estrange tries to block a swarm of hypnotized commuters by firing a hail of adhesive slugs at them.

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.

The **Investigate** move is used 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 rolling. However, if you want to find that which is hidden, as things often are in *City of Mist*, you need to **Investigate**.

Examples: Declan L'Estrange is reading an ancient manuscript to find the location of a lost temple; Post-Mortem evaluates her surroundings to find out where her target is hiding; Flicker is looking into the past to discover the identity of a killer; Salamander flirts with a news reporter to get a lead on a corrupt media magnate.

THE RULE OF MINIMUM ONE

Whenever your Power determines how much benefit you get from a move, you always get at least one point – one Clue, one Juice, or a tier-1 status – even if you rolled with a Power of zero or less.

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 | ETC.

Sneak Around covers any and all actions characters attempt to carry out secretly or discreetly. If the focus of the action is its secrecy, then you are **Sneaking Around**.

This move can be played 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 success 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**.

Examples: Kitsune sneaks up on the nightmarish monstrosity that is attacking the city center; Salamander pretends to be an unassuming window-cleaner when inspected by security guards; Declan L'Estrange tries to cut his bonds without alerting his mercenary captors.

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 | CROSS A SECURITY LASER GRID | SLIDE UNDER A CLOSING GATE | STEP UP TO AN ARMED GANG OF MOBSTERS AND START TALKING | ETC.

Take the Risk applies when your character attempts a feat of daring. The possible outcomes are obvious: it can go smoothly, it can go horribly belly-up, but usually it falls somewhere in between and gets messy, so that you have to sacrifice something just to get out by the skin of your teeth. Unlike **Go Toe to Toe**, **Take the Risk** applies to situations with no clear opposition, and unlike **Face Danger**, your character is not yet faced with a status to resist (although, as with all other moves, she might suffer a status if she fails the roll).

On 7-9, the MC will describe a complication and present you with a difficult choice between two or three negative outcomes. For example, you may succeed in your feat but you must choose between dropping something important you are carrying or taking a status. What your ugly choice may be is open to the MC's interpretation.

If you take a status as a result of this move, the MC rules whether you can use **Face Danger** to avoid it. She can also rule that tags used for **Take the Risk** cannot be used again in a subsequent **Face Danger** move. For example, if you used *agile* trying to cross a busy highway without being hit and you failed, you may not be able to use *agile* again to **Face Danger** when a car hits you, but you may use *tough*.

Examples: Post-Mortem climbs a crane to get into a better sniping position; Mitosis runs into a building on fire to try to save a kid caught inside; Flicker tries to teleport a high-speed bullet out of its course before it hits L'Estrange; Salamander calmly walks up to a drug lord heavily guarded by armed henchmen.



DOWNTIME

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.

In *City of Mist*, the time characters spend doing their own things has consequences, as 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:

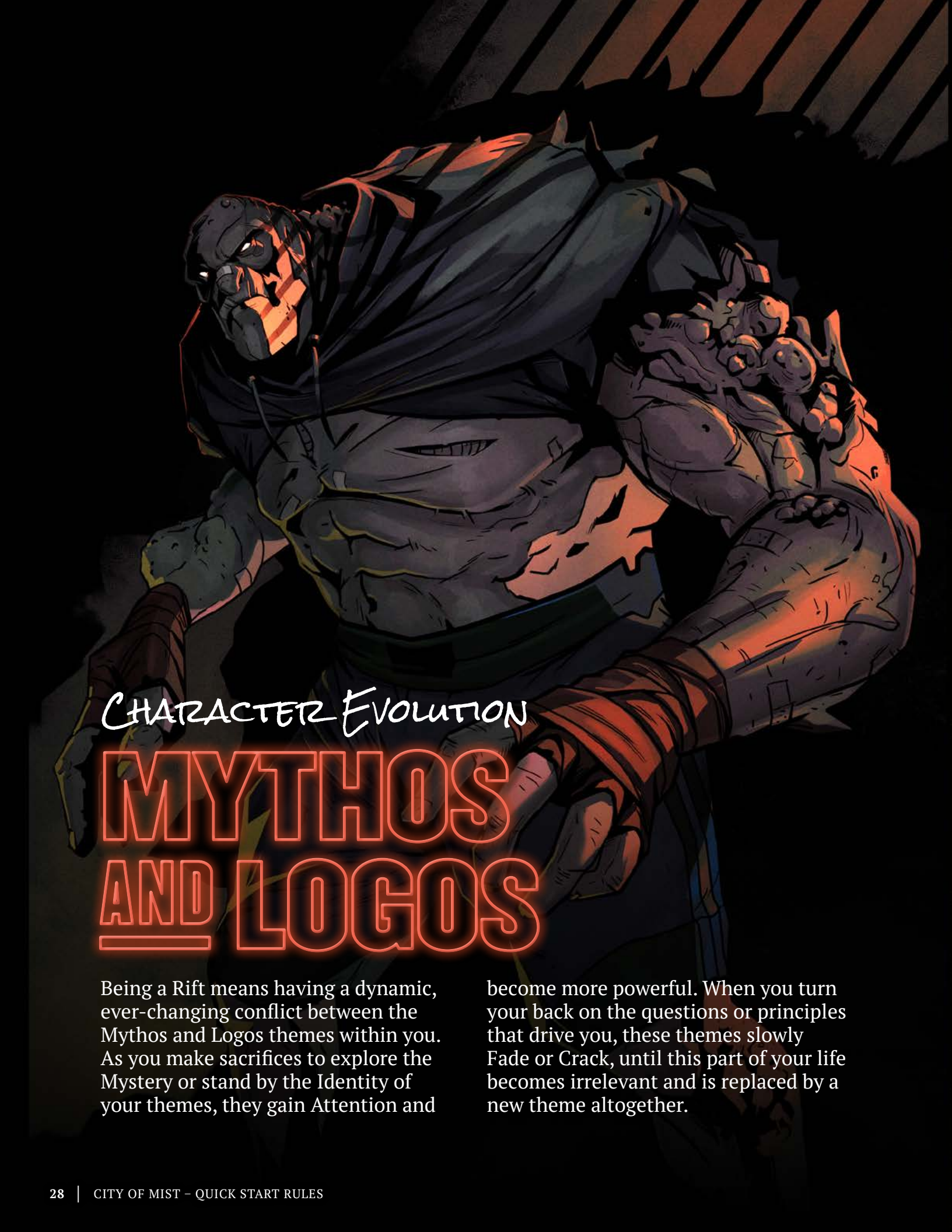
MONTAGE (DOWNTIME)

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 your 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.





CHARACTER EVOLUTION

MYTHOS AND LOGOS

Being a Rift means having a dynamic, ever-changing conflict between the Mythos and Logos themes within you. As you make sacrifices to explore the Mystery or stand by the Identity of your themes, they gain Attention and

become more powerful. When you turn your back on the questions or principles that drive you, these themes slowly Fade or Crack, until this part of your life becomes irrelevant and is replaced by a new theme altogether.

ATTENTION & IMPROVEMENTS

Attention represents how much of your character's time, energy, and awareness is invested in a theme. As you play your character in the game, different situations will allow you to mark Attention on your themes:

- You or the MC invoke one of the theme's weakness tags in a move. This represents what you've learned about this theme by coping with its difficulties, flaws, and setbacks.

- You choose to focus on the theme during downtime, using the **Montage** move (see page 27).
- You mark Attention when you **Make a Hard Choice**, explained later in this chapter.

Once you mark three Attention on a theme, reset it to zero and choose a new power tag (see options under "New Power Tag Options" in your character's playbook).

THEME IMPROVEMENTS

The *City of Mist Player's Guide* allows you to advance your character in several new ways, including changing weakness tags or choosing Theme Improvements that give you special benefits or enhance your moves.

THE BALANCE OF MYTHOS AND LOGOS

Your character has the seed of a legend inside her, her Mythos. At the same time, she is a person with quirks, desires, and inhibitions reflected in her life choices and situation. This is called her Logos¹.

In *City of Mist*, the number of Mythos and Logos themes your character has shows the balance of the legendary and the ordinary within her:

- A Rift with 1 Mythos and 3 Logos is **Touched**. She is closer to the mundane world and that keeps her grounded, but she's always at risk of losing touch with her Mythos.
- A Rift with 2 Mythos and 2 Logos is a **Borderliner**. She is walking the line between becoming a glorious exemplar of her legend and keeping her ordinary identity.
- A Rift with 3 Mythos and 1 Logos is a **Legend**. She has almost entirely submitted to the Mythos in her, becoming more powerful but nevertheless still dependent on the one last thing that keeps her human.

1. *Logos* as in Jungian psychology, not theology.

MYTHOS IS...

The unknown: questions, doubts, dark places, subconscious, 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 inconcrete
- symbolism that fascinates her
- a wish to be more than what she is
- what attracts your character to the edge

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

DRAMATIC MOMENTS

STOP HOLDING. BACK.

Some dramatic moments in the story will require your character to open up to her Mythos and discover powers and possibilities she did not know before. Such a monumental unleashing of your Mythos' powers could have life-altering consequences and may reshape your character.

Stop. Holding. Back. covers such situations where you want to use your character's abilities in some extreme way or in a way that isn't specifically represented by your tags but is generally related to your ability set. This naturally applies to your character's Mythos powers but can also apply in certain cases to mundane abilities taken to the limit.

After you describe your action, the MC will choose the degree of sacrifice your character must make to open up to her Mythos: significant, no-return, or ultimate. (The MC chooses this level based on the impact you are trying to make on the story). 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.

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.

Example: Post-Mortem wants to discharge an Ion-9 blast sphere around her to knock out an army of automatons; Flicker wants to go back in time; Kitsune wants to mask an entire building with an illusion; Excalibur attempts to use her family's fortune to overturn the economic status-quo in the City.

MAKING A HARD CHOICE

Another dramatic development can occur when your character is facing a difficult dilemma, a situation where she chooses to forego clues for answering one of Mysteries (thus marking Fade) or act in a way that contradicts one of Identities (thus marking Crack). This is referred to as **Making a Hard Choice**.

You decide when your character is facing a dilemma and when to mark Fade or Crack. The MC can only introduce the complications in a way that she thinks will be interesting and interacts with your Mysteries, Identities, and the circumstances.

REPLACING A THEME

When you mark the third Crack or Fade on a theme, you lose it along with all its tags. It could mean your character has actually lost abilities, that she's unwilling to use them, forgot how to use them, can't access them, etc. However, this loss has freed up some space in your character's life, a space for something new to appear.

When you lose a Mythos theme, you gain a Logos theme instead, and vice versa. Choose one power tag, one weakness tag, and a Mystery or an Identity for your new theme (or choose a new themebook from the *City of Mist Player's Guide*).

This nascent theme will quickly mature into a full theme. When you first mark Attention on a nascent theme, you gain a new power tag. When you mark two more Attention, you reset the track and gain another new power tag. From this point on, the theme is a standard theme and evolves as usual.

Replacing a theme represents a major shift in your characters life and in the balance between the ordinary and the legendary within her.

MOMENTS OF EVOLUTION

In the *City of Mist Player's Guide*, replacing themes earns you Build-Up points, which allow you to instigate a more dramatic change in your character – a Moment of Evolution – such as gaining special Extra themes (Ally, Base of Operations, Ride), enhancing the Core Moves, developing the ability to see through the Mist, and more.

BECOMING AN AVATAR

If you ever lose your last Logos theme, you do not get a Mythos theme to replace it. Instead, your character becomes an **Avatar** of your Mythos, glowing with nothing but its pure legendary power. When you burn tags as an Avatar, you don't scratch them out or mark the burn icon. Yes, this means you can burn tags for a hit for each and every action you take.

When you become an Avatar, ask yourself: What does my Mythos ultimately want? What is the endgame here? This is your Agenda going forward. This, and only this, is what your Mythos cares about.

You stop being an Avatar when you choose to, when you veer away from your Agenda by taking an action that does not promote it, or with any other narrative solution the MC deems appropriate, e.g. your character's comrades find an ancient mystical ritual to banish her, or someone reminds your character of the Identity of her last Logos theme in a way that makes you choose it over your Mythos.

Your character's avatarhood can end with her either transcending her humanity or being cast down back into the ordinary life. When it ends, you can choose

one: your character ascends into her Mythos and is never seen again OR she returns, now or later, as a new Touched character (1 Mythos and 3 Logos themes).

FALLING ASLEEP

If you ever lose your last Mythos theme, you do not get a Logos theme to replace it. Instead, your character is **falling asleep**. You can choose to make her even **Denying the Beyond**, repressing the mythical so aggressively that no-one can use any Mythos powers in her vicinity or on people and things related to her life. Choose whether your character remembers the world beyond the Mist but pushes it out or is completely unaware and enshrouded in Mist.

This state ends when you choose to end it, when you take an action to look for answers beyond your ordinary life, or with any other narrative solution the MC deems appropriate, e.g. your character's comrades take her on a vision quest to rediscover the power within her.

When you reawaken, your character either rediscovers her Mythos in all its glory or turns her back on it forever. You choose one: your character continues her life in mundanity to her last day, OR she returns, now or later, as a **Legendary character** (3 Mythos and 1 Logos).





MASTER OF CEREMONIES RULES

BEYOND THE MIST

When in the role of the Master of Ceremonies, or MC, you are the host, referee, and narrator of the game as well as one of the storytellers.

As a **host**, you prepare the story elements which will be used to create the story, namely **cases** made of characters, motives, locations, clues, and Dangers. During the game, you manage the conversation, allowing different players to take actions with their characters.

As a **referee**, you ensure everyone understands the rules of the game and make some of the final calls about how to use the game system, like tag interpretations.

As a **narrator**, you introduce the elements you prepared as well as improvise new elements to create scenarios that engage the player characters, allowing the story to take place. This does not mean you are the sole storyteller, as you'll soon see.

RUNNING THE GAME

When narrating a game of *City of Mist*, you will be presenting the players with open-ended scenes that include locations, characters, events, and Dangers. Some of the scenes will arise from the case you are running; others - from the actions and choices of the players' characters.

The players will respond by describing their character's actions in the scene and making Moves, to which you will respond by describing the outcome and repercussions of their actions. Scene by scene, your shared story will unfold.

City of Mist focuses on creating an engaging and interesting story. Your role as the MC is to use the details of the case, such as clues and Dangers, as well as improvised details, in ways that will make the story more challenging, stimulating, and ultimately gratifying for the group. You can introduce these details at certain points in the game using MC moves or other game rules.

YOUR PRINCIPLES

As an MC, here is what you should keep in mind as overarching principles:

- Communicate with the group about what works for everyone and what doesn't
- Be the player characters' biggest fan, make their lives interesting.
- Play to find out: don't limit the players' impact on the plotline
- Think cinematic, plan and describe the game as if it was a movie, TV show, or comic book

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:** Weather, lighting, sounds, textures, smells, etc.
- **Make your characters real and human:** Emphasize their ordinary persona over their legendary aspects (if they have any).
- **Keep it a mystery:** The revelation comes in little drops, hint by hint.

- **Ask provoking questions:** Each question should reveal a detail that has meaning in the story, so it interests the group as the audience.
- **Stay consistent:** Story elements such as characters, locations, and events should remain consistent throughout the series.
- **Make the City feel alive:** Things change in the City, even when the characters are not there.

YOUR MOVES

The MC moves are different from the player moves - they represent your narrative tools, the ways in which you can make things more interesting for everyone, usually by making things more difficult for the player characters.

SOFT MOVES

A soft move represents an imminent threat or challenge to the PCs or their investigation. You can make a soft move before and after each player move and whenever you have the spotlight.

Your soft moves are:

- **Complicate Things:** Introduce a new problem into the story.
- **Hit Them After A Fair Warning:** If the characters ignore or neglect an approaching threat for long enough, you can make a hard move instead of a soft move.

HARD MOVES

A hard move represents a major complication or a significant setback for a player character or the crew. Think of it as the consequences of taking (or failing to take) an action. You can make a hard move whenever a player takes an action and scores a miss (6 or less). You can also make a hard move if you **Hit Them After A Fair Warning**.

Choose the move that makes the most sense in the current situation, or the one that adds the most interesting development to the scene.

Your hard moves are:

- **Complicate Things, Bigtime:** Introduce a new and immediate crisis.
- **Deny Them Something They Want:** You declare that something that the characters want is no longer within their reach, for this scene.
- **Make Something Horrible Happen:** Describe a shocking development for emotional effect.
- **Turn Their Move Against Them:** Whatever the character tried to do, it backfires.
- **Give a Status:** Impose a negative condition on a PC (they usually get to **Face Danger**).

- **Reduce or Remove a Status:** Take away a positive status from a PC.
- **Burn a Tag:** It's no longer usable, until recovered during downtime.
- **Force Them to Choose:** Describe a development that forces a player to choose between two undesirable outcomes, each a hard move in itself.

INTRUSIONS

An intrusion is a short interruption you can apply at any time, even when a player has the spotlight.

When a player is taking an action, you may intrude to:

- Ask him for more details about his action
- Tell him which Core Move to use
- Rule which of the tags he invoked are relevant (and which aren't)
- Rule which statuses, his and others' in the scene, affect his action (and which don't)
- Invoke his weakness tags

After a player rolls:

- If the move outcome says you choose the outcome, you may intrude to describe it (this occurs on **Convince**, **Investigate**, **Sneak Around**, or **Take the Risk**).
- If the player chooses the outcome, let him choose and then intrude to describe the outcome of the options he did not choose (this occurs on **Go Toe to Toe** and **Hit With All You've Got**).

When a Danger custom move is triggered:

- Intrude to reveal its outcome

SETTING UP THE CHARACTERS' INNER CONFLICT

Mysteries and Identities lie at the heart of the character evolution system of *City of Mist*. As a narrator, you should aspire to create situations that challenge the characters by giving them reasons to go against their Mysteries and Identities, thereby maneuvering them to **Make a Hard Choice**. For this purpose, you can use elements from the case or introduce elements from a character's personal story. As a general rule, you should aspire to have at least one character make a hard choice in every session.

The best way to get a character to go against one of her Mysteries/Identities is to pitch them one against the other. For example, a crime lord that Post-Mortem has hunted down may offer her information about Helix Labs just as she is about to kill him, thereby creating a conflict between her Assassin Identity "Once I mark a target, there is no turning back" and her Helix Labs Mystery "Who did this to me?". She would be forced to embrace one and go against the other.

If you can't seem to trigger a character's Mystery/Identity, simply ask the player to explain how they understand this facet of their character and what would constitute going against it.

The MC Tracking Sheet included in this set summarizes all of the pre-generated characters' Mysteries, Identities, and weakness tags, so it's handy during play.



CASES

Cases are the stories of City of Mist. The players' crew is always some kind of an investigative entity; they have questions, as individuals and as a group, so they look for answers. You, as one of the writers of the game story, create the details of the cases the player characters work on.

Cases in City of Mist mostly start from the mundane and dig into the mythic to some extent, because the mundane in City of Mist is just a cover for what the mythic is really up to. A case in City of Mist always revolves around a Rift of some sort and a problem that they have or that they cause. Furthermore, this problem is often tied to another, greater Rift, with a bigger agenda, and so forth.

During the game, the investigation starts from what seems like normal people's problems: someone is missing, a crime has taken place, etc. As the player characters dig into the case they begin little by little to unravel the threads, first hitting up a relatively weak Rift or Rifts and gradually working their way up the spider web to the greater legends and their massive secret operations, which usually influence or abuse many Sleepers and/or Rifts. Solving a case involving a single Rift could be the subject of a session or two, while exposing the work of an ancient, Avatar-level Rift could be the theme of an entire story arc or campaign.

Building a case, therefore, is like a trip down from the mythical to the mundane and then back up:

On the way down, you create the background story that the characters will uncover.

- As a first step, decide what is the **legendary aspect** of the case. What kind of Mythos is involved and what is its high-level agenda? Perhaps there is more than one Mythos involved.
- Then, choose the **Rifts** of the Mythoi involved. Who are they? How do they promote the agenda of their Mythos, if at all? What are their practical and personal goals?
- Finally, describe **what happened on the streets**: who was murdered, who disappeared, who was paid off, who was put under a spell, and who found out. Now you have a story.

On the way up, you create the trail of breadcrumbs the characters will follow and the obstacles they might face.

- **Write down the clues.** For each step in the case, write down a few leads that can take the characters there. Write down the locations and/or people who make up the lead. For each of them, write down some actual clues that, if uncovered, will point in the right direction.
- **Write down the Dangers.** Dangers are challenges that the characters face during their investigation. Some of the parties involved may try to interfere with the characters' investigation, subtly or directly, or there could be other hazards the characters must overcome to crack the case such as a dangerous location, third-party Rifts, etc.

SAMPLE CASES

This set includes two short sample cases, *V is for going Viral* and *Demons in Cross End*.



DANGERS

Dangers in *City of Mist* include any threat to the characters or their investigation. Beyond its narrative aspects of background and motives, a Danger has game elements that define how challenging it is for the characters: **Danger moves and spectrums.**

DANGER MOVES

A Danger has moves that you can use to challenge the PCs, usually by making their lives harder.

- **Hard Danger moves** are suggestions for hard MC moves. You use them whenever you can make a hard MC move to make the Danger harm the characters.
- **Soft Danger moves** are suggestions for soft MC moves. You can activate them whenever you have the spotlight in order to present a new threat to the characters. If the players don't act on the threat, you can upgrade your next soft move to a hard move (**Hit Them After A Fair Warning**).
- **Custom Danger moves** are special rules that make a Danger more challenging and interesting. You can use them whenever they apply, usually as an intrusion, such as "When this Danger enters the game, give it *alert-3*".

SPECTRUMS

Dangers take statuses as PCs do, and PCs can use moves to inflict various statuses on Dangers, from punching a villain to outrunning the police. Unlike PCs' statuses that always max out at 6, Dangers have different maximums for different types of statuses: physical, social, magical, etc.

Each type of status the Danger can be affected by is called a spectrum and its maximum indicates how much of that type of status the Danger can take before it is overcome. A spectrum and its maximum are highlighted in red, e.g., *threaten:5*.

When a Danger takes a status with a tier equal to its spectrum maximum, that spectrum is **maxed out**.

Normally, when a Danger's spectrum maxes out, it is overcome or resolved. For example, when a hired thug with a *hurt-or-subdue:3* takes *broken-bones-3*, she stays down; when a ghost with *banish:2* takes *banished-2*, it vanishes.

A status on a Danger's spectrum doesn't affect the PCs, so they can't add it to their Power as a helpful status.

Statuses that don't fit into any of the Danger's listed spectrums can instead do one of the following, at your discretion:

- **Affect the Danger's moves**, increasing or reducing their effectiveness by a number equal to the tier of the status (e.g., *prone-2* can reduce the effectiveness of a Danger shooting from *riddled-with-bullets-4* to *fleshwound-2*).
- **Affect the PC's moves against the Danger**, acting as positive or negative statuses to the PC's actions, depending on the circumstances (e.g., giving a Danger *alert-3* can affect the PC's ability to sneak behind the Danger, reducing the PC's Power by 3).
- **Contribute to her defeat** like a normal spectrum (the MC sets a maximum for this new spectrum). This allows the players to come up with their own way to overcome a Danger.

COLLECTIVES

Dangers that are groups of individual threats are still represented as a single Danger. To reflect the increased fire-power and durability of such collectives, they have a size factor ranging from 1 (a handful) to 4 (a host). The size factor is added to any status the collective inflicts against a normal-sized target and reduced from any status it takes from a normal-sized attack.



WHAT'S NEXT?

We hope you enjoyed this demo version of *City of Mist*! To continue the adventure, here are some options to explore. Find all of these *City of Mist* products on our website at cityofmist.co



“ALL-SEEING EYE INVESTIGATIONS” STARTER SET

Move up to the Starter Set: Get the best tool for teaching the game to others with a learn-as-you-play case, *Shark Tank*, and five more pregenerated characters with theme improvements, additional rules, a new crew theme; plus dice, tokens, and maps - all in one boxed set!

PLAYER'S GUIDE

Create your own characters and own the full ruleset: Find the full rules on character creation (including 14 themebooks), player actions, and character development in the *Player's Guide* book.



MC TOOLKIT

Create your own cases: Learn how to write your own cases, story arcs, arch-villains, and Dangers with step-by-step guides and examples in the *MC Toolkit* book, which also includes the case *Gambling with Death*.

NIGHTS OF PAYNE TOWN

Pick up more ready-to-play cases: Check out *Nights of Payne Town*, a sourcebook containing 10 cases that can be played independently or as a continuous story arc, exposing the nefarious forces behind the violence, greed, and hatred in the City.

