

# CITY of MIST



**DON'T BELIEVE  
THE TRUTH**

THE CITY'S PANTHEON OF AVATARS

# *CITY* of MIST

**DON'T BELIEVE  
THE TRUTH**

**THE CITY'S PANTHEON OF AVATARS**



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Wars of Gods and Titans: the Origins of the Truth	8
The Truth Today	10
The Council's Resources	11
The Council in your Game	13
<b>Avatar Profiles</b>	<b>16</b>
Chairman Chow	16
DA King	26
Ganesha	36
Dr. Leyland	46
Rosaline	56
Monte Wolfe	66

---

## CREDITS

City of Mist created by Amit Moshe  
Writing, Game Design, and Production: Amit Moshe  
Assistant Game Producer: Omer Shapira  
Additional Writing: Omer Shapira  
Editing: Eran Aviram  
Proofreading: Marshal Oppel  
Art: Marcin Sobon, Gunship Revolution (Oliver Morit, Marlon Ruiz, Harvey Bunda)  
Graphic Design: Manuel Serra Sáez  
Contributors: Robert Jeffery II (Monte Wolfe), Tobias Gantner (Dr. Leyland)  
The production of this game was made possible thanks to our Kickstarter backers. Thank you all!  
© 2019 Son of Oak Game Studio / Amit Moshe

## PRONOUN USE

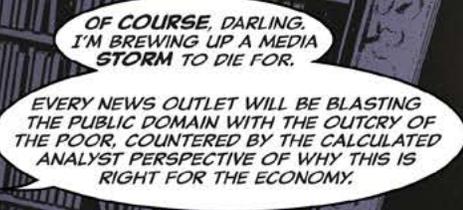
Where the third person is required, this book refers to characters as 'she', players as 'he', and the MC as 'she' as well. This is an arbitrary division for the sake of readability and balance in the use of pronouns; characters, players, and MCs may be of any or no gender.

## CONTENT WARNING

This game contains mild language as well as strong themes of violence, crime, and immorality. It does NOT contain explicit representation of sexual acts. Parental guidance is advised.



SO IT IS AGREED. THIS MONTH WE WILL ANNOUNCE A PRICE SPIKE ACROSS THE MARKET. WOLFE, I TRUST WE WILL HEAR ABOUT IT.



OF COURSE, DARLING. I'M BREWING UP A MEDIA STORM TO DIE FOR.

EVERY NEWS OUTLET WILL BE BLASTING THE PUBLIC DOMAIN WITH THE OUTCRY OF THE POOR, COUNTERED BY THE CALCULATED ANALYST PERSPECTIVE OF WHY THIS IS RIGHT FOR THE ECONOMY.



YOU KNOW I WILL OPPOSE YOU ON EVERY FRONT.

OF COURSE, THE PEOPLE NEED TO HAVE HOPE.



I EXPECT RIOTS, BUT THEY WILL BE SQUASHED WITH AN IRON FIST.



SPEAKING OF HOPE, HOW ARE THINGS IN CROSS END?

MY VIGILANTES DROVE ANATOLI'S ENFORCES OUT. HE WILL NOT GAIN A FOOTHOLD THERE ANYTIME SOON.



DON'T UNDERESTIMATE HIM.

HE HAS MORE INSIDIOUS HELPERS THAN THOSE RUN-OF-THE-MILL AMBROSIA THUGS.



WE HAVE **OTHER ASSETS** WE CAN DEPLOY THERE.



AREN'T YOU SPREADING YOURSELF A LITTLE THIN, OLD MAN? I HEARD YOU HAD A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH A CREW OF INDEPENDENTS RECENTLY.

THAT WAS A PRIVATE FAMILY MATTER. THEY WILL BE DEALT WITH.



STILL, TO CATCH THE CHAIRMAN OFF-GUARD PUTS US ALL AT GREAT RISK



HOW **DARE** YOU PRETEND TO BE OUR ALLY? YOU THINK WE DON'T KNOW YOU'RE JUST WAITING FOR THE CHANCE TO **SNUFF** US ALL?



IF THIS COUNCIL KEEPS PUTTING UP **BARRIERS** BETWEEN PEOPLE, I CAN'T...

**ENOUGH!**



*ENOUGH WITH YOUR PRIDE.*

*YOU ALL KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE.*

*THIS CITY IS HANGING BY A THREAD. WE MUST GO TO GREAT PAINS TO KEEP THE STATUS QUO, TO KEEP IT FROM TEARING ITSELF APART.*



LEAVE THE INDEPENDENTS TO ME. BY THE TIME I'M DONE WITH THEM, THEY'LL BEG TO GO BACK TO THEIR LITTLE SLEEPY LIVES.

Those who sleep know nothing. Even those who have awakened are only half-aware, wrestling with their identity crisis as their Mythoi ravage their private lives. But **the Truth** lies much deeper than that, far below the surface and the billowing Mist. Unseen, it governs everything in the City. It is the status quo, the way things are. Its workings are everywhere, and yet, only the most aware of Rifts ever learn of its existence. Its individual components are ever-shifting, but the Truth remains constant. It is the alpha and the omega. It is the City itself.

## WHAT IS THE TRUTH?

The Truth is the secretive council of Avatars that has controlled the City since its early days. Its grip on the City is contingent upon an uneasy truce between a handful of long-standing Avatars and the Gatekeepers, a truce which allows all parties to continue pursuing their agenda in the City while supporting each other; or, at least, without having the others intervene in their affairs. The members of the Truth seek to maintain the status quo in the City, often at the expense of its Sleeper and Rift residents.

In your series, the Truth can be used as **an antagonist pantheon**, an all-powerful insidious organization that the crew can strive to expose, become entangled with, and perhaps even try to topple down, or conversely join forces with. It uses the guidelines given in the *MC Toolkit* for Designing a Series (p. 104) and Avatars (p.170) to describe a **mega-iceberg** comprised of multiple Avatar icebergs and large enough to fuel several seasons-worth of gaming.

While this pantheon can be viewed as an evil organization, the Truth (pardon the pun) is more complicated than that. Some of its members are Avatars who do good in the City, yet they find themselves collaborating with darker Avatars or employ morally questionable means and methods. Furthermore, while the Truth seeks to preserve the status quo above all else, to keep the City safe and perpetuate its many systems and networks, its members (with one possible exception) rarely care about the individual on the street, ultimately seeking to preserve their own status in order to stay in power. The members of the Truth, saintly or wicked, Avatars or Gatekeepers, can be downright abusive toward the City's denizens and treat them as pawns.

## WARS OF GODS AND TITANS: THE ORIGINS OF THE TRUTH

### FOLLOWING THE BIRTH OF THE MIST

The first days of the City are lost to the Mist. Perhaps none but the Gatekeepers truly know how things came to be. When the first Avatars transcended the confines of the Mist, they naturally sought to destroy it, waging war against the early Gatekeepers. Some, however, began to see the virtues of the veiled City. A handful of Avatars realized there was a benefit to be had in drawing lines in the sand. While the Gatekeepers sought to seal off their more aggressive brethren, they were free to insidiously influence the masses.

### FROM EPIC STORIES TO WIDESPREAD TRENDS

Instead of telling their stories of epic drama, ripping the very fabric of the City apart, the new dissidents targeted the Sleepers and used them to bring their legends to life through their everyday experiences. Each Avatar's story was told in a much more mundane and lackluster version, but it was reenacted by millions of Sleepers. The new Avatars therefore traded quality for quantity. The Avatar of a Fertility Goddess instigated a baby boom, while that of a fabled king became the mayor; the Avatar of a folklore thief brought on an economic crisis, only to be restored by the industrious powers of the Avatar of an immigrant work song. A Mythos of beauty found its expression in a renaissance of the arts, a blacksmith God in the rise of industry, a legend of freedom in human rights movements and emancipation, and a story about narrow-minded hatred in widespread bigotry and violence on the streets.

## A SCHISM OF RIFTS

Naturally, not all Avatars could operate in this fashion. When the Mythos of a renowned murderer inspired a wave of serial killings and mass shootings, other Avatars joined forces to eradicate him. It was becoming rapidly apparent that only Avatars whose legend was conducive to life and society in the City could benefit from this new modus operandi of mass effect. Any Avatar whose endgame involved the obliteration of the City or its residents could not play the long game. Avatars were never much for working together, using each other as instruments more than as allies, but now a greater schism was forming among the most powerful of Riffs and they were divided into those who sought to preserve the City as it was and those who sought radical change or annihilation.

## THE DILEMMA OF THE FEW

At this stage, the faction that fought for the City's survival was no more than a handful of gods, legends, and tales who waged war against one another as much as they did with the more destructive Avatars and the Gatekeepers. Each of them separately began to see that battling all the primordial forces in the realm of the Mythoi was impossible; they would win over one Avatar one day and lose to another Avatar the next day. They needed a way to collaborate and create a body of Avatars that could endure all others, a group which could stabilize the City. That perspective was perhaps already tainted by their human parts which, as miniscule as they were, had some attachment for the City and the world confined by the Mist. For the first time, they saw that it was within their power to push their brethren out and carve out a place only for themselves. The price would be to put aside their egos.

## UNITED IN WAR

These Avatars decided to confer with each other, and that very parley could have been enough to send all of them toppling down from the peaks of their Avatarhood, had it involved any concession on their individual agendas. None of them had to give in, however, as together they conspired to employ their agendas in tandem in order to rule the City, in some cases by becoming counterparts for one another – so the works of an Avatar of war would give the Avatar of peace a conflict she could strive to heal, and vice versa. A powerful cabal was formed, one that had shaped the City ever since. There would be no other force in the City that would define it so absolutely. They would be the sole and ultimate **Truth**.

## AN INCONVENIENT ALLY

The members of the Truth set out to fortify their reign of the City from their skyscraper headquarters, lavish manor houses, and worm-infested lairs. But now they discovered their shared goal was indirectly protecting their greatest enemy, the murky water that could one day snuff out even their undying flame – the Mist. Their mortal foes, the Gatekeepers who sought to banish them back to the realm of the Mythoi and turn them into sniveling mortals, now became natural allies. Let the Gatekeepers seal off other Avatars and Riffs; the members of the Truth cared not, as long as the Gatekeepers would leave them be. In fact, both groups had a common enemy in Avatars who sought to destabilize the Mist and the City. The Avatars of the Truth therefore made the Mist-lords an offer they couldn't refuse.

## THE ULTIMATE TRUTH

While the Mist was already well-established and the Gatekeepers were more powerful than any single Avatar, keeping the veil spread upon a growing metropolis while fighting an open war with an entire pantheon of Avatars was out of the question for the Gatekeepers. Idealism was burning in their bones, still fresh from their victory against the Mythoi, as was their hatred of these forces who would presume to control mankind's fate and their representatives, the Avatars. And yet, as they were becoming overstretched beyond their limits, it also became necessary to find a way to reduce the workload. It was a tough call to make, but as the flames of war with the other, destructive Avatars threatened to consume the City and the Gatekeepers' bodycount was mounting, a leader from the pragmatic house of Solomon finally agreed to the deal and the fate of the City was sealed. The Truth was now indisputable, an (un)holy union of Mythos and Mist.

# THE TRUTH TODAY

As the decades passed, the Truth continued to evolve and transform. Members came and went, backstabbed each other, lost their Avatarhood, and made remarkable comebacks. Every member left her mark upon the City, a mark the sleepwalking residents can now recall only as a trend or characteristic of the times.

The pantheon of the Truth has also evolved as an organization, constantly modernizing its operation to stay ahead of its many enemies and challengers. Today, as before, the members of the Truth and its methods represent the City's zeitgeist, its spirit of the times.

## CURRENT MEMBERS

Since its conception, the Truth had seen all its original members replaced, excepting the Gatekeepers (although their representatives changed) and perhaps its one secret member. The current members of the Truth are:

- **Chairman (Edmund) Chow**, Chairman of the Board (and major shareholder) of Chow Industries, Avatar of Tanhā, the buddhist force of desire, manifesting as **consumerism and greed**.
- **Ganesha**, the six-year-old homeless Avatar of the elephant-headed Indian god of the same name who is the Remover of Obstacles and the **protector of the City's residents**.
- **District Attorney Barbara King**, Avatar of Shango, the Orisha (personification) of Power and Dominion, who is upholding **law and justice** with an iron fist.
- **Dr. Talbot Leyland**, Head of Helix Labs and the Avatar of Prometheus, promoting innovation and a **dark brand of future optimism**.
- **Rosaline**, a theater-owner and whorehouse madam who is the Avatar of Romeo & Juliet, symbols of **tragic, destructive love**.
- **Monte Wolfe**, the City's foremost media and PR figure, Avatar of The Boy Who Cried Wolf and the sensationalization of lies, or **fake news**.

The council also has two special seats, one for the representative of the Gatekeepers, currently **Richard Hughes**, and one for a member whose identity is kept secret as a special dispensation agreed upon by all other members (who have an inkling as to who this member might be, but prefer to avoid any direct contact with him or her).

## THE UNSPOKEN AGREEMENT

Members of the Truth only agree to sit in the council with their fellow members out of necessity. It is an open secret, rarely spoken, that if any one member had the power to vanquish all others and assert their power over the City, they would do so in a heartbeat and without hesitation (this includes the Gatekeepers, of course).

In the current state of affairs no single member has the power to defeat the other six Avatars. They all realize that any one of them would need the aid of the Gatekeepers to keep the Mist in the City intact, but also would need the other Avatars to prevent the Gatekeepers from taking him or her out. Hence, truce remains the only viable options for all members. On top of it all, threats to the council from without abound, keeping its members too busy to contemplate a coup. Still, council members are rightfully suspicious of one another and keep tabs on the backstage activities of the others.

The most convenient aspect of the council members' arrangement is that each Avatar can continue to promote their agenda normally and is even expected to do so. No one frowns upon an Avatar taking an opportunity to further their cause or gain ground against another Avatar, simply because they would do the same.

Furthermore, the ecosystem of the Truth tends to balance itself: the stronger an Avatar becomes, the more opposition they will encounter from other Avatars, whose operations they encroach upon. If an Avatar is weak enough to be cannibalized by the others, so be it – there is no room for frailty in the Truth. Other times, Avatars may enjoy the synergy of their actions where their agendas are aligned and they might even actively support one another. Since all Avatars need the City to promote their agenda, they can always rely on one another when facing external threats to their power, the status quo, or the City.



# THE COUNCIL'S RESOURCES

An Avatar's Avatarhood is dependant upon their pursuit of their Mythos' agenda, and nothing else. And yet, all members of the Truth are aware that in order to cooperate at all, they are sometimes required to help one another, or to push some agenda that is helpful to the Truth, but not necessarily for themselves.

In order to do so, they created the **Shared Account**. This is a catch-all name for a pool into which they pour some of their resources without accessing it themselves - required by all but usable by none. Only their trusty manager, **Mr. Burns**, can access these funds and tools, and he never explains to his superiors what for. This removes direct accountability from the Avatars and avoids any unnecessary risks to their Avatarhood in case the council's wishes directly conflict with the wishes of their Mythoi. Mr. Burns understands the council's shared agenda and needs more than anyone; he doesn't need to be told, which is exactly what makes him so valuable.

## MR. BURNS

The council's assets are managed by **Mr. Burns** (Janus, Roman God of Gateways, Transitions, and Passages), a middle-aged attorney with the affect of a butler. Mr. Burns lives solely to carry out the will of the council as decided in its meetings; something about watching and facilitating change in the ebb and flow of political power in the City appeals to his mythical sensibilities as Janus. At the same time, his mortal affinity to neatness and love for well-executed tasks keeps him well-grounded as a Legendary. He has no desire to expand his Mythos further, thanks to his imminent understanding that opening up to Janus would put him in direct conflict with his employers.

On the mundane level, Mr. Burns manages the menial tasks required by the council. He hires the best professionals available for each required job, be they lawyers, hired guns, or spies. He transfers funds, creates dummy companies and closes them, then makes the paper trail disappear (as he is also the God of Time, he is an expert at backdating).

Mr. Burns' abilities make him indispensable to the Truth, enough so that if there was ever a real threat

to his safety, each of the members would show up personally to protect him from harm. He is not just the master of gateways, he is also a walking portal. Mr. Burns' very skin (or surface, rather) is a gateway to elsewhere, to wherever he wishes it to be. Able to expand and collapse, he can transport almost anything, including himself, to anywhere. This has limitless applications, but on a day-to-day basis it allows him to efficiently manage the Truth's business across the City, spy on any activity that takes place in a physical space (whether in the City or in an Enclave he is aware of) and also to provide secure and discreet transportation for all Truth members to their meeting place.

## THE "GRAND COLONIAL" GENTLEMEN'S CLUB

The Truth meetings have always taken place at the "Grand Colonial". This prestigious club originally resided in a luxurious colonial house in the Old Quarter - but not anymore. The house exterior stands empty, protected by Shrouding wards that make Sleepers, Rifts, and even low-ranking Gatekeeper agents ignore it (anyone who does snoop around is immediately tagged as a threat). The interior was gutted by Mr. Burns years ago and then transported into an Enclave out of space and time. Before every meeting, Mr. Burns meticulously chooses the vista de jur and materializes the club in a location overlooking the City: an empty floor in a recently-purchased skyscraper floor Downtown, the top of a silo in the Industrial Zone, sometimes even in the original house. This is a luxury of peace; at times of war, the club stays in its Enclave and the meetings take place there.

Inside, the "Grand Colonial" shows all the trappings of a respectable and well-endowed establishment (much to the discomfort of stylistically- or socially-aware members like Wolfe and Ganesha). The walls are paneled with dark, smooth wood, enclosing furniture of superior craftsmanship carefully curated by Mr. Burns. A masterpiece hangs over the mantle; to the side, a spotless cocktail bar cabinet awaits, stocked with the finest elixirs legend has to offer (a bottle of Nectar procured from Anatoli Vidales' personal stock is a trophy almost too gratifying to open). All in all, the club house provides a very plush and pleasant environment, perfect for some of the City's darkest shenanigans.

## THE GATE

The private communications between the Truth's members and its operatives also depend on Mr. Burns, who has constructed a Relic to provide this service. The Gate of Janus is a large, ornate stone and marble Roman gate

with cast iron double doors, erected inside one of the halls of the “Grand Colonial”. Looking through the gate, one can see a vertical pool of shimmering silver liquid, ebbing and flowing. Effectively opening voice- and/or image-only portals between communicants, the Gate allows anyone in the service of the Truth to communicate with Mr. Burns, who can then patch them to another member or operative using another portal, if necessary. The information (voice and visuals) is transmitted via a pocket dimension, so that it never exists in the City *per se*, making this communication channel the most secure channel in the City (excepting, perhaps, Gatekeeper channels). Furthermore, communicants are sheathed in multiple layers of displaced space, creating sensory, technological, and psychic interference as an espionage countermeasure. Authorized personnel carry a piece of marble from the gate as a means of contacting Mr. Burns, who follows protocol to a tee and only answers once he has glimpsed into the past and future of the speaker and verified their identity. Portals can be made large enough to walk through, should communicants want to converse in person within the Gate’s pocket dimension, at the “Grand Colonial”, or anywhere else. This degree of security keeps the communications of the Truth members off the grid and untraceable, and has saved the council a lot of interference from scrying or tech-savvy would-be heroes.

## PYROCLAST

At times, the council may encounter a threat that needs to be eliminated immediately and without the involvement of its members. For these occasions, Mr. Burns sheds his mortal veneer of a painstaking manservant and take on the mantle of Pyroclast. As Pyroclast, he turns almost the entire surface of his skin into a one-way portal to the heart of a legendary volcano (where exactly this volcano is located remains a mystery, one of Mr. Burns greatest and only secrets from the council). Anything that touches Pyroclast is immediately incinerated or transported into the volcano; when he so wishes, he turns the portal two-way and blasts his vicinity with jets of molten rock. As Pyroclast, he is destruction manifest.

The Truth has had to employ Pyroclast only a handful of times since Mr. Burns’ employment began, each time much to the consternation and protest of Richard Hughes, the Gatekeeper representative, who had to clean up these hellish appearances from the minds of thousands of Sleepers. Still, when the circumstances call for it, Pyroclast is a weapon they would not hesitate to use.

## LOSING MR. BURNS

Capable of transferring elsewhere almost any form of harm to his person, Mr. Burns is virtually indestructible. However, in the unlikely event that he were compromised, there is no doubt that the current organization of the Truth would take a grave hit, though it would not be entirely incapacitated. Each of the Avatars has the resources to replace Mr. Burns with alternative service providers and they all have contingency plans for such an event. On his part, Mr. Burns is completely dedicated to the Truth, and it seems unlikely he will ever choose to leave their employment.

### MR. BURNS ★★★



#### HURT OR SUBDUE - / PLEA, THREATEN, OR TURN -

- **Walking Gateway:** When you attack Mr. Burns, the MC chooses one or both:
    - » You first find yourself in another part of the City.
    - » If your attack is physical, it is redirected to anyone or anything in the City.
  - **Hello, Goodbye:** Mr. Burns can transport himself anywhere as an intrusion.
  - **Loyal Servant:** When you first try to influence Mr. Burns, give him *loyal-4*, renewable as a soft move. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
  - **Deadpan Threat:** When Mr. Burns threatens you, you take *terrified-3*. If you take an action contrary to his wish, you are **Taking the Risk**.
  - **Open Book:** When you spend a Clue to ask about Mr. Burns or his business, the MC always gets to ask a question back.
  - **In Absentia:** When you spend a Clue to ask about Mr. Burns or his business, you cannot use the question word “where”.
- 
- Transport someone elsewhere (**Complicate Things, Bigtime**) or restrain them in a portal loop (*looped-5*)
  - Deliver dreadful threats and announcements in a dry, matter-of-factly fashion
  - Warn aggressors not to do anything rash



## **PYROCLAST ★★★★★**

### **HURT OR SUBDUE - / COOL DOWN 6**

- **Walking Volcano I:** When you touch Pyroclast, at his option, you first take *burnt-to-cinders-6* or *fallen-into-a-volcano-6*.
  - **Walking Volcano II:** When Pyroclast takes a cooling status, reduce its tier by 3. As long as his volcano is hot, Pyroclast can remove any cooling statuses as a soft move.
  - **Molten:** When you **Face Danger** against Pyroclast's volcanic fire, first burn one appropriate defensive tag or reduce a defensive status or effect by one, if it could be obliterated by the intense heat.
- 
- Blast someone or his entire surroundings with a jet of lava (*burnt-to-cinders-6* or, if he's pulling his punches, *critical-burns-5*)
  - Encase someone in pyroclastic rock (*encased-5*; if it hits, you also take *burns-2*)
- 
- Proceed unstopably, consuming all in his way

## **"THE TRUTH" OPERATIVE + ★**

Operatives working for the Truth are few, as most of the council's work is done by its members' operations. When Mr. Burns does hire professional staff for specific applications, he supports them from afar, enabling them to strike surgically and without a trace. Use this Mythos Power Set to enhance Dangers such as Cat Burglar, Heist Team, Hitman, or Elite Security (see Mundane Dangers in the *MC Toolkit*, page 141).

- **The Drop:** Once per scene, as a soft move, the operative(s) materializes out of nowhere at a place chosen by the MC, circumventing all physical barriers. Everyone around takes a temporary *surprised-3*.
- **Clean Getaway:** Once per scene, the operative(s) can disappear into thin air as a soft move (**Deny Them Something They Want**). She then receives the move **In Absentia** (as in Mr. Burns' moves).
- **(optional +★) Lethal Timing:** Once per scene, the operative(s) can make one of her hard or soft moves as an intrusion.

# **THE COUNCIL IN YOUR GAME**

## **THE MEMBERS AS THREATS**

Further in this chapter, the Avatar operations of the six known members of the Truth are described. Each Avatar operation can be the foundation for anything between a short story arc to multiple seasons, depending on how deeply you want to engage your crew with that Avatar. Each member of the Truth poses a different category of threats:

- **Chairman Chow:** Fan the individual desires of each member, breaking the crew apart
- **Ganesh:** Rope kind-hearted crew members into helping her cause
- **DA Barbara King:** Hunt down, convict, and/or imprison lawless crew members
- **Dr. Leyland:** Involve the crew in Mythos experiments, willingly or not
- **Rosaline:** Destroy relationships within the crew and without
- **Monte Wolfe:** Tarnish the crew's reputation and turn the public against them

Each Avatar's profile provides story seeds that will help you integrate their operation into your series.

## **THE COUNCIL AS A MEGA-THREAT**

Once you've introduced the operations of one or two members, and especially if your crew revealed one of the Avatars and engaged with her, you can start dropping hints about collaborations between Avatar organizations, building up to the discovery that some Avatars in the City are working together. Remember to roll out this mega-threat gradually, starting with vague hints, once per session, allowing for things to slowly add up for the players.

## **THE COUNCIL AS BACKDROP**

Even if the crew does not directly engage the members of the Truth, its members and their operations can serve as backdrop in your series, giving a wider context of the forces and factions operating in the City. This is particularly true for street-level games in which the crew is not likely to encounter an Avatar, but where they are constantly in contact with an Avatar's minions, even if unknowingly. For example, your crew can learn that illegal action gets them in trouble with superpowered police (Shango's minions) or they

might cross paths with a Rift temptress belonging to a mysterious school of drama (Rosaline's minions). Some of the supporting cast could be caught in a media storm (stirred by Wolfe's minions) or involved in social activism or spiritual pursuits (with Ganesha's minions). Even if these elements do not connect to a larger narrative, they help paint a picture of a mythical City.

## PLAYING THE COUNCIL

You could involve your players in describing the state of affairs in the City by playing short cutscenes of the council meetings, where each player takes the role of one of the Truth members. These are *cutscenes* because the lead characters are not present, nor are they aware of what goes on in the meeting (unless they somehow discover it). The meetings take place on a level far beyond that of the crew (at least at the start of the arc) and rarely discuss the crew or matters directly related to the crew. Instead, each meeting revolves around what is happening in the City within each Avatar's domain, setting the background for your game.

A council meeting cutscene is best played at the beginning of a session, informing the session to come, or at the end, as a review of where the City is going and as a possible cliffhanger. To start the cutscene, assign a council member to each player or let them choose:

- You are **Chairman Chow** (Tanhā), a corrupt corporate tycoon who runs the City's biggest company and is always fanning consumerism and political corruption.
- You are **Ganesha** (Ganesha), a serene, wise, and compassionate child-Avatar and social activist who is determined to help the underprivileged populations in the City as well as individuals in distress.
- You are **District Attorney Barbara King** (Shango), the City's top prosecutor and law enforcement leader. You're concerned about fighting crime and maintaining civil order, by whatever means necessary.
- You are **Dr. Talbot Leyland** (Prometheus), a technology mogul seeking to promote science to the point of breakthrough, using dangerous experimentation.
- You are **Rosaline** (Romeo & Juliet), a tempestuous theater grande dame who loves pushing the City's residents to destroy their relationships with tragic endings.
- You are **Monte Wolfe** (The Boy Who Cried Wolf), the City's top and most flamboyant media pundit who thrives on stirring up public storms and spreading fear, especially if it gets him attention.

Before starting the scene, instruct the players to limit their portrayal of the council members in the following way:

- **The council discusses large-scale or unique happenings in the City.** You MAY describe:
  - » high-level City trends;
  - » specific events not directly related to the crew; or
  - » your council member's opinion or overall intentions.
- **The council rarely discusses happenings at the crew level (at least at first).** AVOID describing your council member's reaction to the crew's recent actions and AVOID naming specific street-level NPCs the crew has met, unless it's particularly apt.
- **The council rarely discusses the details of their plans.** AVOID detailing what your council member intends to do; instead, FORESHADOW with a dramatic, vague statement: "We will take care of this." or "Soon, this will no longer pose a problem."

During the scene, you as the MC can take the role of a council member, or simply watch and take notes. Whatever the players describe in the cutscene should be treated as fact; add it to the story elements and/or burning questions bucket list and use these elements through the coming sessions or even incorporate them in your cases.

## SERVING AN AVATAR

As described in the Core Books, Sleepers who come under the influence of a powerful Rift can temporarily awaken and remember the legendary to some extent, just enough to make them useful minions. These individuals become Touched, not by their own Mythos, but by that of their bosses. Once the influence of the Rift is gone, a Touched minion usually returns to their obliviousness, although in some cases they awaken, tapping into their own Mythos.

Avatars and other powerful Rifts also have the ability to bestow boons and magical abilities upon their Touched minions, granting them some of their magic to create troops, spies, messengers, etc. that are more than mundane. The exact nature of the process through which powers are given depends greatly on the Avatar. Some Touched receive their abilities by merely being associated with the Avatar and working in her service. In other cases, Avatars must perform a ritual, have access to a resource, or somehow alter or ensnare their Touched minions-to-be before power can be granted.

Rift characters, including the lead characters, cannot become Touched minions of an Avatar because they are already under the influence of their own Mythoi. However, lead characters who have fallen asleep or supporting cast who are Sleepers can become the servants of an Avatar.

A Sleeper PC who becomes a servant of an Avatar gains an appropriate Mythos theme in addition to her three Logos themes, representing the powers bestowed by the Avatar. However, change the Mystery of that theme into an Identity representing her loyalty to the Avatar. When the Mythos theme received from the Avatar is lost (e.g. by marking three Crack), it is not replaced by a Logos theme. Instead, it is simply lost, and the PC goes back to being a Sleeper, or awakens as a Rift, at the player's discretion. Some Avatars also have custom moves to describe the effects of their initiation (for example Anatoli's Living Dead, *MC Toolkit*, page 180).

For NPC minions, combine the Sleeper NPC Danger profile with the Avatar's Mythos Power Set or grant them some of the custom moves from the Danger profile of the Avatar or his other servants.

## CHAMPIONING FOR AN AVATAR

Avatars are the City's most charismatic and powerful beings. Every Avatar has her own great plans for the City and she needs all the help she can get to bring her vision to life. Rifts are naturally inclined to take part in a greater story. Many times this puts them in conflict with Avatars, but in some cases the opposite happens, when a Rift meets an Avatar so magnificent and whose goals align so deeply with hers, that she is compelled to join the Avatar's cause. Other times an Avatar is cunning, convincing, or wise enough to change a Rift's mind and recruit them.

The role an Avatar grants to a Rift in her ranks usually aligns with the Rift's Mythos and/or Logos. For example, a Rift could serve as the Avatar's bodyguard because she has the Mythos of a warrior who makes her seek out battle, or because she is an expert martial-artist (or both). The Rifts in the service of an Avatar are often referred to as her champions.

Sometimes Avatars can bestow boons on their champions, granting them a portion of their power and magic (just how much depends on the position and loyalty of the champion). This boon can manifest as new powers and abilities, but it could also be a Relic, Familiar, Enclave, or Conjunction that serve the champion.

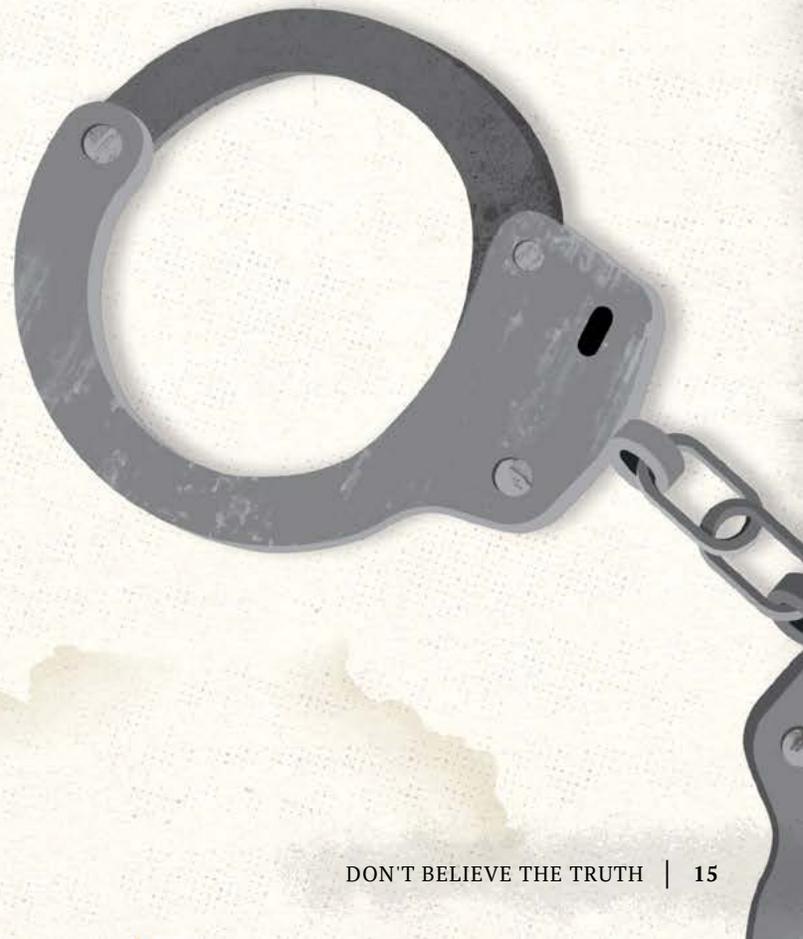
To become a champion for an Avatar, a player character must replace a theme. Nothing short of a profound transformation will satisfy the Avatar that the PC is truly her champion now. Whether the PC lost a Mythos or Logos theme, she picks out a new Mythos theme to represent the boons of her Avatar. However, change the Mystery of that theme into an Identity representing her loyalty to the Avatar. When the Mythos theme received from the Avatar is lost (e.g. by marking three

Crack), it is replaced by a theme from the type opposite to the theme the character lost to become the Avatar's champion.

## JOINING THE COUNCIL

An Avatar character, whether PC or NPC, can attempt to join the Truth and take her place at the council. To even be considered, the Avatar must be well-established and powerful. New or inexperienced Avatars that attempt to approach the Truth are quashed, either by one of the council members or all of them. The Avatars of the Truth have no time to play; a new Avatar in town is either powerful enough to not be worth fighting or she is dead meat, and they don't waste time in finding out. Enduring this first meeting in itself says a lot about a new Avatar's potential as a member of the pantheon.

A joining Avatar must have an agenda that involves the survival of the City as it is. A destructive or Mist-disruptive Avatar can only be an enemy of the Truth. Furthermore, even if an Avatar has withstood the test of power against the other members, she still needs to have her own City-wide operation in place to continue to grow in power, influence, and resources so she could keep up with the rest of the council. In that sense, there is no application process or candidacy, nor an official and final coronation; Avatars take their place in the Truth because *they* can, and their ability to hold onto their seat is continuously tested by the other members. If they do, more power to them; if they don't, well, too bad.





## **CHAIRMAN CHOW**

*Tanhā, Buddhist concept of craving*

“What do you mean you’re out of *CreamyDreamy* bars? You too?! I called you ten minutes ago and you said you had a dozen left! I drove from the other side of town for this. I don’t care that some guy offered you fifty bucks for them! I’ve been working in the sewers all day, I need that candy bar. Mmmm... I can’t wait to take a bite of that fluffy, sweet cream... So, where can I get it? Out of stock?! Are you sending me to the factory? Whatever, get me an address. I’m going there right now. There had better not be anyone standing in my way.”

–Salamander

Everyone wants something, all the time. To exist is to desire: a plant desires sunlight and water, an animal needs food and shelter. Out of all living things, though, human beings desire the most. Through their imagination, they desire not just what isn't available but also what does not yet exist. Simply existing is not enough for them; they wish to obtain things, because that gives them an ever-so-fleeting satisfaction, only to then be replaced with renewed craving, stronger tenfold. No one in the City knows this vicious but so human cycle of greed better than Edmund Chow, Chairman of the Board and majority shareholder of the City's largest corporation – Chow Industries Inc.

Chairman Chow is one of the only Avatars in the history of the City to achieve their endgame: in his case, to drown the City in an endless bout of consumerism and greed. For over a century, he has been cultivating the City's consumer market, its ever-growing and increasingly-powerful corporate world, and its corrupt relationship with the local government. He is finally at a point where he could feel satisfied: society is the most materialistic it's ever been, people are consuming mindlessly, enslaved to their desires, blindly devouring all natural resources, and those in power have never been more power-hungry and corrupt.

But satisfaction is not something Chairman Chow can feel. All he can do is to desire more and more: he wants the City to be more greedy, and its people to be more aggressive in their quest to fulfill their wants. At the same time, he is unsure whether the City can take any more of this ferocious craving, whether society will collapse and fall prey to the forces of destruction, leaving Chairman Chow without his source of gratification. This equilibrium keeps Chairman Chow in the council of the Truth and it torments him, because he cannot have more. He's always seeking new, more insidious ways to bleed the City dry without breaking it.

Even if he were satisfied, Chairman Chow can't afford to rest on his laurels. Being at the top means everyone wants what you have. The other, younger Avatars are always waiting for him to slip so they can sink their teeth and claws in what's his. Now there is a new Avatar in town, a child whose powers seem to exceed,

if not dwarf, his own; Chairman Chow often wonders if she's born out of some cosmic backlash to his excessive exploitation of the City. Secretly, he is using her as a counterbalance which allows him to ravage the City, knowing there is someone to heal it and restore it as well as curb his hunger.

For now, his influence and grip on the City remain unmatched; all these fresh contenders could only dream of their agenda becoming as ingrained in the everyday life of the City as the desire for possessions has become. Moreover, his cemented, century-old relationship with the Gatekeepers, who need him because their Mist exploits people's desires, keeps him in the leading coalition within the council. All in all, Chairman Chow is in the best position he could hope for, and, more than anything else, he desires to keep it.

### OVERVIEW OF CHAIRMAN CHOW

- **Agenda:** to fan the flames of desire so people consume more and more
- **MO:** promoting consumerism, accumulation of assets, and corruption
- **Desire:** Desire itself
- **Motifs:** money, Chinese fans, Buddhist demons, skulls
- **Frontliners:** enchanted products, Brand Stores, Preta
- **Stronghold:** Chow Industries Skyscraper

### CHAIRMAN CHOW'S MODUS OPERANDI

Out of the many kinds of desire Chairman Chow could exploit, the materialistic urge to obtain worldly possessions is by far the "lowest-hanging fruit", the easiest to capitalize upon. Chow Industries is a megacorporation that is built for this purpose only: to lure the sleepwalking citizens of the City into an unchecked rampage of consumerism, which drives more desire and more manufacturing, and so on.

Chow Industries has a foothold in almost every retail industry in the City: food, clothing, auto, home & decor, tech, and many more. Its business expands beyond retail to offer services in manufacturing, logistics, financial services, and marketing as well as manufacturing for construction, the military, and the aerospace industry. Overall, this giant controls a vast share of the commerce in the City, keeping itself just shy of becoming a monopoly not because of any legal restrictions but because it avoids stifling consumption. It plays a major part in maintaining the City's economy stable

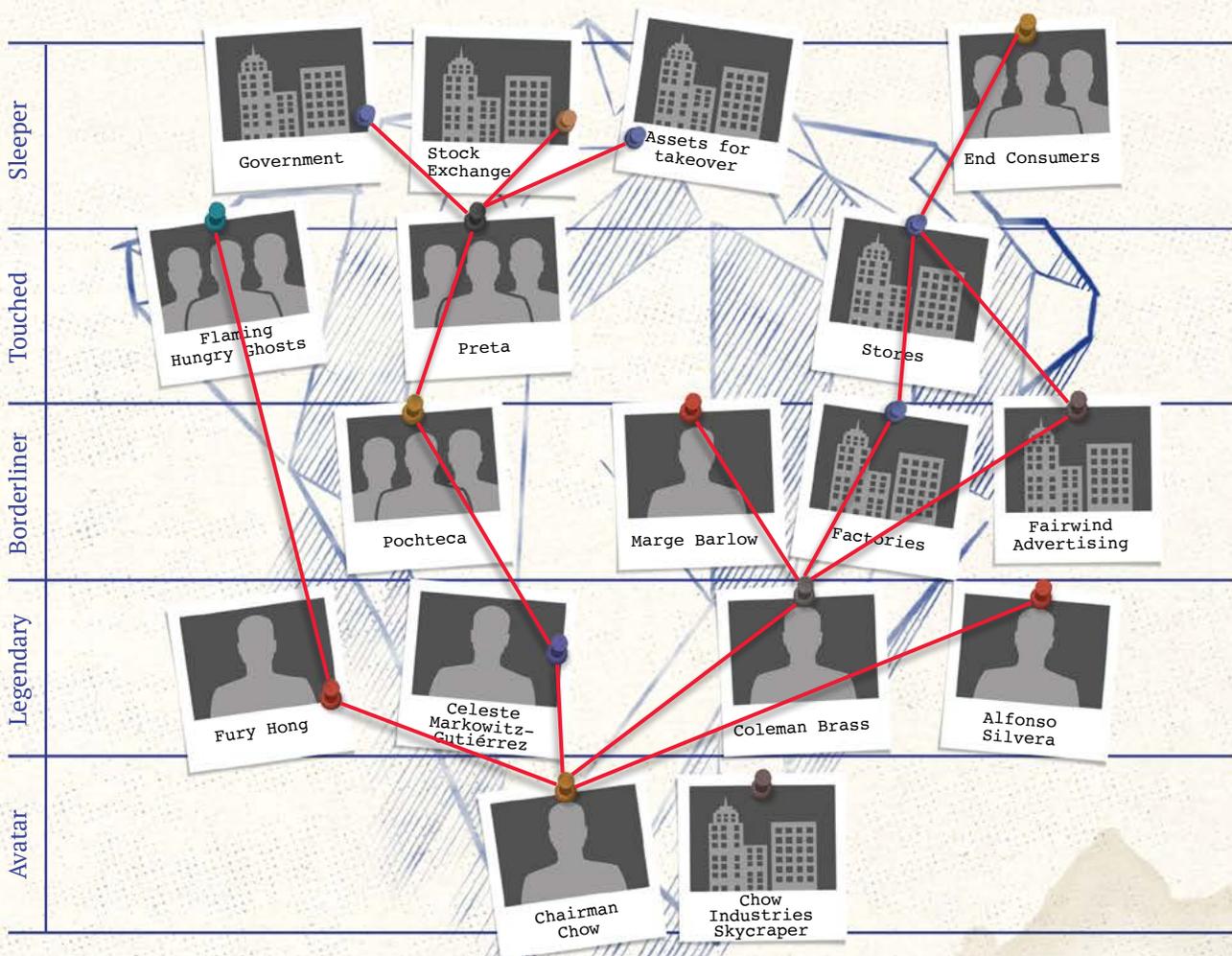
and keeping recession at bay, although in doing so, it has eroded the buying power of individual citizens (not to mention their morals), increasing the gap between rich and poor.

There is a secret to the seemingly mundane success of Chow Industries: its executives are carefully-selected Rifts of greed and excess who know how to fan the cravings of the City's residents. Addictive and alluring enchantments are worked into the company's products in every step of the process from manufacturing to marketing, pulling the masses with magical threads to crave far more than they need. These enchantments usually don't work in a vacuum – people already desire so much more than is necessary – but they can take a fleeting interest, one which maybe would have been sidelined, and turn it into an itching and burning hunger that the consumer rushes to satisfy.

Once it is consumed, a Chow Industry product will make a consumer want to get it again and again, or continuously strive to obtain a newer and improved

model. Chow Industry experts have perfected their methods to the point of implanting desires in people who even just look at their billboards or who catch the scent of a perfume or a chocolate bar. What's special about these enchantments is that they are more insidious than most others in the City and are very difficult to detect, even with Mythos powers, operating almost at the level of the Mist.

Everyone wants something, and Chow Industries caters for all. The higher you get, the greater the stakes are, and the more burning your desire to succeed becomes. Chow Industries leads a social culture in the City that makes employees and business people crave material success so badly, that they lose sight of what truly matters, and become obsessed with this singular goal in life and its trappings. People in the City feel more and more that they are measured by what they have, and from a social perspective, this is indeed the case. Status symbols (sold by Chow-Industries-owned brands) never cease to grow in popularity.



In order to shape the business culture in the City, Chow Industries has positioned itself as the most sought after employer, business partner, investor, and client. Everyone wants to work with this megacorp, which dictates the commonplace dog-eat-dog business mentality that burns out so many citizens every year. Their reach isn't limited to the business world; Chow Industries' connections run deep in the public sector. The company employs a battery of lobbyists and corrupt politicians to further its agenda in the government, and remove any obstacles in its path to turn the City into a free-for-all fight for power. Here too, mercantile Mythoi are employed to give the corporation an unfair business advantage over Sleepers and less powerful Rifts.

## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S OPERATION

Within the massive organization of Chow Industries there are two separate branches of activity that involve Rifts who work for the Chairman: consumer products and business development. Employee turnover is rapid, as exhausted managers are backstabbed and replaced by their ambitious subordinates. The Chairman expects exceptional performance from everyone; anyone who can't deliver finds themselves on the streets or in the gutter.

The consumer branch creates products and makes people crave them. It is integrated with the company's retail operations, from the factories down to the stores, using Mythos powers to enslave the City to what Chow Industries has to offer.

The business development (read: corruption) branch targets those individuals in business, government, and politics who are already a part of the rat race and presents them with opportunities that will catapult their careers, but at the same time devour their souls and make them addicted to material success.

### KEY CHARACTERS

Officially titled Head of Customer Success, **COLEMAN BRASS's** (Aladdin's wish-fulfilling djinn from *One Thousand and One Nights*) actual job is to manage all supernatural aspects of Chow Industries' consumer branch. Coleman is a tall and rugged man in his early 40s, who would have attracted a lot of romantic attention if he wasn't such a doormat. A hopeless pleaser, Coleman lives to serve others and fulfill their wishes – which is easily done when the whole City craves your products and your team is trained to fulfill the customer's wishes. The most compelling Chow Industries adverts and their most hooking products have a drop of Coleman's wish-fulfillment inside them, which he passes on to employees through customer relationships seminars. Sadly, on a personal level, people

don't really want Coleman, they only want what he can give them, so they use him and discard him once they realize he can't do any more for them (three wishes, as the tale goes; Chairman Chow himself is down to his last wish, having used two in the past to gain much of his influence). If only Coleman could fulfill his own wishes, he would make himself confident and assertive and stand up for himself. But he can't, so he spends his days obsessing over positive reviews and flattering customer feedback reports. Anything to feel desired.

Several desire-inducing Rifts work under Coleman's management, supplying the juicy sorcery that powers the Chow Industry sales machine. **MARGE BARLOW** (The Fisherman's Wife, whose wishes offended a wish-fulfilling fish) is a disgruntled, chain-smoking Senior Chemist working for the company's Material Engineering Department. The perfect counterpiece to her superior, Brass, she is in a chronic state of mythic dissatisfaction which no wish-fulfilling being in the City can remedy. She can also infect others with dissatisfaction and ungratefulness, an ability she works into obscure ingredients and components used in Chow Industries products. If her compositions are activated correctly, a mixture of her dissatisfaction and Brass's wish-fulfillment creates a synergistic effect, wherein, the people who use these products quickly start to feel dissatisfied, leading to them craving more of the product or a newer version of it. Every now and then she has a fluke that causes entire product lines to shut down because customers are dissatisfied *with the product*. For her employers, this is just the cost of doing business, but if she doesn't pull it together, she's out.

Coleman often enlists **SHERYL FISHER** (Ebisu, Japanese god of wealth in business), a chirpy downtown copywriting guru (*MC Toolkit*, page 23), and her advertising firm, **FAIRWIND**, to market Chow Industries products and drive sales. Chow Industries pays a high fee for hiring this top-tier firm, but the results are always satisfactory. People just can't seem to resist the fisherman god's baits, whether it's in a newspaper ad, on TV, or on a billboard. A Fairwind campaign or sale usually causes a citywide craze for a product, with lines of people camping outside stores and even store stampedes that results in fights over items and even injuries. Fisher doesn't feel conscientious pangs over any of it; she just waits until the stock is cleared and moves on to the next product.

With such temptation to buy, the City is always at risk of financially collapsing its micro-structures – individuals and families. This gives rise to crime, starting with loansharking, which empowers one of the Truth's greatest enemies, Anatoli Vidales (Hades, *MC Toolkit*, page 174), who feeds off debt. The responsibility of making sure this never happens rests on the scrawny

shoulders of **ALFONSO SILVERA** (the devil Mammon, medieval personification of wealth and greed), High Commissioner of the City's Banking Authority. In person, Mr. Silvera is a small, soft-spoken, meticulously-dressed banker. Through his demonic powers, he commands absolute control over funds coursing through the City's financial systems (excluding black markets), making sure citizens have enough to spend and that if they owe anything, they owe it to the banks. So important is this person, that the Truth has him watched over by Mr. Burns himself. In recent years, Silvera has warned Mr. Chow that unchecked consumption is beginning to erode the City's natural resources, putting the economy at risk in the long term, but so far the Chairman has not addressed this.

On the biz dev front, the main showrunner is **CELESTE MARKOVITZ-GUTIÉRREZ** (Yacatecuhtli, Aztec patron god of commerce and travelers), the blingy and shrewd VP of Business Development. CMG trains and employs the **POCHTECA** (merchants), a roster of superpowered businesspeople (high-powered Touched that serve on the Borderliner level of the organization). They manipulate the City's markets and industries by disrupting the stock market, lobbying in the government, and identifying assets and smaller companies to acquire. These sorcerous wheelers-and-dealers and trained industrial spies tip the scales of business in the City to Chow Industries' favor while corrupting other businesses who crave their money, influence, and power. Every Pochteca has their unique style and tactics, but they all carry an expensive piece of Aztec jewelry and sometimes a cane, umbrella, or parasol. The jewel serves as their connection with CMG, who bestows upon them luck in dealings and powerful protective enchantments. Through a blood ritual, the cane or other stick-like accessory can be transformed into a towering, moving stick effigy (or "stick golem") for additional protection. Some prodigious Pochteca also get an Iron Fan from Chairman Chow himself, the highest of honors; they can use it to fan the flames of desire in their victims.

Businesspeople who deal with Pochteca and become embroiled with Chow Industries usually see their careers and success skyrocket, as the Pochteca cultivate their hunger for more. As their hunger grows, and they sacrifice more and more for their material standing and social status, they transform into **PRETA** (hungry ghosts of corrupt and greedy people). Preta are still very much alive, but they are afflicted by an insatiable want for more, burning bridges and sacrificing family ties, even neglecting their health and spiritual well-being. Newly-created Preta start showing bags under their eyes and sunken cheeks, and gradually become

gaunt until finally turning emaciated as their hunger consumes them. A Preta's hunger can be controlled by anyone possessing an Iron Fan by directing it at an object of desire, making them ideal servants.

For the most part, illegal Chow Industries activities, though harmful to individuals, are not a danger to the public order and are easily smoothed over, grandfathered, or even legalized by the Pochteca representatives in the government. When it comes to securing its business and assets, the **CHOW INDUSTRIES SECURITY FORCE**, in reality a small army, has almost absolute freedom to act on the company's behalf, freedom much greater than that enjoyed by law enforcement in the City. When Chairman Chow needs something really bad done, he outsources it to his illegitimate son and criminal-for-hire, **FURY HONG** (Red Boy, wielder of True Samadhi Fire in *Journey to the West*). Combining his ability to produce unquenchable fire with one of his father's Iron Fans, Fury Hong has the ability to create unquenchable desire in anyone he meets. He leads a gang of Preta, the **FLAMING HUNGRY GHOSTS**, as a deniable strikeforce in the service of Chow Industries.

### KEY LOCATIONS

The Chow Industries retail magic takes place in **FACTORIES** in the Industrial Zone and just out of town. The factory receives enchanted ingredients, formulas, and specs from Rift employees like Marge Barlow, and incorporates them in the final products. Factory accidents do happen from time to time; once, an employee who mishandled the greed-inducing components ended up driving a truck full of product out from the factory in a bold bid to escape, while another time a whole batch of cookies had to be discarded after half of the working force jumped into the giant mixing machine and suffocated themselves in cookie dough. Needless to say, Chow Industries' legal department made it all go away with due compensation and media damage control.

The product then hits the stores and sells citywide, but it's the Chow Industries **BRAND STORES** (Venus Flytrap) that really tantalize the customers. These expansive stores, dressed top-to-bottom with high-end design and perfectly-served marketing messages, are positioned strategically at the heart of downtown or other commercial hubs, for all to see. Thanks to Coleman Brass's team, unwitting residents who see the store can't help but come in. They are then compelled to buy and buy until their wallets are empty and their credit cards are maxed out, at which point the store spits them out and gets ready to digest the next sucker.

Look above the downtown stores and you will see a shining gold-and-red-tinted skyscraper towering over

the City, simply named **THE CHOW INDUSTRIES SKYSCRAPER**. While the company has many locations around the City, this tower serves as the company headquarters, and home to most Rift activities of Chow's operation. On the 88th floor, Edmund Chow sits in a lavish office and overlooks the City. The Chairman isn't much for Enclaves these days; in a way, the City is his Enclave, as the concept of Tanhā is manifested all around. Those few Rifts who venture to the 88th floor, like Fury Hong, CMG, or Brass, or awakened guests of the Chairman who partake in his exclusive and decadent parties, see nothing much out of the ordinary, except for sudden flashes of an Eastern palace crawling with three-eyed Tibetan demons with necklaces and headdresses made of human skulls. That's just a little effect the Chairman keeps to set the scene, and let visitors know they have arrived in the heart of darkness, where their greatest desires can be fulfilled but never satisfied.



## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S HISTORY

Mr. Chow is over a hundred years old. His earliest memory was arriving at the City while it was still a glorified town as an immigrant child on a dingy, but given his deep familiarity with the Mist, he doubts that this memory ever really happened. He remembers growing up in a slum in the shadow of skyscrapers' skeletons under construction and swearing that one day he would live up there, in the clouds, like the Jade Emperor, in a constant state of serenity and content. While still a young child, he started dreaming about how he would get there, sneak off and talk to the builders, and plot his path to greatness.

Little Edmund's ambition and drive took him far, from a teenage hustler to a wealthy shopkeeper in Chinatown. His grocery business flourished, and he never allowed himself to be distracted or slowed down by romantic love, family, friendship, academics, or other pursuits. Something was slowly awakening in him, and he thought it was the Jade Emperor, which made him push harder. He could instill a sense of purpose and a cause in anyone and led his company, now a chain of stores, to taking over the market.

It's unclear whether Edmund Chow was truly contended upon by two Mythoi at the same time. He remembers a moment of clarity where he suddenly understood that self-gratification can only lead to

more dissatisfaction. He remembers a bright white light and within it celestial gardens opening up before him. He remembers understanding that in order to partake in this wholeness, he must let go of the need to satisfy his own desires and instead dedicate his work to something greater. And he remembers turning his back on this ludicrous offer and setting out on a path to forever gratify his every craving, brief as the pleasure may be. For him, desires were there to be realized, that's what life is all about. He thus became the Rift and Avatar of Tanhā

Since then he has grown Chow Industries to the empire it is today. To avoid public attention, he added "Jr." to his name, and then "the 3<sup>rd</sup>", and then returned to just Edmond Chow, serially inheriting Chow Industries from himself. While he had many children out of wedlock (one of them is Fury Hong), outcomes of random nights of passion, he never had an heir. That is until twenty years ago, when whether on a whim or as a strategic move, he married a high-ranking Gatekeeper, and together they had a child. To avoid any Oedipal calamities, they agreed to keep the child under extreme Mist, safeguarding her from her Mythos. Thanks to the intervention of another Avatar, the child awakened, discovering the truth about her parents, and escaped. The Chairman is now directing special resources to locating and retrieving this child. If he cannot harness her amazing powers, he may need to get rid of her.

## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S STORY SEEDS

- Families of the victims of the cookie dough factory accident turn to the crew in search for some real answers. The crew must infiltrate the Chow Industries factory, examine the equipment, and interview the staff to uncover what exactly happened, but Chow Industries security won't make it easy on them, and the factory is full of dangerous substances that could end up inciting a second accident.
- The City succumbs to a particularly powerful frenzied attack over a new product: new sneakers, an energy drink, or a line of toys. Customers become violent in their pursuit of the coveted new fad and when they have it, they only want more. What's worse, no one seems to be showing remorse for their violent behavior and advertisers don't seem to be slowing down. Conscientious crew members are drawn to investigate while some lead or support characters fall to temptation and join the craze.
- A support character doing business in the City celebrates a new deal with Chow Industries, inviting the crew to the party. Every time the crew encounters that character again, they are thinner, more tired, and more obsessed about their business and what they can achieve. Trying to intervene leads to a conflict with the Chow Industries contact, a Pochteca.
- Disguised as a middle-management nobody, Coleman Brass approaches the crew and asks them to help him become his own man. The crew can either find a way to help him or use him to fulfill their own wishes, in which case their desires become known to Fury Hong and the Flaming Hungry Ghosts who come to eliminate the threat and return Mr. Brass to his office.

## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S CUSTOM MOVES

**Returning Customer:** When you buy a Chow Industries product, at the end of the next downtime, you crave more or better. Take *need-more-2*, *want-up-grades-2*, or *want-another-2*. As long as you have this status, you continue to take the same tier-2 status at the end of every downtime. Once you get what you want, remove the status (although, if you fulfilled your desire through a Chow Industries product, this move applies anew).

## PURCHASES IN CITY OF MIST

In *City of Mist*, players don't track their characters' belongings or money. When a player character wishes to buy something, if it's within her buying power, the players and the MC can assume that she obtains it and pays for it. The MC may optionally give the player a story tag describing the character's purchase, if it is important to the story or fun to highlight. If the purchase is stretching the character's buying power, or if the player wants to have tags to represent the advantage the purchase provides, he should **Change the Game** to see if his character can acquire it.

## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S EXTRA THEMES

To obtain one of Chairman Chow's Iron Fans is a great feat indeed; one must either earn it, working for the Chairman by corrupting others, or steal it from one of Chow's most-valued and meanest employees. The fan confers sorcerous abilities of amplifying a victim's desires.

### IRON FAN OF DESIRE

*Relic*

#### MYSTERY

*How hot can the strongest desire burn?*

#### POWER TAGS

*fan the flames of desire, supernaturally fan real fire, make a craving irresistible, slash with the fan's edge, easily concealable, sense a person's desires, control the desires of Preta, fan martial art moves, cause mass craze, block incoming attacks with fan*

#### WEAKNESS TAGS

*can't fan a fire that isn't there, clunky open-close action, benign spiritual forces, people avoid me*

#### THEME IMPROVEMENT

**More Fuel to the Fire:** When you use tags from this theme to **Convince**, the status you inflict equals to Power+2. (This does not stack with the 12+ outcome.)

## CHAIRMAN CHOW'S DANGERS

### PRETA ★★

#### HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / NEGOTIATE 4

- **Starved Ambition:** When a Preta enters the scene, give her *gung-ho-2* and *weakened-1*.
- **Aggressive Negotiator:** When you **Convince** a Preta and threaten her with a status, or when the Preta takes a convincing status otherwise, reduce its tier by 1.
- **Bleed You Dry:** When you accept the Preta's offer, she gets more out of the deal than you thought. The MC makes a hard move to represent the cost, e.g., you get a call from the bank, take *broke-3*, or burn 3 tags related to possessions.
- Devalue a counter proposition (burn one tag describing negotiations skills or resistance to negotiation)
- Rope someone into a deal (*really-want-it-2*)
- Enter a negotiation with eyes burning with hunger

### BRANDED STORE ★★

#### EXIT 3 / GET A GOOD PRICE 4

The Branded Store's *compelled-to-enter* and *gotta-have-this* statuses are compelling mind-control effects. They apply as a negative status to any action that is different than what the character feels compelled to do. If the character is attempting a simple narrative action without making a move under the influence of such an effect, like attempting to walk away, she must **Take the Risk** to succeed.

- **So Pretty!:** When you pass by a Branded Store, you feel *compelled-to-enter-3*. When you enter, remove this status.
- **Gotta Have This:** As a soft move, the Branded Store gives someone in it *gotta-have-this-2*.
- **Bleed You Dry:** When you buy something in a Branded Store, it costs more than you thought. The MC makes a hard move to represent the cost, e.g., you get a call from the bank, take *broke-3*, or burn 3 tags related to possessions.
- **Narrow Escape:** When you escape the Branded Store with a *gotta-have-this* status, reduce it's tier by 2.
- Confuse customers who try to leave before buying anything (*lost-2*)
- Hypnotize customers with beautiful products that seem to answer their needs (*gotta-have-this-2*)
- Showcase its many enticing products

### POCHTECA ★★★(+★)

Pochteca are always dressed well and ooze ambition; some are more charismatic and act in the forefront while others whisper in the ears of their victims, but they are all manipulative and sly.

The crew may encounter a Pochteca as a Chow Industries representative in a position of interest: negotiating a dark deal or merger, proposing to buy and demolish the crew's favorite neighborhood, lobbying for legislation, or fostering a relationship with powerful third-party Rifts, turning them against the crew.

A Pochteca in possession of an Iron Fan is a dangerous opponent in the conference room. Increase her hard moves to burning 3 tags or giving *tempted-4* and give her one or more Preta associates who serve as "bodyguards" (see Bodyguards move), taking *negotiate* statuses for her (one must first negotiate with the junior associate before addressing the senior associate directly). The Pochteca can command the Preta to do anything.

#### HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / NEGOTIATE 6 / EXHAUST FINANCIALLY 6

- **Tutelar Merchant Protection:** When a Pochteca takes a status of financial or physical harm, reduce its tier by 2.
- **Aggressive Negotiator:** When you **Convince** a Pochteca and threaten her with a status, or when the Pochteca takes a convincing status otherwise, reduce its tier by 1.
- **Emissary, or Spy?:** When you try to **Investigate** a Pochteca, she first takes *secretive-2*.
- **Bodyguards:** When a Pochteca takes a status from which her bodyguards can protect her, the bodyguards take the status instead (use Pochteca Stick Effigy; for an Iron Fan Pochteca, also use Preta).
- **Bleed You Dry:** When you accept the Pochteca's offer, she gets more out of the deal than you thought. The MC makes a hard move to represent the cost, e.g., you get a call from the bank, take *broke-3*, or burn 3 tags related to possessions.
- Gain the upper hand in negotiations (burn up to two tags describing negotiations skills or resistance to negotiation) or make a tempting offer (*tempted-3*)
- Receive information from her network, revealing a secret the other party doesn't want her to know (**Complicate Things, Bigtime**)
- Magically create an exit path where there wasn't one before and escape with inhuman velocity (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- Pricking her ear for blood, perform a ritual that turns her cane, umbrella, parasole or other stick-like accessory into an animated stick golem (Create Danger: **Stick Effigy**)
- Travel rapidly across town, showing up unexpectedly
- Smile wryly while she's planning her next move

## STICK EFFIGY ★★★

### HURT OR SUBDUE 6 / BURN 3

- **Swift Strike:** When you attack the Stick Effigy, you first take *winded-3* or *broken-arm-3*.
- Strike someone with its stick limbs (*winded-3* or *broken-arm-3*)
- Lumber towards the nearest threat, limbs flailing and clacking

## FLAMING HUNGRY GHOSTS ★★★

### HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / NOURISH 3

- **Collective:** This collective has a few members and a size factor of 1.
- **Starved Ferociousness:** When a Flaming Hungry Ghost takes a status of subdual or restraint, reduce its tier by 1.
- **Souls on Fire:** When you attack a Flaming Hungry Ghost in hand-to-hand combat, you first take *charred-2*.
- Beat up someone with chains, crowbars, or martial arts weapons (*knocked-down-3*)
- In a firefight, take cover (give themselves *cover-1*) and throw fireballs at the enemy (*burnt-2*)
- Devour the flesh of their victims (*terrible-bites-3*, with any *knocked-down* or restraint status possibly affecting **Face Danger**; this does not nourish them in any way)
- Close in on their victim, skin burning

## FURY HONG ★★★★★

Fury Hong is a pyromaniac, sociopath gangster and biker who enjoys puppeteering his victims by controlling and amplifying their deepest desires. He is an insolent and flippant young man, serving his father only because the latter would kill him otherwise.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 5 / QUENCH -

- **Perfected Martial Master:** When you attack Fury Hong with a physical, energy, or psychic attack, he first strikes you with a hard move.
- **Body Fortification:** When Fury Hong takes a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 2.
- **True Samadhi Fire:** Fury Hong's fire (whether of heat or of desire) ignores any effects that would quench it and can burn incorporeal beings. Fury Hong's allies who are engulfed by the fire are unharmed.
- **Deepest Desires:** As a soft move, the MC chooses a player character's Identity or tag representing a desire which Fury Hong then knows or senses.
- Flap his Iron Fan, fanning someone's desires into a *burning-desire-5*
- Perform an unbelievable martial arts maneuver, landing a *fatal-blow-5*
- Spew jets of true samadhi fire everywhere (*extensive-burns-4*)
- Regain control over his gang (remove up to three tiers of appropriate negative statuses) or fan their ambition (give them *gung-ho-2*)
- Laugh at his enemies' puny attempts to resist him
- Whip out the Iron Fan with a malicious grin



東  
造采島  
世紀  
亞洲  
皇雀會  
新輝煌  
愛莎  
銀泉

東  
造采島

東



## **DA KING**

### *Shango, the Orisha of Power and Dominion*

“There’s cops and there’s cops, you know what I mean? If you think we’re all donut-munching lard-balls too distracted to notice what’s under our nose, think again. There are some on the streets who can see through your mask of shadows, see what you really are. If you make a wrong turn and it’s up to these ‘special program’ officers to bring you to justice, don’t expect a quick release for lack of evidence. And don’t expect standard issue pistols either. No... fire and lightning, man. Be ready to be judged by fire and lightning.”

– Detective Enkidu

District Attorney Barbara King (Shango, the Orisha of Power and Dominion) is the most aggressive crime-fighter the City has known, both within the legal system and behind the veil of the Mist, in the Rift underworld. As the personification of domination, she aspires to bring justice and order to the streets of the City, and she has no qualms about using force to do so.

A prominent and outspoken public figure, DA King belongs to the class of Avatars who hide in plain sight. In the public eye, she is a hard-working, well-respected, and much-feared District Attorney, who is known for having reduced crime rates through maximum punishment and deterrence. In her public role, she has fought for increased sentencing for murderers and sex offenders, and stood behind a long line of court precedents that have raised the bar and led to new legislations. Most law-abiding people regard DA King with respect, admiring her for creating an umbrella of security around the City's weaker populations, but anyone who knows anyone on the gray side of the law has heard of the unbridled force used by the King-backed police. As a result, her name is also associated with police brutality and disproportionate punishment.

This harsher side of the District Attorney hints at her real intentions, and at her operation beyond the Mist. Shango doesn't really care about the law as written; he is the law. He wants order and obedience, he wants his rule unchallenged, and he wants his land (the City) peaceful and prosperous – but to him, this can only be achieved under his kingship and by using force.

### OVERVIEW OF DA KING

- **Agenda:** eliminate crime and civil disorder in the City
- **MO:** empowerment of law-enforcement and control over the legal system
- **Goal:** unchallenged dominion
- **Motifs:** lightning and fire, the color red, double-bladed axe, batá drum
- **Frontliners:** Stormbringers
- **Stronghold:** The District Attorney building

## DA KING'S MODUS OPERANDI

DA King is a political powerhouse; she has immense influence over the City's policing force and legal system, with which she can control almost anyone in the local government. From this position of power, she runs her far-reaching campaign against the criminal factions in the City.

The unlawful operations of Avatars and other powerful Rifts, such as Anatoli Vidales (Hades, see the *MC Toolkit*, page 174) or Tío Tez (Tezcatlipoca, see *La Colonia de Sombras*, page 6) constantly feature at the top of her list of threats to handle. However, DA King considers the Rift criminal underworld itself a danger, detesting its unregulated nature. She knows all too well the over-worked Gatekeepers prioritize risks to the Mist over risk to civil order, allowing small-time Rifts to break the law undisturbed. Additionally, seeking to contain civil unrest sometimes puts her in direct conflict with Avatars who promote uprising rallies, such as Ganesha, or social hysteria, like Monte Wolfe.

Her plate of law-enforcement is very full, but Barbara King is a walking generator of energy and power, both figuratively and literally, thanks to her Mythos' dynamism and power over lightning. In fact, no other Avatar can match her power when it comes to sheer voltage output, and even supreme warrior Avatars like Barton (*MC Toolkit*, page 184) are wary of confronting her directly.

The Orisha of Dominion fights crime first and foremost by empowering her people on the street to do their jobs. At its most mundane, this means providing the police with all the legal support and political backing they require (and sometimes more than they deserve). At the precinct level, the Avatar of Shango has constructed a second, invisible infrastructure for cops fighting the legendary. She appoints her own hidden chiefs, usually mid-ranking police officers, to recruit cops into her secret ring of Stormbringers, whether on the down-low, as private cliques of dirty or concerned cops, or in specialized "police excellence programs", created especially by her office to mask this activity. These 'preferred' cops are granted access not only to sight-beyond-the-Mist, as individuals who are touched by Shango, but also to overwhelming powers that can set them on par with unlawful Rifts attempting to escape justice.

DA King also understands that not everything can be done within the confines of the law. Her office coordinates multiple "neighborhood watch" initiatives all over the City, enlisting civilians into guarding their neighborhoods and helping the police (as well as

becoming Stormbringers). The public would be outraged to find, if it ever pierced the Mist, that among DA King's Stormbringers there are also a variety of vigilantes and street gangs. The DA uses these outlaws to reach where the police cannot and strike harder than the police is allowed to, even given her backing. Her vigilantes hunt down small-time Rift criminals while the gangs she employs help prevent aspiring Rift gangs from expanding their turf. In King's eyes, as long as this activity is regulated by her, it's lawful – because she is the law.

Side-by-side with her activity on the City streets, King has developed a Rift legal branch in her own office, one that serves as a contingency against slippery Mist-veiled crooks. A team of Mythos-powered Assistant DA (prosecutors), investigators, and paralegals, as well as judges (who do not answer to her formally but in reality serve her agenda) makes sure Rifts will not avoid justice because of Mist-induced lack of evidence. Whether artfully manipulating the law, circumventing regulations on the sly, or outright falsifying evidence, DA King's agents in the legal system often take their criminal victims by surprise, putting them away for years even when the case made by the prosecution seems flaky and unlikely to stick. This makes for a very dangerous brand of law enforcement; consequently, there are more than a few incarcerated Rifts who have had a long time to think about who is behind all this and plan their revenge.

## DA KING'S OPERATION

Similarly to the mundane judicial system, the law-enforcement activities of Shango's Avatar are divided into two main authorities.

The largest authority by far is the executive authority, responsible for law-enforcement on the streets of the City. This branch is effectively a network of Stormbringers – cops, neighborhood watch, vigilantes, gangs – who work together to take down Mythos-powered threats to civil order. A sub-branch of this authority is involved with pre-emptive detection of criminals, allowing the executive authority to strike with maximum efficiency.

Once a criminal has been charged with a crime, DA King's judiciary authority takes over and makes sure that they are appropriately punished to the extent of the law and beyond. If someone proves to be unredeemable, this branch also employs the toughest bounty hunters in the City, who can bring an outlaw to justice, dead or alive.

## KEY CHARACTERS

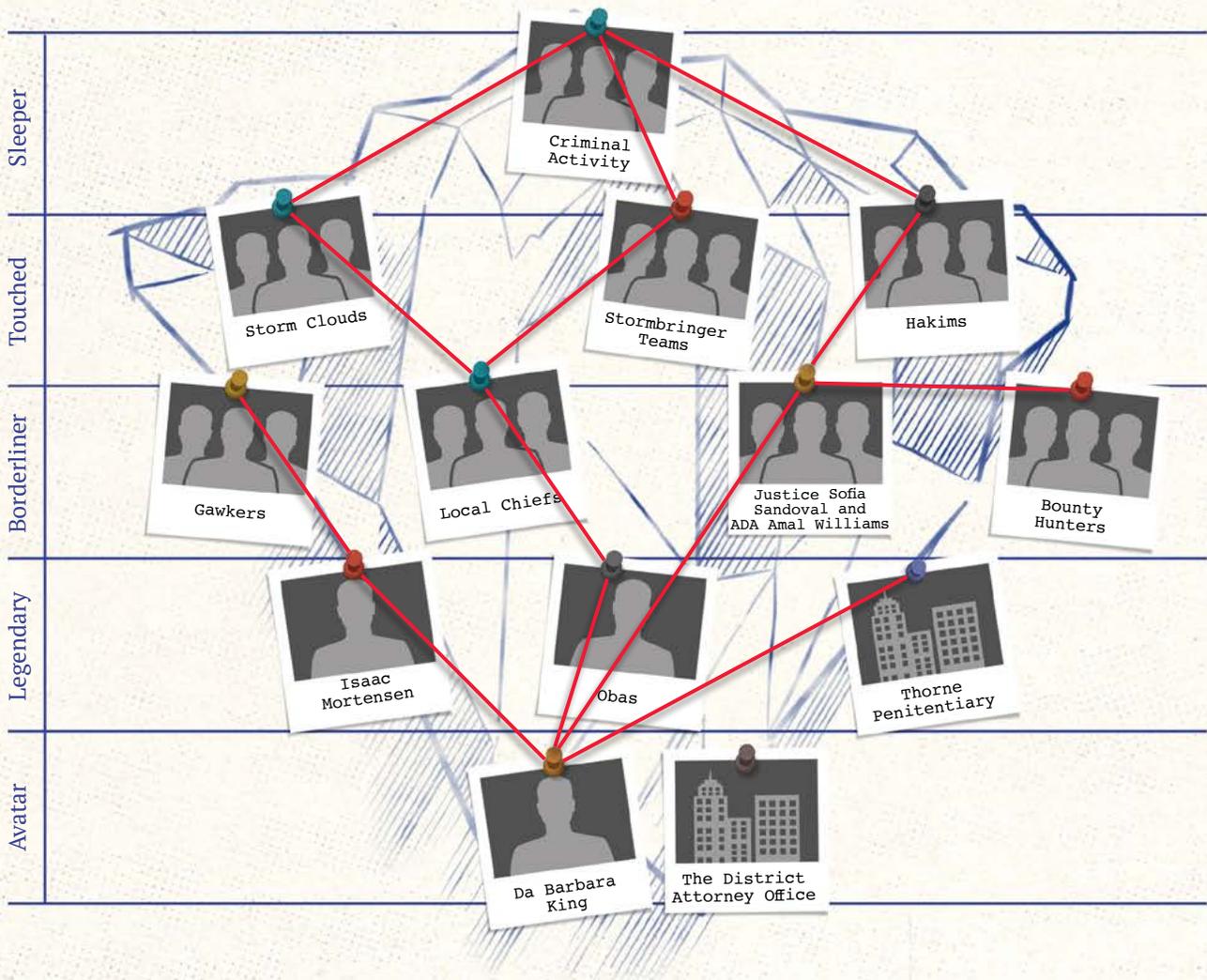
DA King's executive authority recruits people who have proven their dedication to maintaining the order in the City, and while most of these are cops, many come from other walks of life. Because of this, **STORMBRINGER** teams come in a variety of flavors. They can be splinter cells within hate-fueled anti-government militias, inner circles of police officers, a group of veterans who meet in a local sports bar, violent street gangs, underworld Rift vigilantes, or suburban neighborhood watch associations.

Different Stormbringer teams have completely conflicting ideas about how to maintain order, but King doesn't care; she uses each team as "the right tool for the job" when it's most effective and necessary; she knows how to motivate them, pressing on what they care about most, and so, the tools obey. Stormbringer teams who cross paths while venturing into each other's turf usually recognize one another and fall back. The alternative is having their powers revoked by the local chief (see below), turning them into Sleepers again.

Regardless of affiliation, every newly-recruited Stormbringer coming under the influence of Shango quickly develops peak and sometimes superhuman strength, agility, and stamina. Stormbringers are notoriously tough to take out and when enraged or inspired, they can channel their fury into fire-wreathed bolts of lightning that can even punch through walls. With practice, they can imbue their weapons with this energy, packing increased punch and lethality with their batons, pistols, jackknives, or shotguns. Gang stormbringers tend to decorate themselves with Yoruba fabric patterns or bright red garments; police officers need to be more discreet, but may carry a badge with a double-axe engraving that they got in one of DA King's training programs.

Each Stormbringer team reports to a **LOCAL CHIEF**, usually a Rift with an appropriate Mythos that has signed up for the job, although promising Touched Stormbringers are sometimes promoted from the ranks. A local chief can employ one or multiple Stormbringer teams in order to keep the peace in her neck of the City. Like their subordinates, chiefs come in different shapes and forms, from actual police chiefs who turn a blind eye and even cover for the secret cop cliques in their precinct to brawny bare-chested thugs in control of a neighborhood's streets.

When a local chief encounters a threat out of her league, she can curse him, marking him for the **STORM CLOUDS**. These dreaded clouds look like regular storm clouds: slow-moving burgeoning masses of dark vapor that occasionally flash with lightning, within which the rolling sound of thunder can sometimes sound like the



beat of tribal batá drums. The Conjurations, created by DA King herself, follow those cursed by chiefs and unleash upon them an unstoppable barrage of thunderbolts. Storm Clouds pack enormous firepower, easily able to reduce a building to rubble if necessary, and they are difficult to harm or disperse. They are meant to track down and take out a tough-to-handle targets with minimum force, but in numerous cases they have caused civilian injuries and even deaths.

Local chiefs answer to an **OBA** (Yoruba for “king”) who monitors and manages law-enforcement in an entire district and reports directly to DA King (called *Alaafin*, the overlord or “owner of the palace”). One prominent Oba is **HECTOR KRAMP** (Bailiff Gessler, the Austrain tyrant who forced Wilhelm Tell to shoot an apple on his son’s head), Head of the Old Quarter Constabulary. A smug and exacting elderly man, Kramp employs constable chiefs and Stormbringers to keep safe the district’s treasures: the property of old-mon-

ey families. From hunting down thieves and burglars, through collecting due tax from street performers and buskers, to nipping at the bud any public gathering of ne’er-do-wells (read: poor), Head Constable Kramp is more concerned with the well-being of tax-evading citizens than street scum. Many heist teams targeting the Old Quarter find this pompous white-mustached elder amusing; they find out all too late that they have played into one of his cunning traps, and spend the next few years in the correctional dungeon under his fortified manor house. If they ever come out, crime is the last thing on their minds.

Supporting the work of law-enforcement teams is **ISAAC MORTENSEN**, Rift of Issitoq, the all-seeing Inuit floating eye, obsessed with finding and punishing those who break society’s rules. Known for ripping out his own eyes (according to rumor, because they were preventing him from seeing the truth), the slender and brooding blind professor of ethics sees and hears all,

providing DA King with unmatched surveillance capabilities. His gouged out eyes have turned into not two but hundreds of **GAWKERS**, hovering basketball-sized eyeballs that patrol the City and whose gaze pierces not only walls and flesh but also the soul. Nothing but the most powerful magic or advanced Gatekeeper Shrouding could obscure their vision, and they are constantly on the move. Mortensen sits and stares, all day long. He craves nothing but finding people who cross the lines. Once he identifies a perpetrator, he informs the local Stormbringers, chief, or Oba, depending on the severity of the crime and the abilities of any Rifts involved. For especially elusive criminals, he hides one of his Gawkers in a Storm Cloud, creating an incredibly powerful and accurate policing drone.

DA King's arm in the judiciary system is managed by **JUSTICE SOFIA SANDOVAL** along with King's right-hand woman and top prosecutor, **ASSISTANT DA AMAL WILLIAMS** (respectively Anbay and Hawkam, pre-Islamic Arab dual gods of justice and law). Both women have the ability to bend to their will the judgment of the court, the jury (if present), and even public opinion of a trial, as far-fetched as their case may be. Holding fast to the highest standards of justice, Justice Sandoval only uses her powers and resources to nail criminals that are manipulating the legal system, especially Rifts abusing the lack of concrete evidence caused by the Mist. This approach has made her push back against ADA Williams and DA King in a number of cases, forcing them to drop charges; this leaves them with no other choice but to turn to a different kind of justice, and punish the wrongdoer without trial.

To do their jobs, Justice Sandoval and ADA Williams also train dozens of investigators, lawyers, prosecutors, judges, and bureaucrats to serve the greater justice as dictated by Shango. Sandoval and Williams refer to them as **HAKIMS** (Arabic for "wise one"), while DA King calls them **ILARI**, Yoruba for "half-heads", because they are initiated into their Mythos by shaving half their heads and applying a magical ointment. Hakims are shrewd thinkers, astute observers, and masters of the written word, the law, and its possible interpretations; and that's before their abilities are enhanced by Anbay and Hawkam. It is their job to exhaust the legal possibilities against perpetrators and sometimes revise the law and the facts so that justice is served. Some Hakims (such as investigators) know about the Stormbringers and even work with them, while others (most notably judges) are kept in the dark for their own protection.

When a Rift criminal has evaded Shango's grip for too long, DA King brings in the best Rift bounty hunters to get the job done. Some of them, like Colm "Spi-

der" Jameson (The MC Toolkit, pages 43, 163), think they work for the legal system and are unaware of the District Attorney's mythical agenda, while others, like Marcus Davis (Baku, from the All-Seeing Eye Investigations Starter Set), are just in it to hunt monsters. The DA's chief headhunter is **JONAS HOPKINS** (England's "Witchfinder General", who hunted more witches in 14 months than all the witch hunters in England in the 160 years before him combined). Dressed in a capotain ("pilgrim's hat") and a modern-twist on puritan garb, he is feared across the City anywhere Rifts like to mind their own business and be left alone, such as in the Industrial Zone. Besides being an extremely dangerous Legendary-scale inquisitor and rifleman, Hopkins has the strange ability to "flush" a Rift's Mythos powers out of the Mist, allowing Sleepers to see and remember them, which usually leads to a public witch hunt. Due to the nature of his Mythos, Hopkins' doggedness is doubled when his mark is falsely accused.

### KEY LOCATIONS

Most Stormbringer teams need a place to congregate, plan their next operation, reload and rest, and sometimes hunker down. The nature of these headquarters varies from team to team, ranging from a police gym to a divey bar. **SANTERÍA BOXING CLUB**, for example, is a charming if dilapidated-in-places Cuban-owned club owing its name to a little store selling saints-related trinkets next door. It is secretly home to the vigilante ring **LOS SANTOS ROJOS**, responsible for a lot of broken bones in their district but also for the relative safety on its streets. Anyone wandering into the club looking to box would get a run for their money from a Shango-powered ring member, but if they can stand up after that, owner and local chief **TEODORO CRUZ** will try to recruit them.

Another example of a Stormbringer nest is the Industrial Zone **CONVERTED SILO** modified into an overstuffed bunker by the **CRIMSON PATH MILITIA**, a band of masked paramilitaries armed to their teeth with military-grade gear and weapons. A charismatic local chief was able to redirect their hatred towards immigrants and minorities into a Rift-bashing campaign, using the militia to dog outlawed Rifts in less populated areas. For now, they are fortified in their bunker, covering it with their hate symbols and graffiti and using their Shango-given powers to lay anti-Rift anti-personnel claymore mines and other boobytraps that could spell death for a precarious Rift interloper. But the leaders of the Crimson Path are not satisfied with their chief's orders to keep a low profile for the time being and secretly plan an attack on a Rift hotspot, such as The Bowl night club (see MC Toolkit, page 41).

DA King's seat of power, as well as where most of her legal team works, is the **DISTRICT ATTORNEY BUILDING** downtown, just across the street from the City's primary courthouse. A dozen Gawkers continually scan the building and its immediate surrounding up to three blocks away for any criminal intent. The security force is composed of the best Stormbringers in the City, and the Storm Clouds are never too far away. The building's architecture aligns with most stone-and-marble downtown government buildings, although the presiding DA gave its decor a welcomed touch of African culture in the form of carvings and tapestries in the alcoves and on the walls. Much of the building is open to the public, but access to the middle levels is restricted. As one moves closer to the heart of the building, the marble is gradually replaced with walls made of a mixture of mud, shea butter, and palm oil. Strangely, bright sunlight filters through the reed thatching. Venturing further would bring one to **THE AFIN**, the palace, a multi-story thatched complex in the midst of an Enclave of beautiful African tropical forest. This is where Barbara sometimes retires to refo-

cus and regain her strength, but few are ever given the honor of setting their gaze upon this marvel.

**THORNE PENITENTIARY** (Tartarus) is another Enclave, jointly operated by DA King and the Gatekeepers. Used as a last resort when dealing with unstoppable Rifts, the site is 99% security measures and 1% prison. The "prison" is a heavily-fortified thin place opening up into the Enclave of Tartarus, a bottomless abyss of suffering and torment used to lock up the Titans of Greek mythology. "As far beneath Hades as heaven is above earth" (according to the *Iliad*), Tartarus is even outside the power of King's main contender, Anatoli Vidales (Hades), who presides over the souls of men. Those cast inside are never seen again, no matter how powerful they are (the Gatekeepers would love to throw all the Avatars inside, but getting them in is the tricky part). Even if a miserable Rift managed to climb out of this god-hell, they would then need to punch through the combined power of the Gatekeepers and DA King to return to the City. No rescue mission has ever been attempted in the history of this facility.

## DA KING'S HISTORY

Barbara King grew up in a segregated community of immigrants of West African descent. As a child, she didn't understand the powerplay of ethnic politics in the City; she just experienced it as an invisible force field that kept limiting her freedom, turning her back from the world at large to her neighborhood of *Independence*. Little did she know that the "force field" was real, the work of a Gatekeeper division named Ward Nine that strived to oppress her people and her neighborhood.

Barbara realized that in order to change anything in *Independence*, she first had to learn about the forces that be through higher education. She studied hard throughout her school years but when the time had come to send her application, her mother, affected by the hope-draining tactics of Ward Nine, tried to dissuade her as they were both standing by the mailbox, application letter in hand. Barbara spotted the postman watching in wait across the street and suddenly realized — her letter would never make it outside *Independence*. Determined to break free, she started marching to the Old Quarter university complex, but when she arrived at the edge of the neighborhood, two policemen in gray suits moved to stop her. Her anger welled up and she sent them both flying in separate directions, engulfed in flames. She had awakened as Shango and walked out into the world as a free woman.

Shango made Barbara King unstoppable and her career nothing short of meteoric. By the time she became the District Attorney, she had cleaned up the Department of Justice of corruption and figured out the political importance of the Gatekeepers and older, corrupt Avatars like Chairman Chow. She discovered the truth about Ward Nine, but one neighborhood was no longer enough for her — she wanted to set things straight in the entire City and she knew no better way to do it then by exercising her power.

Avatarhood slowly crept up on DA King but when it came, it was deafening. Whenever she chose to use her power to fix things in the City and secure the public order, Shango's voice in her head grew stronger. Sooner than she knew, she was waging a war on multiple fronts with the Gatekeepers and with Avatars, forces much older and more powerful than her. In the end, she had to choose: sign up with the Truth, or give up and perish. When she shook the hand of the Gatekeeper representative to the Truth, Richard Hughes, she was the first non-Avatar Rift admitted to the council, but she didn't stay one for long. By allying with the Gatekeepers and thus betraying *Independence* in sight of greater power — the greatest — the Avatar of Shango was born.

## DA KING'S STORY SEEDS

- The crew can cross paths with a rogue or violent team of Stormbringers. This could be a circle of overzealous cops who brutalize suspects and pass out judgment on the streets, or a violent gang such as Los Santos Rojos. If the crew gets in their way and flaming lightning bolts start flying around, it may raise the crew's suspicion that they are facing a Rift-backed covert organization.
- If the entire crew or some of its members are vigilantes, a local chief can attempt to recruit them to help with law enforcement, and perhaps even mentor them and groom them as a vigilante team. When things start getting morally gray in this mentor's application of force, the crew may start wondering who the chief works for. Alternatively, the chief may try to recruit a supporting character to one of his Stormbringer teams.
- A lead character who got into legal trouble due to unchecked use of her Mythos powers could be promised a quick and easy trial by her lawyer, only to be convicted after a Hakim prosecutor or judge enter the picture. The PC and the crew may now be followed by Hakim investigators trying to gather evidence in order to incriminate them.
- The crew may need information or assistance from a fugitive hunted down by Shango's organization. Between Gawkers, Storm Clouds, and bounty hunters like Jonas Hopkins, will they be able to get to the fugitive and help them live long enough to get what they need?

## DA KING'S CUSTOM MOVES

Chiefs, Obas, and Gawkers can bestow a *marked-4* curse status on anyone or anything that they can see. This is usually made as a hard move (soft move for Obas), and PCs can **Face Danger** against it. As long as a character or an object has a *marked* status, DA King's forces know exactly where they are (Gawkers and Storm Clouds know mystically; everyone else either follows a Gawker or gets their information through the chain of command or directly from Issac Mortensen). The status applies to any actions to hide from them.

**Send out the Gawkers:** When the Gawkers are looking for you all over the City, you may **Sneak Around** to avoid them, but not to hide from them (unless you possess powerful obscuring magic). On a 7-9, the MC may choose one of these options (or choose from **Sneak Around** as usual):

- One Gawker finds you, instantly alerting the others. You must destroy it quickly to drop off their radar again.
- You're caught between search zones of multiple Gawkers. You're safe, but you can't go anywhere for awhile.
- You get word that Gawkers got to someone who knows where you're hiding. It's only a matter of time before they're here, so better keep moving.

## DA KING'S EXTRA THEMES

Vigilante crews and neighborhood watch teams that join DA King's Stormbringer network and later prove themselves by contributing significantly to public order, are rewarded with greater support from their local chief and better access to her resources. Favored teams whose morale and power DA King wants to build may get the keys to a fully-furnished hideout in a basement, a converted fire-department station, or an abandoned Industrial Zone building.

### STORMBRINGER BASE

*Base of Operations*

#### MYSTERY

*Who is breaking the law on our turf?*

#### POWER TAGS

*a safe place to hunker down, lightning-and-fire traps, interrogation room, training room, lightning-and-fire weaponry, visits from the local chief, obliterating force, looks innocuous from the outside, call the Storm Clouds, escape tunnel*

#### WEAKNESS TAGS

*warlike atmosphere, surrounded by enemies, watched by the chief, weapon misfire*

#### THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **Rambo Moment:** Once per session, when you arm yourself with the base's weapons, you may make *lightning-and-fire weaponry* an ongoing tag for the duration of the scene.

# DA KING'S DANGERS

## **STORMBRINGER MYTHOS POWER SET + ★**

Stormbringers come in many shapes and forms. To create a Stormbringer, combine this Mythos Power Set with a mundane Danger from the MC Toolkit (starting on page 141). For Stormbringer cops use the Beat Cops Danger (page 148), for Los Santos Rojos use the Street Gang Danger (page 148), and for the Crimson Path militia members use the SWAT Team Danger (page 150).

The fire-wreathed lightning produced by Stormbringers is powerful enough to go through walls, ballistic armor, riot shields, etc. If you want to limit their use of lightning, give them a *deplete:3* spectrum and a *dis-charge-1* status whenever they use lightning powered attacks.

- **Peak Physical Condition:** When a Stormbringer engages in a physical fight or struggle, give her *peak physical condition*. When she takes a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 1 (this stacks with any other status filter she may possess).
- **Obliterating Force:** Tags describing mundane or soft cover or armor cannot be invoked to **Face Danger** against attacks charged with Stormbringer's lightning.
- Smite with a fire-wreathed thunderbolt (*blast-wound-3*) or charge weapons with such energy.

## **HAKIM MYTHOS POWER SET + ★**

Similarly to their crime-fighting Stormbringer brothers and sisters, Hakims can come from a wide range of mundane professions. To create a Hakim, combine this Mythos Power Set with a mundane Danger from the MC Toolkit (starting on page 141) such as the Corporate Lawyer (page 142) for a prosecutor, or the Detective / Investigator (page 148) for a PI.

- **Wise Beyond Fathom:** Once per scene, give the Hakim *well-of-wisdom* (renewable as a soft move).
- **Law Manipulation:** Any legal status imposed by the Hakim is hard to remove and applies to any attempt to remove it, unless the conditions are ideal (see Player's Guide, page 225).
- Produce *incriminating evidence*, *eye witness*, or *expert opinion*

## **STORM CLOUD ★★★★★**

### **GATHER X / HURT OR SUBDUE - / DISPERSE OR BANISH 6**

- **Gathering Storm Clouds:** Depending on how remote the target is, set the *gather* spectrum maximum between 3 (nearby) and 6 (far-away). After every player move, give the cloud *gathering-1*. When the spectrum maxes out, the Storm Cloud arrives.
- **Slow-moving:** When a Storm Cloud enters the scene, give it *slow-moving*.
- **Obliterating Force:** Tags describing mundane or soft cover or armor cannot be invoked to **Face Danger** against the Storm Cloud's lightning attacks.
- **Lightning Barrage:** When the Storm Cloud targets an area, you cannot **Face Danger** by dodging. When it targets a collective, ignore three levels of size factor.
- Rain down destructive lightning bolts on an area (*severe-lightning-injury-4* or *structural-damage-4*) or focus its power on a single point (*gravely-injured-5* or *all-but-levelled-5*)
- Gather menacingly overhead
- Light up internally, charging up for a blast

## **GAWKER** ★

Gawkers are floating glowing eyeballs the size of a basketball with a bleeding tail of torn optic nerves and eye muscles trailing behind them. They possess great maneuverability and can fly fast, easily able to cross districts in a matter of minutes. A Gawker can see through anything: walls, earth, flesh, water, heart, and mind. It can mystically hear, smell, and sense textures, space, and movement. Its arc of sight is slightly less than 180 degrees, but it reorients quickly and often, easily covering a sphere-shaped area around it, a few blocks wide, although it does perceive closer objects better. Focusing its gaze, a Gawker can even see through the Mist into a person's essence or Mythos.

### **HURT OR SUBDUE 1**

- **Collective:** This Danger can also show up as a collective with a size factor of 1 to 4.
  - **All-Seeing Eye:** When a Gawker enters the scene, give it *heightened-awareness-4* and *fast flyer*, both renewable as a soft move.
  - **Soul Searching:** A Gawker can temporarily focus its gaze on an individual to read its mind and soul. As a hard move, the MC can trade tiers of *heightened-awareness* to ask you questions, one per tier. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Gawker knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- 
- Take evasive maneuvers (*evasive-2*), but not while it is soul searching
  - Study someone to the point it can predict their actions (*analyzed-2*)
  - Curse a target to be hunted down by the Storm Clouds (*marked-4*)
- 
- Search an area, erratically turning its gaze here and there
  - Dilate its pupil in surprise, then narrow it with malice, ready to fly to the target

## **JONAS HOPKINS** ★★★★★

Witch-hunting is both business and pleasure for the Witchfinder General. He usually enters the scene in his raincoat, capotain, and flintlock in hand, putting on quite a performance. He opens the spectacle by indirectly threatening something dear to the "witch" (Rift). When the Rift acts, Hopkins usually surprises them with his resistance to Mythos powers, and takes them out. He'd make a great Gatekeeper if not for his penchant for public hysteria; by stripping Rifts from their Mist cover he allows Sleeper mobs to see them for what they really are: witches.

### **HURT OR SUBDUE 5 / TALK SENSE -**

- **Protection from "Witchcraft":** Tags from Mythos themes cannot be invoked in actions against Jonas Hopkins (although he can be harmed by collateral damage). Dangers cannot use mythical abilities against him.
  - **Interrupt "Witchcraft":** When you **Stop. Holding. Back.** around Jonas Hopkins and roll 7-9, the MC can trade your result with a miss.
  - **Pricking Test:** If Jonas Hopkins can touch a character (or give her a *pricked-1* status that penetrates her defenses), he can tell whether she's a Rift.
  - **Master Huntsman:** When Jonas Hopkins enters the scene, give him *alert-3*, *dexterous*, and *durable doublet*.
- 
- Smoke a "witch" out of hiding by **Forcing Them To Choose** between confronting him and **Make Something Horrible Happen** (usually to their loved ones, community, or reputation)
  - Flush a "witch" out of the Mist (*Mist-stripped-4*) allowing Sleepers to see her powers
  - Call out the local community to judge the "witch" (**Complicate Things, Bigtime** by introducing a new Danger: the Mob, with the Hard Core option, see MC Toolkit page 142)
  - Enflame the emotions of the mob (*witch-hate-3*)
  - Fire an accurate shot from his flintlock (*crippling-wound-5* or *mortally-injured-5*)
  - Subdue and bind his quarry (*bound-4*) and douse them with "holy water" to burn up to three Mythos-related tags
  - Blend into the mob or dash into an alley and vanish (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- 
- Spread rumors that he is going after a certain "witch"
  - Call out a "witch" publically and invite her to relinquish her deal with "the Devil"
  - Calmly take his aim



## **GANESHA**

*Hindu elephant-headed god, the Remover of Obstacles*

“You are safe now, my friend. They won’t look for you here. You are now in the palm of the Buddha’s hand. Go to the room in the back, wash yourself, and change your clothes. Then I will take a look at this wound. It looks poisoned, but don’t worry, I’m an expert when it comes to treating such ailments. It won’t hurt a bit! There is food already cooking. Tonight you will sleep soundly and dream of no evil.”

–Temple Caretaker



The City's reliance on kindness, compassion, and mutual help is far greater than its residents realize. Without good will and charity, the fragile ecosystem of society, even of Mythoi and Mist, would have long ago crumbled into chaos, death, and destruction. Only conscious effort to sustain life and to help it thrive keeps this metropolis from falling into the abyss of entropy. This effort is manifested in Ganesha, the child-Avatar of the Hindu god of the same name, known as the Remover of Obstacles.

Born into Avatarhood, Ganesha is a mystery. She is wise, not just beyond her years; she may be the wisest being in the City. Her arrival, and especially her immediate self-appointment as a member of the Truth, spells positive change for the most downtrodden population of the City – the Sleepers in general and the underprivileged lower class in particular. Ganesha does not seem to have plans to disperse the Mist, as that wouldn't necessarily be good for the Sleepers; she is concerned first and foremost with the well-being of the City's citizens.

She is here for everyone who needs help, and especially for those who need it most: oppressed minorities, marginalized communities, isolated individuals, and troubled souls. Her goal is to remove the myriad obstacles and hardships the miserable people of the City are faced with each day. She is a grassroots Avatar working with the people on the street, and arguably the only Avatar who truly seeks to see the people of the City flourish.

Seemingly without any earthly attachments to hold back her Mythos (thanks to her miraculous birth-into-Avatarhood), Ganesha is significantly more powerful than any single one of her fellow Truth members. Unfortunately for the people of the City, she is also vastly outnumbered and overworked, as almost all of the other Avatars in the City tend to use the City's Sleeper population to their benefit in one way or another, creating more work for her and putting additional strain on her extensive powers.

A simplistic observation of Ganesha may lead one to think her aim is to create harmony, a state of peace and balance between the various components and forces in the City. But sometimes it's hard to put a finger on what exactly the little girl wants, and whether she has a solid plan or is just following a pipe-dream of the future, fueled by her Avatarhood. Can the City, a place of so many opposites and struggles, ever be brought

## OVERVIEW OF GANESHA

- **Agenda:** Support, empower, and help individuals in need
- **MO:** Public and underground support programs, a network of "angels"
- **Emotion:** Compassion, unity
- **Motifs:** The streets, shrines, mice / rats / shrews, a thousand helping hands
- **Frontliners:** A Thousand Helping Hands
- **Stronghold:** –

to a state of harmony? And even if so, is it possible to achieve such harmony for everyone at once? Can such harmony even be attained while the Mist is still in place? Some would argue that the "good" Avatar is just as selfish as her peers, using the City to manifest the story of her Mythos. Others would say it's a moot point, since her Mythos aspires to see the City residents thrive. Either way, the ultimate intentions of the Remover of Obstacles remain as obscure as she is.

## GANESHA'S MODUS OPERANDI

Ganesha operates in the City by promoting compassion and a sense of love among humankind, and also by providing the people of the City with ways to help one another overcome adversity and hardship.

Ganesha's operation trains and supports activists who work to promote social change, some on the political level but most on the practical level, affecting change in the streets and in the homes. Ganesha's people discriminate against no one and show compassion towards all populations equally, sensing hardship and struggle wherever they are, even among those who would be considered her enemies or who are seemingly privileged but in fact cry for help. Within Ganesha's network there is no room for divisive identities which override another person's importance; only one's humanity matters (and in that spirit, Rifts who feel inhuman are treated and accepted as humans nonetheless). Help is not limited to mankind alone; all life is loved, respected, and supported by Ganesha's followers.

Ganesha's network runs grassroots movements intended to empower the downtrodden, fight inequality, and resist oppression, but they keep their protests strictly non-violent (on their part; what stance DA King's men on the other side take and what Monte Wolfe then spins out of it is another matter). Her people also operate extensive programs and platforms for community support and social work as well as free clinics, free legal advice, free schools, homeless shelters, and

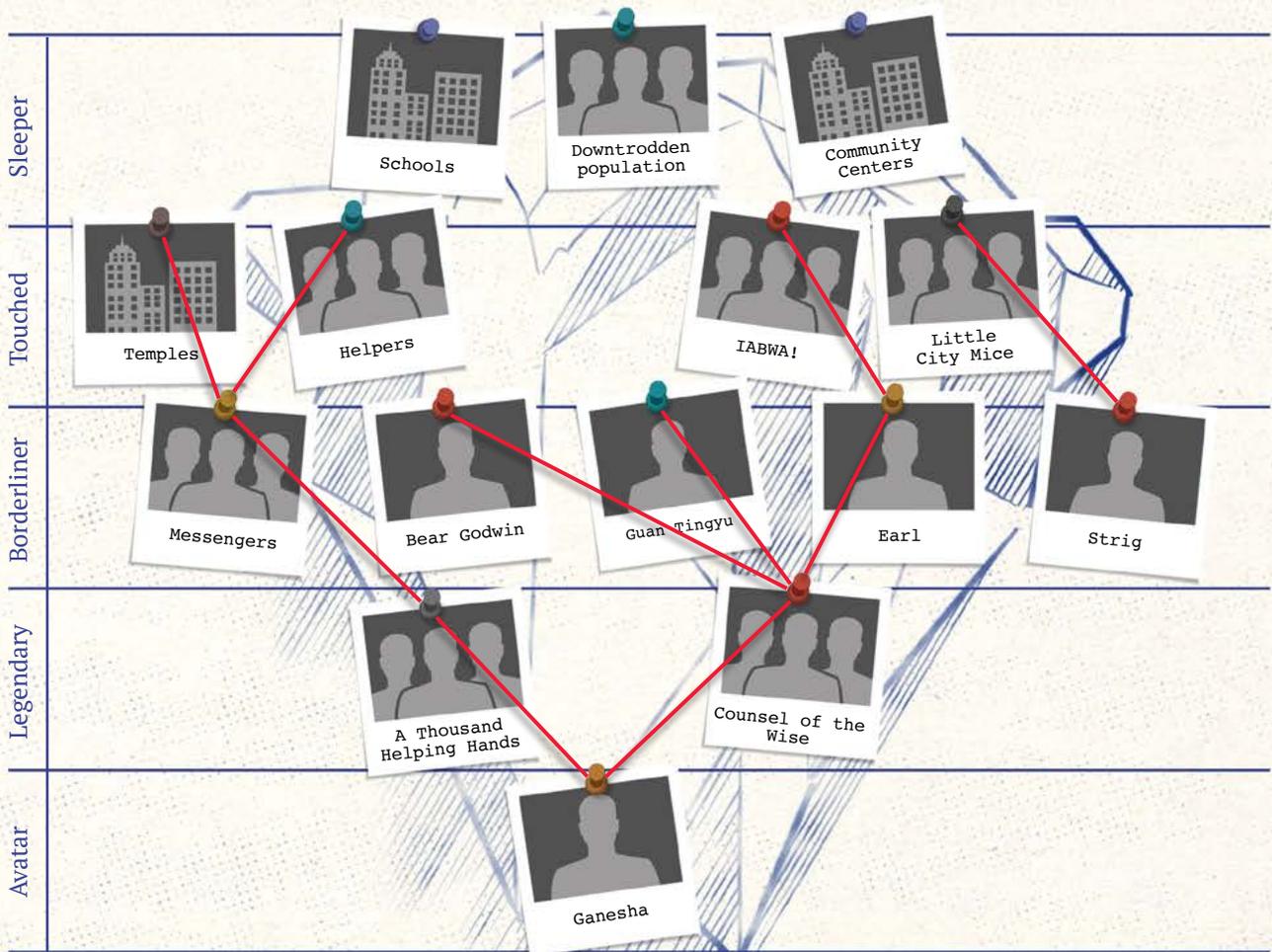
even food and clothes storages for those in need. The City depends on the power of Ganesha to keep the lower class from falling apart in an age of unbridled capitalism and consumerism and a relentless craving for power (promoted by her fellow Truth member and sworn enemy, Chairman Chow).

Ganesha's most powerful tool in helping the City and specific individuals in it is a far-reaching enchantment she has placed on the City, known to her most devout followers as **A Thousand Helping Hands**. In short, A Thousand Helping Hands is a force that helps people help others. It lets those who have the power to help know where they are needed and how to do it. This force communicates with Ganesha's followers through intuition and hunches, or visions and symbols, messages encrypted into reality itself, like an animal spirit guide in a marketplace or words in a signpost or a graffiti that suddenly receive meaning at a specific time and place and for the specific person who sees them.

In some cases, A Thousand Helping Hands reveals itself as a force that can change fate, manipulating

coincidences, synchronicity, serendipity, and sheer luck to get people the help they need. It is so deep-rooted in the reality of the City and so all-encompassing, that some Rift scholars who have studied it believe it relies on the Mist to shape reality or that it is the Mist itself, bowing to the Avatar's will for some reason. Whatever its source of power is, A Thousand Helping Hands acts as a widespread network of good fortune, helping the City to live and love, and breathing new life into it continuously.

Ganesha's followers can sense the force of A Thousand Helping Hands, pray to it, and draw inspiration and strength from it. From wizened wise women who sense it just enough to help a family member in need, to the guardian angels and good Samaritans who serve it with all their hearts (and often spilled blood), Ganesha's followers constitute together a nameless army that works for the embetterment of life in the City. They save one individual at a time, and they have much work ahead of them, but they do so willingly, and with joy in their hearts.



## GANESHA'S OPERATION

It is easiest to think of Ganesha's operation as having two aspects: the community and the individual.

Those in the operation who tend to the community work on large-scale solutions in social work, education, politics, government outreach, and more. Their work benefits millions of people every day and their organizations employ thousands.

Others following Ganesha do so for specific individuals, who may be people in their lives or strangers they've never met before. Often times, people who are rescued or helped by those of the individual branch have a higher purpose to serve, one which may benefit others through the community branch, although Ganesha helps everyone, even those who don't go on to serve a higher calling. This branch of Ganesha's operation relies more heavily on A Thousand Helping Hands to do its work.

In reality, it's hard to separate the two branches and they are very much intertwined. The individual branch supports the community by identifying those meant for great things and by helping the members of the community; while the community branch is essentially concerned with helping individuals, a lot of individuals. Ganesha's followers understand that, and lend a hand to anyone who is working to unburden the miserable souls of the City, on any scale.

### KEY CHARACTERS

The community branch is led by the **COUNSEL OF THE WISE**, a council body of roughly a dozen Legendaries of the wisest Mythoi who are responsible for making the day-to-day decisions of running Ganesha's operation. Each member of the council leads a program, platform, or movement that benefits the City. The council never meets in person, only online (or via radio transmissions if you're playing in True Noir), although specific members who work together do meet. While much weaker than the Truth, the Counsel of the Wise represent a benign reflection of the Avatar council, who safeguards the person on the street. None of the council members know what the Truth is or that Ganesha is a member (the Mist is that thick around the Truth).

**GUAN TINGYU** (Guanyin, Chinese Buddhist bodhi-sattva of compassion) is a genius medical doctor and a medical services mastermind who runs multiple chains of free clinics in the City. She started out as a high-flying doctor for the rich, but soon abandoned her downtown offices to go to the slums and blue-collar neighborhoods, where she felt she was needed more. When Dr. Guan looks at you, time seems to stop, and you feel as if you are truly seen for the first time in your life. Her com-

passion is so unstoppable that some of the City's most vile Rifts (including Avatars) fear she would redeem them, and therefore steer clear of her clinics.

Street operations such as rallies, protests, and nonviolent protective vigils are run by **STRIG** (Athena, Greek goddess of wisdom and warfare), a towering cornfed woman in camos, steel-toed boots, and a tank top that shows her tattoos. Strig's "**LITTLE CITY MICE**" (The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse) are a raggy collection of loiterers, street artists, urban extreme sports ninjas, and gutter urchins who serve as social change instigators, expert infiltrators, and information gatherers. They roam the City spreading the good word and stirring up civil unrest where the government is bearing too hard on its citizens or where it is not doing enough to help them cope with other hardships such as organized crime, poverty, medical crises, and the like. Secretly, Strig misses a good fight and waits for the day Ganesha finally okays a head-on clash with the baddies, but being as wise as she is, she knows it's not the way to heal the City. You wouldn't know it by looking at her, but Strig also runs Ganesha's educational support network helping underprivileged students with their homework, and offering night classes for adults seeking a career change.

Social services in the City are always on the brink of collapse, and they would have been bankrupt if it wasn't for **BEAR GODWIN** (Utnapishtim, a Sumerian wiseman who was tasked with saving all life by building a ship). This furry, round-bellied, and barrel-chested man, not yet 40, serves as a father figure for the City's struggling populations, running community centers and homeless shelters. Bear's supportive and life-sustaining magic allows him and his social workers to protect people who are in danger. His "ship", **PRE-SERVER OF LIFE**, is a moving Enclave that can protect anyone within it from the worst that gods and Mythoi inflict on humanity.

Ganesha's work is not just to care for the wellbeing of those who shelter in her love; she needs to help them come together. This is the purview of **EARL FAVIER** (Osanyin, Orisha of all growing things), a cheerful middle-aged Cajun man in a wheelchair who has been tasked with the creation of a new social movement, one which will promote compassion and unity among people everywhere in the City. Earl's brainchild, **IABWA!** is a movement inspired by the African Ubuntu movement and whose name is not an African word but rather an abbreviation of its core belief: *I am because we are*. The movement promotes understanding and openness to the other, especially in these times when clannish behavior is becoming more commonplace. Earl can tell the unique properties of anything that grows, including

human beings, so for each *IABWA!* mission he chooses just the right individual for the job. He also uses his great understanding and power over plant life and all growing things to help his grassroots movement grow. It is now sprouting in more and more places in the City, where activist cells stand against hatred, conflict, and misunderstanding. As a fellow Orisha, Earl has a complicated relationship with DA King, a mixture of respect and a desire to open her eyes so she shows more compassion towards others.

On the individual branch, those who have attuned to the whispers of A Thousand Helping Hands are called **HELPERS**. Some helpers have been serving this mystical force for years, much longer than Ganesha has presumably been around, while others serve it for only a moment and then go on with their lives. Since A Thousand Helping Hands is omnipresent in the City, any Sleeper could potentially access it and become effectively Touched by Ganesha, if they only listened to their hearts (the Mist makes sure that doesn't happen, of course). Helpers can be concerned parents, good Samaritans, disgruntled PIs who nevertheless always help a client in need, and so on. Once Touched, their sight penetrates the Mist and A Thousand Helping Hands helps them help others by presenting them with opportunities and lucky coincidences.

## GANESHA'S HISTORY

Little is known of the girl who was born an Avatar. Her parents, if she had any, are either complete unknowns bundled up in extreme Mist or are no longer among the living. Ganesha has never taken a name or was given one besides her Mythos name, because she didn't see the point. The fact that her human body is a vessel for something greater is not a matter of philosophical musing for her, but the underlying reality of her existence. Ganesha cognizes that she was sent to relieve the suffering of humankind in the City of Mist. Whether that's true or just the story that's the essence of her Mythos is impossible to determine without transcending the Mist.

The members of the Truth only know, that one day a few years back, a serene, smiling, and highly annoying child appeared at the door with Mr. Burns when he opened the portal to their scheduled meeting. None of them were able to get rid of the child; a few of them flung the worst of their Avatar powers at her (Chow's flaming of desire, Wolfe's fear-mongering, and Rosaline's emotional manipulations) but to no avail, the

**MESSENGERS, ANGELS, and SAVIORS** are some of the names given to those independent Rifts who get sent to help someone by A Thousand Helping Hands, whether as a one-off incident or regularly. Usually equipped with a powerset ideal for the job intended for them, Messengers find themselves guided along a funnel-shaped destiny that rapidly leads them to the person they must help through a succession of coincidences, whether they like it or not (though repeating Messengers learn quickly to stop resisting and go with the flow). Most Messengers aren't even fully aware that some force is guiding them and many don't believe in a greater plan; when presented with the opportunity, they simply help because they can.

In the blue-collar residential neighborhood, **SHEPHERD, HOYT, & DEVA** is a legal firm that takes on small cases, mostly pro-bono. While they could certainly use some paying customers, partner **Ilay Shepherd** (Helper Touched by Ganesha) seems to always get involved with someone in dire straits, dragging his Rift associate and part-time hero, **Hank Hoyt** (Sol Invictus, Roman sun god and patron of soldiers), to assist. The two have been so valuable to Ganesha that one day they found an enchanting lawyer unpacking her boxes in their office: **Deva**, a flesh-and-blood deity, conjured by A Thousand Helping Hands, has joined their firm to help them help others.

kid remained tranquil and sweet. They then became intrigued, realizing they are dealing with either a dangerous threat or a powerful ally. She simply stayed, and no one could get her out, which in itself meant she was qualified to become a member of the Truth. She was then accepted into the council, and has been badgering its members ever since.

Ganesha lives on the streets of the City, among her people and followers. When she appears before someone, it is usually as she is, a dirty little street kid, and a serene silence spreads all around for blocks and blocks: there are no loud sirens, dog barks, engine noise, or shouts. A wholesome calm descends upon the place and people turn inwards, count their blessings, and pray for assistance. Sometimes, when she appears publicly, a great congregation of followers surrounds her, filling up the nearby streets in solemn silence and candlelight or, alternatively, engage in a jovial festival of giant floaters and explosions of colored powder and fireworks.

## KEY LOCATIONS

Ganesha's foot soldiers are everywhere in the City. They are most commonly found operating **WELFARE NON-PROFIT INSTITUTIONS** of any type and description: community centers, clinics, soup kitchens, thrift shops, schools, after-hours activity centers, dojos, homeless shelters, support groups, and more. Those who work for Ganesha or one of her Counsel of the Wise associates usually maintain cover and blend in with the Sleepers, especially when Rifts snoop around their business. They prefer to operate under the radar and benefit the community they're in rather than engage in a flashy clash with other Rifts.

There are agreed **SAFE MEETING SPOTS** throughout the City where Ganesha's servants congregate. These are usually street corners, back alleys, or abandoned buildings covered in graffiti or marked with a pair of shoes slung on the powerlines. The first one to arrive can wait and watch for whoever they are meeting, relying on A Thousand Helping Hands to give them a sign that the new arrivals are safe to talk to. Only people within Ganesha's network and those who are genuinely there to offer help or to seek help are cleared.

Sometimes, when food supply to a poverty-stricken area of the City fails, trucks loaded with food seem to come out of nowhere and prevent a potential famine. These trucks can be traced back to **THE LAFFERTY STORAGE FOUNDATION**, a massive food store spanning dozens of warehouses in the Industrial Zone. The facility is run by **Cormac Lafferty** (The Dagda, Irish god of Fertility, Agriculture, and Manliness), a jolly Irishman who can turn any container to a magic cauldron from which 'no one ever goes unsatisfied'. The LSF stores food for times of crisis and provides food for all of Ganesha's homeless shelters and soup kitchens. Sometimes Cormac can't stop the cauldrons from producing so he sends the surplus out on the streets packed as mystery free meals, disrupting food sales in the City (much to the consternation of Chow Industries analysts).

A Thousand Helping Hands also operates a network of safehouses, places of healing, and strongholds called **TEMPLES**. A Temple could be an unassuming apartment in the heart of a slum, a doctor's office, a massage parlor, a quiet spot in the park with a ribbon-covered tree, or an ice cream shop. It may also be an actual religious temple. There is always a shrine hidden somewhere within it, although its structure and decorations vary from place to place. These little shrines are like lighthouses of Ganesha's power, and protect all who shelter at the Temple. Temples usually have one or more caretakers who tend to the place and welcome weary souls sent by A Thousand Helping Hands.

## GANESHA'S STORY SEEDS

- A Thousand Helping Hands may choose the crew as Angels for a youngster in distress who is destined to lead the resistance against inequality, or for a fugitive with valuable information about another Avatar's operation. The mysterious force will use a kind-hearted lead character as its connection to the crew, arranging a series of coincidences to bring the crew to where they need to be, drawing attention to its existence.
- When a real-estate tycoon Rift threatens to demolish an entire project in the blue-collar residential neighborhood, Shepherd, Hoyt, & Deva, who are working the case, call the crew to help them, both in court and on the streets, where the tycoon has hired Rift goons to speed up the evacuation of the contested tenements.
- A woke lead character is tasked by a Counsel of the Wise member to open a new clinic, youth-at-risk club, dojo, or homeless shelter and kitchen, and ends up dragging the whole crew into it. On top of all the mundane difficulties and interpersonal challenges, dark or selfish mythic forces in the neighborhood are doing everything to prevent Ganesha's operation from gaining a foothold there.
- Against the backdrop of the greatest rally the City has ever seen, the crew gets false reports that Strig and her Little City Mice are starting a violent revolution (perhaps cooked up by Monte Wolfe's entourage). Shango-powered police are getting ready to quell the insurgence violently. The crew must figure out who's behind it all and choose who to help.
- Lead characters on the run stumble upon a Temple and receive unexpected aid from the local Helper, who is convinced their meeting is not a coincidence. The Helper begs the crew to help him avoid a team of Gatekeepers who are closing in on him in a bid to shut down his shrine, terminating the much-needed blessing protecting his neighborhood.

## GANESHA'S CUSTOM MOVES

**Higher Calling:** Whenever you see a sign leading you to your destiny, you can't unsee it. Take *chosen-1*. When you act against your predetermined destiny, you are **Taking the Risk**.

**A Thousand Helping Hands:** When you ask for help from a greater benevolent force, surrendering to its mysterious ways, help miraculously arrives. The MC will introduce assistance or a way out that you can choose to accept.

**A Thousand Helping Hands II:** Once you have been helped, you will be given an opportunity to pay the favor

forward with a deed of equal effort. Take a *grateful* status from which you cannot **Face Danger**: tier 1 if you asked for something small, tier 3 if you asked for something neither small nor great, and tier 5 if you asked for something great. You may not appeal to the benevolent force again before you pay the favor forward.

## GANESHA'S EXTRA THEMES

Shepard, Hoyt, & Deva are a motley crew made of a Touched individual, a Rift, and a Conjunction who can come in handy when the lead characters are facing legal and street-level threats. If they are collaborating with the crew or a specific crew member, they can be represented as a temporary Ally extra theme. To make them permanent Allies, a crew member must spend a Moment of Evolution or the Crew must complete a story arc related to Ganesha and choose the trio as their reward in the **Season Finale** move.

### SHEPHERD, HOYT, & DEVA

Ally

#### IDENTITY

I guess we'll have to do it pro-bono... again.

#### POWER TAGS

##### *Serendipitous legal representation*

Shepherd: *the best lawyer in the district, A Thousand Helping Hands, neighborhood contacts*

Hoyt: *sun god invincibility, solar blast, godlike charisma*

Deva: *turn incorporeal, sense all life, an entity of pure good*

#### WEAKNESS TAGS

*internal crew drama*

Shepherd: *defenseless civilian*

Hoyt: *rushes into action*

Deva: *susceptible to dark emotions*

#### THEME IMPROVEMENT

**Team Tactics**: Once per session, when Shepherd, Hoyt, & Deva work together, you get a free batch of 2 Juice to represent their coordination and assists.

## GANESHA'S DANGERS

### HELPER ★

Helpers believe that a hidden benevolent force will come to their aid in times of need, and often they are right. A Thousand Helping Hands will try to help a Helper by causing strange lucky happenings around them, but with so many Helpers in the City, its power to protect from ongoing threats is limited.

Most Helpers are otherwise ordinary City folk. To represent their mundane abilities, use the same moves as the Helpless City Resident (*MC Toolkit*, page 142).

### HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / EXHAUST LUCK 3 / ERODE FAITH 4

- **Blessed**: When something bad is about to happen to a Helper or someone they are protecting, it is averted by some lucky coincidence. Give the Helper *stretching-luck-1*. When *exhaust-luck* maxes out, this blessing ceases to protect the Helper until they spend a while praying or meditating at a Temple.
  - **Beacon of Hope**: When at or near a Temple, increase the Helper's *exhaust-luck* spectrum maximum by 1.
- 
- Meditate or pray, reuniting with a hidden benevolent force (once per scene, remove one tier of *stretching-luck* statuses)
  - Bestow a blessing on someone else or heal them (give someone *blessed-2* or remove two tiers of negative statuses; then give herself *stretching-luck-1*)
  - Inspire someone to be at ease and avoid violence (*peaceful-2*, burn one tag describing something violent, or remove one tier of an emotional status)
  - Escape miraculously, with traffic or pedestrians suddenly blocking pursuers (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- 
- Smile genuinely and calmly
  - Welcome those in need and offer them a safe place

## LITTLE CITY MICE ★★

### HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / CATCH 4

- **Collective:** This Danger has several members and a size factor of 2.
- **Unnoticed:** When you **Investigate** the Little City Mice, first give them *elusive-3*.
- **Little Spies:** As a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Little City Mice know your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- **Beware the Cat:** When the Little City Mice are in danger, give them *alert-2* and *echolocation* (a quality gained from Ganesha's shrews and rats)
- **Instigators:** When the *inflamed* status given by the Little City Mice to a neighborhood reaches tier 3, create a new Danger: Mob (see the MC Toolkit, page 142) and remove the status. If a mob is already there, increase its size factor by 1 and remove the status.

As long as the Little City Mice are within the mob, its *quell* spectrum maximum is increased by 1.

- Escape miraculously, parkouring nimbly onto the rooftops or evading pursuers in a block of tenements (Deny Them Something They Want)
- Snatch something unexpectedly (burn a tag or Deny Them Something They Want)
- Create street art (e.g. a mural, a performance) or circulate a message (whispered rumors, flyers) that stirs the locals to take to the streets (the district or neighborhood take *inflamed-1*; this status is not increased by the Little City Mice's size factor).
- Tangle a pursuer in their own clothing articles or retrain them non-violently with martial arts (*tangled-1* or *restrained-1*)
- Watch from a roof corner, a back door, or a broken window
- Evade pursuers by parkouring or riding a bike



## **PRESERVER OF LIFE ★★★**

The Preserver of Life is a mobile building-sized Enclave designed to withstand the punishment of the gods. The building is a typical city motel, with seven floors and nine cozy apartments on each floor. It is piloted by a raven-like creature, one of Bear Godwin's Touched servants (although, since he never leaves the Enclave, he may be a Conjuration).

Runaways and fugitives seeking protection from especially persistent and dangerous forces are brought to this safehouse by a Helper. When the door to the building is sealed, the building fades out of existence. Tenants see nothing but the ocean outside, possibly for days, until the raven says it's safe to come out, or the Enclave makes another stop to pick up another tenant or let one off.

### **PENETRATE OR COLLAPSE - / FADE 2 / TRACK 6**

- **Safe from the Gods:** Mythos abilities (tags or Danger moves) cannot affect the Preserver of Life building or anyone inside it if used by anyone who is outside.
  - **Life Support:** Living creatures within the Preserver of Life cannot take statuses of physical harm.
  - **The Raven Sees:** When you try to **Sneak Around** the Preserver of Life, it first takes **alert-3**.
  - **Sail Away:** When **fade** maxes out, the Preserver of Life is transported into the story of the Sumerian flood and must be tracked across the Mythoi realm to be found. For the purpose of tracking, each batch of Clues can be treated as a **tracked** status with a tier equal to the number of Clues in the batch.
- 
- Eject an offending tenant or visitor to the City streets (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
  - Begin to fade out of existence (give itself **fade-1**)
- 
- Start disappearing, with the faint sound of ocean waves and seagulls

## **SHEPHERD, HOYT, & DEVA ★★★★★**

This Ganesha-backed group can get in the way of your crew, if your crew is working for "the man" or are involved in an activity that puts the trio's underprivileged community in harm's way, directly or indirectly. This legal team can start off as a Danger and later transform into allies, as explained above.

### **HURT SHEPHERD 2 / HURT HOYT 4 / HURT DEVA - / DEFEAT IN COURT 5**

- **Objection!:** When Shepherd, Hoyt, & Deva or their clients take a legal or court status, reduce the tier of the status by 2.
  - **Shepherd - Blessed:** See Helper Danger profile, page 42.
  - **Hoyt - Sol Invictus:** As long as Hoyt saw sunlight in the last three days, when he takes a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 3.
  - **Deva - Spirit of Compassion:** When someone around Deva takes a status of negative emotion, she takes the same status at tier 1.
- 
- File for cease-and-desist (*legally-restrained-3*) or gain the upper hand in court (*losing-the-case-3*)
  - Talk their way out of a fight (*reasonable-2*)
  - Throw some punches (Shepherd, *bruised-2*), fire a solar blast (Hoyt, *fried-3* and a temporary *blinded-3*), punch with godlike strength (Hoyt, *crushed-4*), dazzle and confuse with enchanting lights (Deva, *disoriented-3*)
  - Create a protective aura around a small group of people (Deva, *shielded-3*)
  - Help each other bounce back with a kind word, tactical support, or Deva's healing and magical abilities (remove up to 2 tiers of appropriate negative statuses)
- 
- Try to find an amicable solution
  - Assertively present a violator with a legal threat
  - Assume a tactical stance before a fight begins

## GUAN TINGYU ★★★★★

### HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / OVERWHELM WITH NEGATIVE FEELINGS -

- **Infinite Compassion:** Anyone around Guan Tingyu or who can perceive her immediately removes all negative emotional statuses and takes *loved-5*. This effect can be repeated as a soft move. When you attack Guan Tingyu, you first take *loved-5*.
  - **Palm of the Buddha:** If Tingyu is aware of an incoming attack on her person or on anyone in her vicinity, she can nullify the attack. The same person cannot attack her again in this scene.
  - **Divine Consciousness:** When someone tries to fool Guan Tingyu (including **Sneaking Around**), she first takes *cosmically-aware-4*. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- 
- Reinforce someone's sense of being loved, of belonging, and of well-being to the point of transforming them (*loved-6*)
  - Remove any and all negative statuses from an individual or a group, including tier-6 statuses which are not fatal
  - Bless someone with good fortune (*blessed-4*, cannot exceed tier 4)
  - Make someone see how fortunate they are and then send them on a quest to help another or many others (burn three tags related to resistance and then give *grateful-5*, which drives the target to complete the quest)
- 
- Beam with divine kindness and love for all of creation
  - Create apparitions and illusions of whatever a person needs to see in order to let go of his past trauma and attachments and grow





## **DR. TALBOT LEYLAND**

*Prometheus, the Greek Titan who gave fire to mankind*

“Welcome to Pandoloria Healthcare! Here, we believe in a better tomorrow, a future where humanity is free and happy. Technology shapes our view on the world. Thanks to our groundbreaking research in endocrinology, nanobiology, cybernetics, and cognition, our advanced AI is able to help you with any medical or psychological condition you may suffer from. Would you be willing to answer some questions about your condition? For an all-AI treatment we offer significant discounts and reduced waiting time. This will only take a moment.”

–Pandoloria Healthcare AI representative

Dr. Talbot Leyland, Avatar of Prometheus, is the living manifestation of humankind's ability to think creatively and to understand the physical world. His "fire", the flame of cognition and of innovation, is the driving force behind science, technology, and medicine in the City. Dr. Leyland wants humanity to try new things, explore every possibility, and step out of their comfort zone. He seeks to endow humanity with the tools with which to shape their reality in every aspect of their lives. Believing unequivocally in a better tomorrow brought on by scientific discovery, he is a beacon of future optimism and the patron of thinking minds everywhere in the City, sending his sparks to ignite great ideas in great minds.

Dr. Leyland believes his fire will warm up the City, and indeed one of his greatest aspirations is to revolutionize the City into a futuristic tomorrowland where problems are solved scientifically, starting with the field closest to his heart: healthcare, life sciences, and medicine. But fire warms and fire burns. Scientific innovation has brought much good to the City, but some would say it has brought evil as well. In their campaign to promote more breakthroughs, the Faustian Dr. Leyland and his genius colleagues created a new field of study, exploring a creative force that is highly unpredictable and perhaps unknowable. His R&D division, Helix Labs, has been spearheading a dangerous technique of harnessing Mythoi to power technology. This new "Rift-tech" and Dr. Leyland's unapologetic aspiration (and ability) to awaken humanity from slumber have placed this culture hero in direct conflict with the Gatekeepers.

While he's an unparalleled genius, the doctor's failure to revolutionize the City so far has been a source of constant frustration and disappointment. His fear of the coming of another technological Dark Age and his dreams for humanity's future keep him going, but most of the time he is prone to melancholy and world-weariness, and he sometimes shuts himself in his lab for days. Over and over again he is faced with the realization that nothing can be accurately predicted: life doesn't always follow the hypothesis, and what is true in theory may be much more complicated in

practice. The gates of knowledge have to be held open and pushed wider apart every day, because people are petty, self-centered, and seek their own benefit over others'. Unable to come to terms with a world any less than ideal, the doctor feels that real life constantly puts a wrench in his calculations, and because he never accepts the truth, he just tries again later. This cycle of renewed hope and despair torments him endlessly, much like an eagle gnawing at his Promethean liver.

### OVERVIEW OF DR. LEYLAND

- **Agenda:** embetter life in the City through scientific breakthrough
- **MO:** investment in groundbreaking science
- **Lesson:** creative and courageous thinking can revolutionize life
- **Motifs:** creative fire, advanced tech, curiosity
- **Frontliners:** Pandoloria Healthcare, Helix Labs subsidiaries
- **Stronghold:** Out-of-town research facility

### DR. LEYLAND'S MODUS OPERANDI

Dr. Leyland wants to apply science in order to turn the City into a tomorrowland. From the dawn of his Avatarhood he has sought to cultivate science in the City on a grand scale, helping the best minds to receive the guidance and resources they need. The doctor operates multiple innovation foundations, 3D medication printer farms, fully digital no-doctor-offices, hi-tech accelerator programs, and hedge funds that help budding talent grow. He donates his time and money to universities and schools in the City to foster scientific advance and digital health literacy for patients.

The funding for all this comes from selling the patents for some of the second-class inventions his operation produces; Chow Industries usually buys them and creates some silly mass market products. The doctor makes these deals out of necessity, but he never commercializes inventions that truly matter, like life-saving drugs or new forms of communication. In fact, he despises the greed-driven scientists bribed by big pharma corporations and quickly disposes of them if they show up in one of his programs.

The doctor's first goal is to revolutionize healthcare in the City. In his mind, when humanity is free of the ailments of the body, it will finally be able to unlock the endless potential of its mind. Dabbling with theories of technological singularity and cognition sciences, Dr. Leyland also understands that the human body is the

most marvelous machine of all and contains far greater secrets than anything else in the material world, as evidenced by the fact that humans are the most likely candidates to become Rifts. Understanding the human body and how to heal it is synonymous with initiating the next step in the evolution of mankind. **Pandoloria Healthcare** is a new health care system the doctor found that represents his hope for a better future. It is based on people's participation, trying to encourage increased compliance and adherence through helping the patients understand their conditions (digital health literacy). Unfortunately, every innovation Pandoloria Healthcare tries to bring to the masses meets opposition from Chow Industries and its corrupt City officials, who would rather capitalize on these inventions, and the Mist, which exploits illness and old age (among other things) to distract the City residents. In this matter, the doctor would do well to collaborate with Ganesha, if only their agendas were not as foreign to each other as mind and heart, science and religion.

This frustration around Pandoloria Healthcare serves as a daily reminder for the doctor that real progress cannot be achieved in the public domain, where petty politicians will always put their hand in the mix. It needs an isolated environment, devoid of all subjective influences; only then can true genius shine. **Helix Labs** is the doctor's scientific adventure park. It is where he lets go of all ethical hindrances and truly focuses on innovation, on the spark that will change the world, and to hell with the consequences.

Mostly unknown to the City population, Helix Labs is a Rift-tech R&D company that conducts unbridled cutting-edge research. Their core technology, **the Pyrakaeus (Fire-Kindler) Engine**, allows them to identify a person who could become a suitable Rift for a specific Mythos and then awaken the Mythos in that subject (mostly humans, but also animals, plants, and objects). They have evolved Mythos science to the point of creating Mythos-powered equipment and weaponry. This technology was used to create dozens of Rifts, but re-



grettably, successful experiments often get out of hand (case in point: Post-Mortem and Vector, from the *City of Mist Quick Start Rules*). Finding volunteers for these experiments has also proven to be a challenge. Helix Labs' Black Ops division is responsible for securing candidates for experiments as well as protecting the company's property and operations from anyone who tries to interfere, be they mundane, Rift, or Gatekeeper.

## DR. LEYLAND'S OPERATION

All of Dr. Leyland's operational assets are managed by Helix Labs as their subsidiaries and investments. The company has four main divisions: The Leyland Foundation for Innovation, Pandoloria Healthcare, R&D, and Black Ops.

The Leyland Foundation for Innovation locates and supports scientific geniuses whose work can benefit the City the most. Once their work is established and recognized as valuable, the best minds cross over to work for one of the other divisions, or continue to develop their own field independently (while still funded by the Foundation).

Pandoloria Healthcare is the public-facing section of the operation, concerned with bringing technological advancement to the people of the City in the form of healthcare. This is regarded as the doctor's pet project, secretly mocked by Helix Labs' chief executives, but executed passionately by the teams on the ground.

R&D deals exclusively with Rift-tech and its many applications, while Black Ops protects the company's assets and operations, using Rift-tech from R&D to give themselves an edge over the many threats they face.

### KEY CHARACTERS

The Leyland Foundation for Innovation employs a small army of **TALENT SCOUTS** who comb the City's schools and universities in search of super-intelligent individuals that the Foundation could cultivate into productive scientists. The scouts are intelligent in their own right but also worldly and shrewd and they are barely Touched; the only Mythos power they possess comes from a scanning device they are given (usually a monocle, glasses, or binoculars) that detects remarkable intelligence, creativity, and academic capabilities as well as Mythos powers related to science and knowledge. Through the foundation's different programs and partners, Scouts can offer a candidate a wide range of scholarships, funding, apprenticeships, mentors, and/or resources.

An aspiring scientist who is supported by the Foundation is called a **POTENTIAL**. A Potential's natural scientific ability is mythically-enhanced with a special piece of equipment provided by the Foundation, a

## SCIENCE IN CITY OF MIST

Science is not a common theme in the noir genre, although it does feature in futuristic neon-noir fiction. Still, science can be fun to incorporate in a super-powered story. Scientists from horror stories like Dr. Frankenstein or Dr. Jekyll, or legendary scientists like Daedalus, Archimedes, or Da Vinci (as well as scientists from other cultures) are a perfect fit for *City of Mist*. To maintain the noir theme, keep science strange and obscure and focus on its potentially-dark personal and social implications rather than the optimistic prospect of understanding the universe.

Science in your game (including all technology mentioned in this Avatar profile) should be adapted to the technological age in which your campaign is set. If you play True Noir (1930s), electricity-powered devices are commonplace and the next big thing is radioactivity. In Neon Noir (1980s), computers are the bees knees, and virtual spaces within computer games or destructive Artificial Intelligence are considered superscience. In the Dreary Present, superscience crosses over to cyberpunk, comic-book science, and science-fiction.

In *City of Mist*, any form of super-science, science that exceeds the science of the age in which you play, is necessarily Mythos-powered (or Mist-powered).

device called a **Spark**, usually in the form of a floating strobing orb of a malleable glasslike super-material (modern), a hi-tech S.P.A.R.K computer (80s), or a handheld contraption of lightbulbs and gauges (30s). A Spark device serves as a research guide and personal assistant, giving a fraction of Prometheus' fire to help the Potential fulfill her potential. This elevates the discoveries of a Potential to the level of super-science, if she wasn't already touched by her own Mythos.

To avoid a "brain drain", the Foundation also employs more "aggressive" talent scouts when a candidate refuses its advances. **LATOYA BELVEDERE** (head-changing Princess Langwidere of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* sequel, *Ozma of Oz*), a voluptuous and bubbly hedge-fund headhuntress, and the Peruvian cutthroat known only as **RENZO** (Tsantsa, shrunken heads of those killed by Amazonian tribes) both have the ability to behead reluctant candidates and have their severed heads retain their intellect, disposition, and animating spirit – so progress can continue. They have collected over a hundred heads, stored in their beautiful bejeweled vault under the Old Quarter university. To use the

knowledge stored in a head, Belvedere needs to put it on, which makes her less efficient than her partner, since the shrunken heads he creates can talk. On the other hand, Renzo's heads also stink and initially refuse to cooperate, outraged that they were killed, although many of them eventually adjust and even learn to like their new situation, which allows them to focus on science without having to care for a body.

The Pandoloria Healthcare operation is managed by **CLONE 713A aka DR. MATTY KILROY** (Dr. Jekyll). This copy of the original Rift of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde has false memories and records fabricated by Helix Labs, and is not aware of his true nature, neither as a clone or as half of a Rift. Dr. Kilroy is a good-natured, hands-on, respectable doctor, who is working miracles in the fields of medicine and pharmaceuticals. Unbeknownst to Dr. Kilroy, Pandoloria Healthcare's patient database is shared with Helix Labs, who are mining it for candidates and test subjects. Recently, Helix Labs Black Ops has been keeping a close look on the clone. Their scheduled memory suppression treatments have been causing him memory lapses at times, a fact his fellow doctors have begun noticing. More worryingly, the good doctor is inexplicably drawn to his literal other half.

Dr. Kilroy's other mythical half, **CLONE 713C aka HYDE** (Mr. Hyde) is the head honcho of the Helix Labs Black Ops division. Fully aware of being a clone and the half-Rift of a sociopath, and psychologically quite messed-up about it, 713C is the right man for the job. Ruthless and relentless, he has the Black Ops division operating effectively and with zero moral qualms. 713C is struggling to restrain his Mythos at times and has had more than one violent outburst at both subordinates and targets; still, the violence inherent to his job mostly suffices to keep his tendencies in check. No-one can deny that Black Ops is fulfilling their purpose and protecting Helix Labs' interests in the City.

**HELIX LABS BLACK OPS** is a private security force on mythical steroids. Armed to their teeth with every imaginable piece of Rift-tech gear, armor, and weaponry, their technological advantage in the field makes Sleeper security and law-enforcement think they're fighting aliens. From force-field generators powered by a sun god's solar energy to assault rifles firing focused beams of dragon fire, Rift-tech has succeeded in choking out the Mythoi's narrative and keeping only their functionality. There's virtually no power in the City that Helix Labs won't be able to extract and weaponize, if they can get their hands on its Rift. Black Ops often abducts suitable subjects for the Pyrkaeus Engine or Rifts who were selected for a specific experiment, steal Relics or valuable information, and provides around the clock airtight protection for all Helix Labs assets and activities.

**DR. MICHELLE ADAMS, MD, PhD, MSc.** (Dr. Frankenstein) is the Director of Research at Helix Labs. Forever rushing to deal with yet another experiment gone bad, the middle-aged scientist can be seen rushing through the HQ corridors in unkempt blond hair and a dirty lab coat covering frumpy clothing, after having spent god-knows-how-many days poring over plans for upcoming experiments. Dr. Adams was the first to be recruited by Dr. Leyland; the Pyrkaeus Engine technology is the product of their combined genius and Mythos powers. Since then her powers and obsession with life sciences have created a host of abominations. The other aspect of her powers, the ability to cover up her abominations' crimes with a Mist-like effect, is extremely valuable to Helix Labs. The damage caused by runaway abominations is rarely connected with Helix Labs, but with each murder the burden of the guilty grows heavy on her. Still, science must march on!

### KEY LOCATIONS

Step into a **PANDOLORIA HEALTHCARE CLINIC** and you will behold a vision of the future. These wholesome bright white spaces are perfectly designed with indoor plants and softly-moving animations on screen walls. Cares are taken away when the personalized AI assistant welcomes you in, helping you begin the process of your healing. Here, all mundane and even Rift-induced diseases can be cured. Unfortunately, each clinic costs a fortune and can only handle a limited number of patients, accepting them in order of severity and urgency.

The Leyland Foundation for Innovation supports its Potentials' research in many ways. Sometimes the best thing to do with genius is just let it be; the Foundation pays all expenses and provides the tech necessary for research, but it lets the aspiring scientists work uninterrupted in their personal **GARAGE LABS** at home. These labs vary greatly from one to the other according to the Potential's needs, style, and field of research. One may be a cavernous basement lined with vats of bubbling green liquid and something vaguely human growing inside while another might be a car shop with an experimental reactor core that flashes with bright lights and causes frequent blackouts. Garage labs are a danger to the neighborhoods they're in but candidates don't care; they just want to make scientific breakthrough.

The serious science, experimenting with applications of the Pyrkaeus Engine, takes place in ad hoc Helix Labs **TEST SITES** around the City. Usually in a secluded area (unless the experiments require otherwise), these sites – a forgotten lot, an abandoned factory, or an empty hangar – are procured by Helix Labs years in advance and activated days or even hours before the experiment. Black Ops goes in first and comes out

## DR. LEYLAND'S HISTORY

Talbot Leyland was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, heir to a rich family whose fortune was made decades ago through the inventions of a genius ancestor. Starting as early as his infancy, Talbot was given the best education one can hope for, not just the kind that would make him more knowledgeable or better at passing exams, but also challenging and stimulating exercises that nourish and evolve one's mind. His mother, a world-leader in the fields of physics and chemistry, tutored him and pushed him to greatness. After he completed his first PhD at 12, Talbot took to high theoretical sciences. His path would have been set, if it wasn't for an unexpected traffic jam.

The driver had to take them through a slum. For the first time in his life, Talbot was directly exposed to human beings living in subhuman conditions. He *knew* such people existed, intellectually, but *seeing* them shocked him to his core. The local clinic, a dirty hole-in-the-wall with a long line of unkempt miserables trailing out of it, made the most lasting impression: it disgusted him and at the same time made him feel sorrow so great he thought his chest would cave in. He didn't understand why these poor souls didn't *think* of a solution to end their suffering. This event had changed the course of his life. He abandoned the theoretical fields and devoted himself to medicine and applied sciences, taking on the mission of revolution-

izing healthcare in the City. Slowly but surely, through his genius and compassion, Prometheus awakened in him, empowering him to make discoveries that defied the laws of physics.

The years went by, but despite Dr. Leyland's great contribution to medicine and technology, most everything in the City stayed the same. The more he studied it, the more he became convinced the game was rigged and that there was a hidden reason for humanity's lack of real progress. His investigation uncovered the part the Truth and the Gatekeepers had in maintaining the status quo. He wanted to help, but knew he could only do it from within the system and that he was no match for Avatars. He was still holding back, sensing somehow that his inventions could do just as much harm as they did good. Until then, he had never experimented with others' powers, although the prospects of how he could revolutionize the City with Rift-tech fascinated him.

In the end, his pity for the many overcame his grief for the few who would pay the price. He tracked down the Seven Sisters, the keepers of the true fire of awakening, and whisked them away to his desert research lab where he gleaned the secret knowledge from them and then experimented with it for years. Upon his return to the City with the Pyrkaeus engine he ascended to Avatarhood as the bringer of fire to mankind. He founded Helix Labs and began the formation of his Rift-tech empire, paving his path to a seat at the Grand Colonial.

last, providing airtight security around the perimeter throughout the experiment. Scientists and subjects are shuttled in under the cover of darkness or in inconspicuous vehicles. Two times out of three something inexorably goes wrong and Black Ops needs to evacuate the scientists and then team up with the hated Gatekeepers to clean up any runaway monstrosities or spillover Mythos energy. Oftentimes test sites of experiments gone wrong are left abandoned in the ensuing chaos (as in the sample case *Vis For Going Viral*).

Test site experiments are designed and planned at one of Helix Labs' secret **R&D CENTERS**, which can range from a modern corporate office building, through a multi-level underground bunker, to a massive cloaked hovercraft or an offshore rig. Later, in other sections of the same centers, the results are analyzed, studied, and used in practical applications. Here unstable Rift-tech is perfected into usable technology and tested over and over again until ready to be used by one of the other divisions or in the next experiment.

**HELIX LABS HEADQUARTERS** is a hi-tech fortress straight from a sci-fi movie, situated in the heart of the science hub in the Industrial Zone. The building is an architectural marvel, made out of sheer surfaces of a strange black alloy capable of absorbing Mythos powers, rendering it impervious to most Rift attacks. If desired, this alloy can assume the properties of Mythoi, so the structure itself can be infused with legendary capabilities such as incorporeality, invisibility, invincibility, or levitation, to name a few. Black Ops has its finest people, tech, and abominations guarding the facility 24/7, and have been known to set abominations loose elsewhere in the City to draw away law enforcement, Gatekeepers, or independent Rift crews with fanciful ideas of storming their HQ.

Outside of the City, in a remote and hidden desert lab, Dr. Leyland continues his research into new knowledge that would embetter life in the City and would catapult its residents into the next step in evolution. In the **KARATGURK CONTAINMENT FACILITY** (Karatgurk,

the seven Pleiades sisters in Aboriginal Dreamtime from whom fire was stolen and given to humanity) he is accommodating seven alien entities of unknown origin or nature, who hold vast knowledge of scientific and cosmic nature. It was these celestial entities, most beautiful to behold, who gave Dr. Leyland the capability to create the original Pyrkaeus engine, but now he wants more. Whether by manipulation, torture, or simply theft, he intends to wring the Karatgurk for one final gamechanger that will change life in the City forever.

## DR. LEYLAND'S STORY SEEDS

- A lead or support character engaged in research is offered the opportunity of a lifetime by the Leyland Foundation for Innovation. If they accept, they start working for a subsidiary of Helix Labs, and soon discover that their inventions end up in the wrong hands. If they refuse, Belvedere and Renzo go after their head.
- A street in Suburbia becomes the epicenter of a cluster of freak phenomena in which objects and people become supercharged with a specific type of energy (kinetic, cosmic, mythic, or otherwise). The crew must protect the neighborhood from these occurrences while tracing the energy leak to a garage lab of a young mad scientist, who tries to stop them from shutting him down.
- As a continuation to the sample case *V is For Going Viral*, a wave of disappearances plagues the City. The crew must identify the missing persons as Pandoloria Healthcare patients, investigate this miracle-working organization, and reveal the festering insidious link to Helix Labs. But can they remove the tumor without killing the patient?
- Dr. Matty Kilroy contacts the crew in panic, asking for help: he is suffering from paranoia and anxiety, hallucinating that every few nights black ghosts with evil green eyes enter his bedroom and abduct him. The crew must help him catch Black Ops as they perform his regular memory suppression and uncover his true origin and connection to Helix Labs, leading to an inevitable confrontation with his twin, Clone 713C.
- Helix Labs marks the crew or one of its members as necessary components in one of their experiments. A Black Ops squad carefully plans an abduction, using a Helix Labs abomination as a decoy or bait. When the crew bites, they are attacked with Rift-tech tailored to their powers, kidnapped, and forced to become subjects in a Helix Labs grand experiment, overseen by Dr. Adams herself.

## DR. LEYLAND'S CUSTOM MOVES

**Super Technology:** When you make a move against someone or something who is using super technology, you cannot invoke tags from Logos themes describing equipment of inferior technology.

## DR. LEYLAND'S EXTRA THEMES

A genius-level lead character who is conducting research could be offered a Spark device by one of the Leyland Foundations' recruiters, which can be represented as a temporary Relic extra theme.

### SPARK DEVICE

*Relic*

### MYSTERY

*Is my hypothesis correct?*

### POWER TAGS

*personal research assistant, remotely control my inventions, spark of innovation, illuminate surroundings, recording device, show me what I'm missing, enhanced intellect, science yet unheard of, quickly build a prototype, connect with my brain*

### WEAKNESS TAGS

*highlights my mistakes, unexpected side-effects, overheated, unethical*

### THEME IMPROVEMENT

**Power Surge:** You can use the Spark device to power your inventions. After you **Change The Game** with tags from this theme, you may burn all the tags in this theme to increase your Juice by 3.



# DR. LEYLAND'S DANGERS

## HELIX LABS HEADHUNTERS

Latoya Belvedere and Renzo usually show up after a Recruiter tried to convince a highly-coveted candidate and failed. They bag their candidates' head, leaving the headless body for the police to wonder about, or have Black Ops feed it to an abomination. They each keep to their pool of can-

didates and methods, with Latoya focusing on upper class and university talent and Renzo picking off bright minds on the streets of the Industrial Zone and the blue-collar residential. However, when faced with an especially stubborn candidate, they will team up and split the prize.

### LATOYA BELVEDERE ★★

#### HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Unfamiliar Face:** When you **Investigate** Latoya, she first gets *hard to put a name to the face*.
- **Head De Jur:** Depending on the head Latoya has on, give her one tag describing her features, disposition, intellect, or knowledge such as *pretty, smart, innocent, annoying, forgettable, rocket science, marine biology*, etc. As a hard move, Latoya can open a briefcase and take out a spare head, exchanging one tag for another.
- Charm someone who is in her way or whose head she wants (*charmed-2*)
- Make a generous offer to support someone's research (*interested-2*)
- Block a candidate's exit path (*cornered-2*)
- Try to hack a candidate's head off with her stylized katana (*neck-cut-3*)
- Present herself with a firm handshake

### RENZO ★★

#### HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / DEplete ARUTAM 4

- **Arutam Spirit:** Renzo is protected by the *Arutam* spirits (life force) of those he killed. As long as *deplete-arutam* is not maxed out, any status of physical or spiritual harm he receives is converted to a *weakened-arutam* status instead.
- **Greater Arutam Spirit:** If Renzo ever kills a Rift, increase his *deplete-arutam* spectrum maximum to 6 and remove all statuses from that spectrum.
- Slit the throat of an innocent nearby (**Make Something Horrible Happen** and remove all statuses from *deplete-arutam*)
- Touch someone's head and shrink it while it's still attached (*headache-3*)
- Confer with a string of shrunken heads on his belt (give himself *educated-2* or a relevant knowledge tag)
- Block a candidate's exit path (*cornered-2*)
- Slash at someone's throat (*neck-cut-3*)
- Creep out of an alley, knife in hand

### CLONE 713C ★★★★★

Clone 713C is a hulking muscular man, with a broken nose, multiple facial scars, patchy stubble, blotchy skin, and the meanest look in the eyes. All of these are side-effects of the Mythos inside him; Clone 713C is less than a decade old. His ability to transfer harm to his twin, Dr. Matty Kilroy, has kept him alive, but he uses it sparingly, knowing that if his other half dies, he may die as well.

#### HURT OR SUBDUE 6

- **Superhuman Physique:** When Clone 713C takes a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 2.
- **Alter Ego:** When Clone 713C takes a status, he can choose to transfer it to his alter ego elsewhere in the City.

- **Bodyguards:** When Clone 713C takes a status his bodyguards can protect him from, the bodyguards take the status instead (use Helix Labs Black Ops).
- **Give Me That!:** As a hard move, Clone 713C can borrow his team's tech and use it better than them, increasing the effect by one.
- Warn someone that hurting him hurts an innocent person instead (*apprehensive-2*)
- Brutalize someone with a knife, crow bar, or knuckle-buster (*bleeding-out-4* or *broken-bones-4*)
- Unleash a person's darkest urges (*berserk-4, self-destructive-4, or wanton-4*)
- Rally his team and get them out of tight spot (remove up to three tiers of negative tactical or morale status)
- Chuckle at another's suffering
- Sharpen his knife loudly on a whetstone

## ABOMINATIONS

Helix Labs abominations are the results of Rift-tech experiments on people, animals, or plants that have gone terribly wrong – or exceptionally well. All Helix Labs abominations, great or small, are affected by the custom moves **Hands Washed Clean** as an extension of Dr. Adams' powers, which hide the damage they cause.

**Hands Washed Clean:** When you **Investigate** an abomination, trying to establish its origin, evidence disappears and witnesses forget. All evidence takes *fading-2*.

Whenever an abomination kills people on screen, give Dr. Adams a *remorseful-1* status; when she maxes out *filled-with-remorse:4* she turns on Helix Labs, her abominations, or herself, enlisting the crew to help.

## GUARD DOGS ★★

Abomination Guard Dogs are Familiars of Psoglav, demonic man-eating dog-headed creatures of Serbian and Croatian folklore. These feral canines have iron teeth, walk on elongated man-sized limbs, crave human flesh, and are often used as a security measure in Helix Labs facilities. They detest sunlight, which is how their Black Ops handlers control them.

## HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / OUTRUN 3 / SCARE WITH SUNLIGHT 1

- **Collective:** This collective has a few members and a size factor of 1.
- **Feral Tenacity:** When the Guard Dogs take a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 1.

- **Blood Craze:** Once per scene, when the Guard Dogs smell human flesh that isn't their masters', give them *ferocious-1*.
- Bite and tear at flesh with iron teeth (*rended-flesh-3*)
- Pounce at someone and knock them to the ground (*prone-2*)
- Leap out of their kennels, bearing iron teeth

## FRANK ★★★★★

Frank (Frankenstein's Monster) was Dr. Adams first cloning experiment and the reason for her awakening. This monstrous ogre has been captured many times by Helix Labs but has always escaped captivity. These days he hides in the sewers, shunning society, but Helix Labs keep a close watch on him. If they need him, they know how to lure him out with offers of social acceptance, or a bride.

## HURT - / SUBDUE 6 / DECEIVE 4

- **Hideous:** When you first see Frank this scene, take *repulsed-3*.
- Strike with deadly force, snapping necks or skewering people as if they were ants (*impaled-5* or *broken-neck-6*)
- Roar with rage, terrifying all around (*terrified-3*)
- Electrically charge a dead body, turning it to a monster like him (**Complicate Things, Bigtime**)
- Step out of hiding, filling everyone with horror

## HELIX LABS BLACK OPS ★★★(+★)

A single Black Ops operative usually carries no more than four different Rift-tech pieces of equipment, limiting her range of gear moves. However, in a team, different agents carry different gear to increase versatility. When Black Ops encounter the crew unexpectedly, their gear would be appropriate for their current objective. When they attack the crew directly, customize their gear list to counter the crew's specific abilities (adding ★ to the Danger's rating). When Black Ops roll out their **Gamechanger**, if it has dramatic implications, you may give it a *charging:3* spectrum and activate it only when the spectrum maxes out.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / DRAIN THEIR GEAR 4

- **Collective:** This collective has several members and a size factor of 2.
  - **Advanced Technology:** When you make a move against Helix Labs Black Ops gear and weapons, you cannot invoke tags from your Logos themes.
  - **Automatic Ignition:** When Helix Labs Black Ops enter the scene, unless their gear is disabled, the MC can make two of their hard Danger gear moves as an intrusion.
- **Gamechanger:** As a hard move, Helix Labs Black Ops reveal a specialized piece of tech that changes the battlefield (**Complicate Things, Bigtime**), following which they can make a hard move with a tier-6 effect.
  - Activate a piece of equipment:
    - » Cloaking device (give themselves *hidden-3*)
    - » Force-field generator (give themselves *shielded-3*)
    - » Multi-spectral scanner (give themselves *alert-2* or gain specific knowledge of nearby threats, especially Rifts)
    - » Bio-matter patch (remove up to 2 tiers of medical statuses)
    - » Ion-9 assault rifle (*perforated-4* or *pinned-down-4*)
    - » Web-shooting spiders (*bound-4*)
    - » Psychic noise grenade (*in-pain-4*)
    - » Knockout gas (*knocked-out-5*)
    - » Laser pointers (*cornered-3*)
  - Deploy silently and quickly around a target, guns ready





## **ROSALINE**

### *Romeo & Juliet, A Tale of Tragic Love*

“Mother, no, you don’t understand! He was abusive! He was trying to stop me from becoming who I truly am... I refused to keep burying myself deep inside. I had to break free of his clutches, once and for all! I know I did a horrible thing and I’m sorry, but you must believe me, there was no other way. It was Alistair’s idea, he convinced me the only way out was to kill the old man. Alistair, my love, what have you done to me! What did you make me do?... I killed my own father. What did you make me do?! Mother, could you ever forgive me?... Mother?... Mother are you there?”

–Excalibur

“All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players” – these words by William Shakespeare aptly capture the spirit of Rosaline, the Avatar of his most famous play, *Romeo & Juliet*, and of all stories of tragic love. For her, the value of a life lies only in its dramatic impact upon “the audience”. The more miserable and tragic its ending, the better.

Rosaline herself is that “audience”: she wants to witness the drama and tragedy brought upon mortals by love, romantic or otherwise. If only theater was as compelling as real life! Then she wouldn’t have to go to all this trouble to infect other people’s lives with tragedy, on her quest to brew the most gratifying finale. Alas, one such spectacle is not enough; Rosaline wants to see the City bathed in the blood of those who died for love. From adulterers to true lovers, from those who would sacrifice themselves for others to those who discover bitterly that others won’t do the same for them, Rosaline vampirically fosters and feeds off incidents where fools’ fate was sealed by love and passion. Her insidious work undermines the very foundations of society in the City but Rosaline doesn’t care. Everytime a love story ends in ruination she licks her lips and brews the next heartfelt demise.

Though not remotely the youngest among the pantheon of the Truth, Rosaline is often derided for her childishness and lack of vision as an Avatar who could reshape the City with her powers, but instead wastes her time on entertaining herself with mere theatrics. Most other members of the Truth look down on her to the point of underestimating her. Even those who have the wits to see her for the danger she poses are too preoccupied with the machinations of their more aggressive brethren to really keep an eye on her. Rosaline is biding her time. She knows she is not as strong nor as wise as her fellow Avatars, but she also knows no one can manipulate a relationship as well as she and there is no relationship more prone to love and tragedy than a pantheon of gods. In her heart, she dreams of a final act, a grand finale, where she would bring down the pantheon and indeed the whole City in a dramatic and tragic war of gods the likes of which only she can orchestrate.

## OVERVIEW OF ROSALINE

- **Agenda:** To cause personal love stories to end tragically
- **MO:** Use temptation and unbridled passion to transform love into ruin
- **Emotion:** Tragic love
- **Motifs:** lovers, theater props, potions, rings
- **Frontliners:** Star-Crossed Lovers, Homewreckers, Potion-Makers
- **Stronghold:** The forsaken Lolita Theater

## ROSALINE’S MODUS OPERANDI

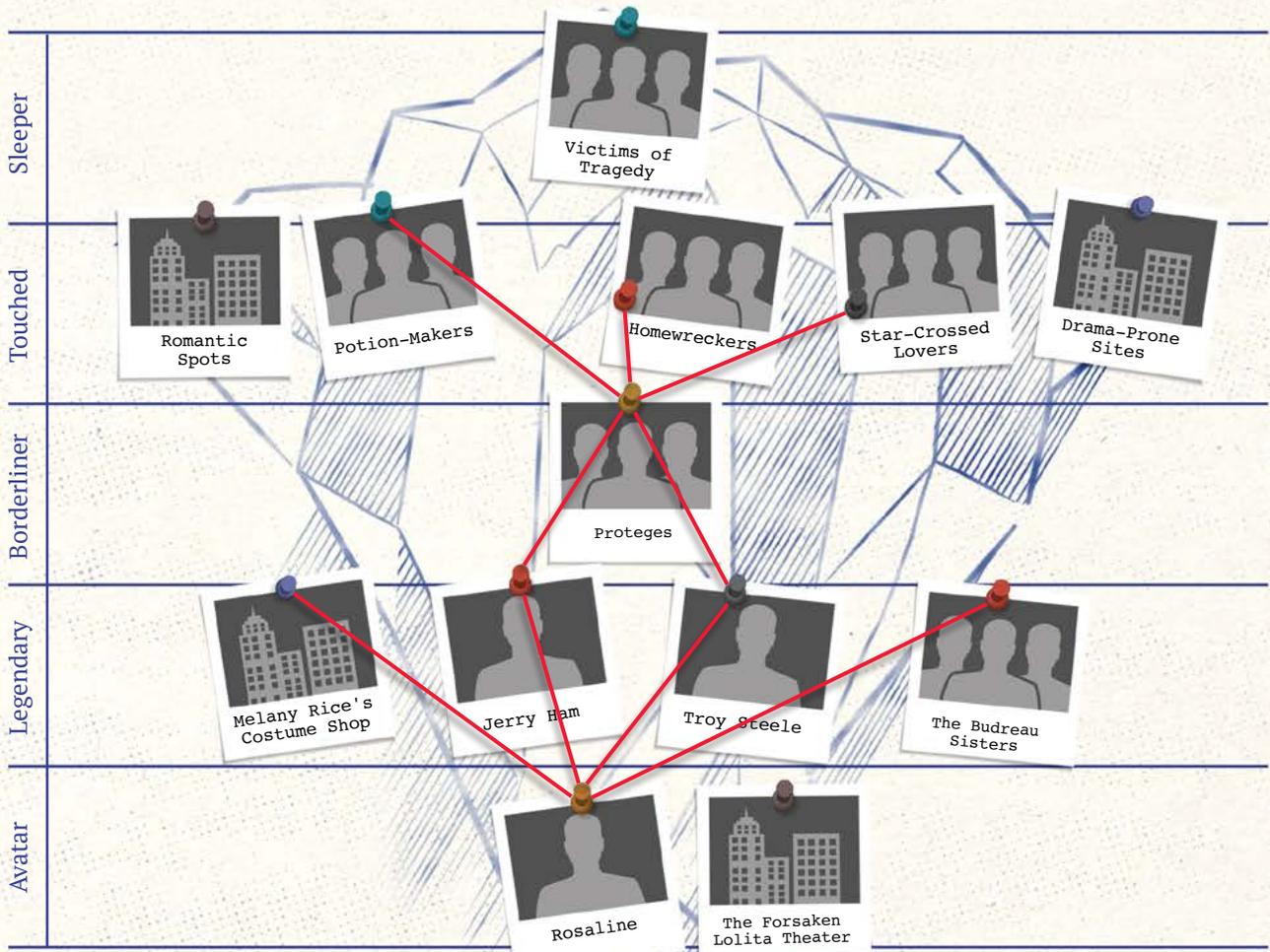
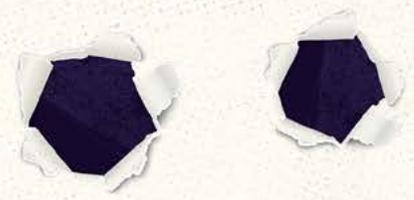
Rosaline’s work in the City is driven more by a flair for the dramatic and a penchant for backstage scheming than actual planning. Even before she had risen to Avatarhood, the Lady of Bitter Sorrows naturally attracted flamboyant suitors and lustful handmaidens who shared her twisted views on love and aspired to shatter hearts and spread misery as well as she did. Rather than crush their black hearts and move on, Rosaline found it much more entertaining to sweep them into a depraved emotional entanglement where they were both her lovers (or were promised such grace) and her proteges. Some already awakened as Rifts of woeful love stories and others to awaken at Rosaline’s hands, these new students learned how to manipulate emotions and bring about personal downfall. Those who brought the most drama to the table won her favor and were further instructed in her vile arts until they were versed enough to train their own proteges. By the time she became an Avatar, Rosaline’s school of drama was a vast network of forbidden romance and teacher-student relationships, whose members excelled in luring their victims to their ultimate ruination.

This sick form of apprenticeship remains at the heart of Rosaline’s operation to this day. Rosaline doesn’t care about systems and structure; she’s all about the personal and intimate, and her one-on-one relationships with her proteges and their proteges reflects this. Likewise, she does not seek to create a systemic change that will affect millions in the same way, like other Avatars. For her, every story must be unique, up-close-and-personal. Her school of drama serves this perfectly as her agenda is passed on from one protege to another until it hits the person on the street through their own particular life circumstances and personal flaws, just as it should be in a proper tragedy.

Proteges of Rosaline’s school are attracted to those who love passionately, whether truly or superficially. They know how to read the scents in the very air

around their victims, sensing their desperateness, lust, hopefulness, and potential catastrophe. This sensitivity taught by Rosaline's proteges is one of the heart and not of the mind; it relies on intuition more than analysis. Based on their reading of the situation, the proteges' cultivated instinct and cunning tells them where to strike and how to bring a person from a state of brittle stability to complete calamity. This process could be swift and deadly or lingering and excruciating. The best of them can toy with a victim through many highs and lows before unexpectedly shattering their hopes, body, and/or soul forever. Some work their charms directly on their victims to achieve their goals, while others manipulate and scheme from afar, dropping a love potion here and digging up a long-forgotten secret there, when it's most opportune. Whatever the method, deaths caused indirectly by Rosaline tend to have a dramatic air to them. Witnesses or detectives studying a crime scene can vaguely sense theatrics at work, though they cannot tell why.

Rosaline's victims are not limited to any sex, class, orientation, age, or emotional state, nor are they limited to romantic or sexual love; she gets just as good a kick out of family betrayals and the corruption of childhood friendships, as she does from two lovers dying in each other's arms. Her proteges target anyone who loves: from a wealthy and seedy old businessman seeking sexual encounters with younger companions, through a child whose friend tossed away a flower she gave him, to a mother who can't get through to her teenage daughter, to young and penniless lovers who boast that their love could withstand all. She'll have her students make tragic delicacies out of all of them, watch, and sigh in content.



## ROSALINE'S OPERATION

Due to the personal nature of her school of drama, Rosaline's operation (if it can be called that) is organized rather loosely. There are no branches and none of her immediate proteges are responsible for any specific purview. Instead, each protege has her own style and milieu, which keeps them out of each other's hair. Proteges that do well receive more guidance and backing from the grande dame.

Proteges are exclusively Rifts independent of Rosaline; one must show great talent to be accepted into her "school", although sometimes these Rifts were awakened through coming in contact with Rosaline or her other proteges. Ideally, Rosaline prefers working with independent Rifts in the Borderliner stages of awakening because they can get the job done and don't pose a serious threat. She suffers the amateurism of independent Touched, because she understands the need to cultivate them into full bloom before she can benefit from them as Borderliners. Legendaries are risky but necessary for managing her growing school and for training more proteges. Rosaline knows that if her closest and most powerful proteges are not emotionally invested, one of them could eventually outsmart her, so she keeps them constantly in the throes of a twisted love affair, with herself and with one another. Luckily for her, few in the City are able to match the manipulative prowess of the Mistress of Tragic Love so for now, she has her most awakened proteges wrapped around her finger.

Rosaline's favor, so coveted by the proteges, is sometimes reflected in access to her resources, such as her network of Touched potion-makers and magical-trinket-peddlers or the three powerful seers who serve her. The proteges pass down the secret recipes and spells that transform a Sleeper into a Potion-Maker, but this power still originates in Rosaline. Any protege who doesn't want a poison or love spell failing on her at a crucial moment would do best to stay on the grande dame's good side.

### KEY CHARACTERS

Rosaline's closest companions and most destructive proteges are high fashion tycoon **TROY STEELE** (Helen of Troy) and the pimp **JERRY HAM** (Don Juan), as different from one another as night and day. The mother of all divas (excepting perhaps Monte Wolfe) and an icon of femininity, Steele works mostly the upper echelons of society, cultivating power-hungry and attractive female and male gold-diggers into irresistible temptresses. Troy and his proteges employ a look-don't-touch strategy and exude the sort of magnetic prestige that places them immediately in the "trophy wife or husband" fantasies of power-mongers and social climbers around them. Those

who do win their "love" have their families torn apart and are bled dry of their fortune or are used as mere springboards for the protege's career. Jerry Ham on the other hand is a loathsome, promiscuous, abusive lowlife who runs brothels across the City and balks at nothing, from personally enacting someone's darkest fantasies to outright human trafficking. His proteges are trashy, wanton, yet incredibly seductive prostitutes and "loose" individuals of both sexes who bait others with the allure of the forbidden passion and the dark side of love.

**THE BUDREAU SISTERS** (Three Witches of Macbeth) are Rosaline's seers. Some would say these three obese and chain-smoking women, often dressed in grease-stained leotard spandex and brandishing frizzy hairdoes, have no room in Rosaline's school for the seductive arts. Yet, their value lies in their ability to read – and sometimes alter – the fates of individuals in the City, particularly in the areas of love and fortune. To anyone else their prophecies sounds clouded and ambiguous, but proteges, who are versed in the language of theatrical symbolism, derive a great deal of information from the sisters and learn exactly where, when, and how they should strike. An audience with the sisters could clinch the deal for a protege's project and seal the fate of even the most pure-hearted victims. Conveniently, the sisters never leave the confines of the tiny kitchen in their apartment above the Lolita theater. Their loyalty to Rosaline also knows no bounds; she refers to them as her sisters, but no one knows whether they are actually related, particularly given the fact that each of the four women is of a different ethnicity and culture.

As said above, Rosaline's favorite proteges are the wild cards, those she doesn't control directly and who actually know nothing of her existence, except perhaps as the mysterious teacher of their teachers. Dr. Wendy Medlocke, jokingly called **DR. WEDLOCK** (Wicked Sister-In-Law who turned brother against brother in the Native American Blackfoot *A Tale of Two Brothers*) is a renowned marriage and family therapist best known for hosting a popular reality talk show, *Together Forever*. Under the pretence of promoting family unit stability and wholesomeness, Dr. Medlocke actually thrives by inflaming the emotions and worsening the friction between family members who appear at her shows or come to her for therapy. The number of ruined families and murder-suicides coming from under her hands continues to rise, but those who would call foul play usually fall to her manipulative powers and believe her excuses that "they were lost cases to begin with". Due to her Mythos, Medlocke is especially vulnerable to Native-American *medicine* (especially Beaver medicine), so she steers clear of parks and waterways in the City.

**P.I. HARGREAVES** (the Bone Harp, from the Nurthumbrian murder ballad *the Twa Sisters*) is one protege driven by ideals completely opposed to Rosaline's, but whose Mythos nonetheless ties him with her. In the gruesome ballad of *The Twa Sisters*, one sister betrays another to her death; a harp-maker makes a harp out of the dead sister's rib cage and hair, and when played, the harp exposes the betrayal; the murderous sister is then boiled in lead. Similarly morbid in disposition, Hargreaves is a middle-aged hard-boiled detective for hire who has a tendency to be drawn towards cases where there is hidden betrayal and unspeakable secrets. When he arrives at the scene, these skeletons tend to magically come flying out of the closet, so wherever he goes he usually leaves a wake of broken hearts shocked to their core, much to the pleasure of his mentors, who swoop in to nudge his former clients over the edge.

Rosaline's **SACRED PROSTITUTES** are independent Rifts of fertility and sexuality gods and goddesses with legendary powers of seduction. One of them, code-named **WHITE PEONY** (Bai Mudan, legendary Chinese courtesan), is a rogue government assassin and spy specializing in destroying the lives of privileged men who prey on vulnerable women. Like her Mythos, she is able to drain the Ki energy of her mates, empowering herself to the point of immortality and invulnerability. Her first target was her superior agent who took advantage of her while she was under his command. She later seduced him and dismantled his life piece by piece until he saw no way out but to take his own life. Despite her vengeful streak, White Peony focused so far on taking out the bad guys, but it's only a matter of time until her mentor, Jerry Ham, points her at a haughty, condescending, and arrogant male who nonetheless did nothing wrong. What she chooses to do when faced with that moral dilemma will define her path as a hero or villain.

Recently, the proteges have been complaining about a mysterious dark stranger who has been stealing their thunder. When this man waltzes into a scene, everyone around is taken over by an irresistible wave of unbridled rage, passion, and lust. At first this was believed to be Ekram Din (Dionysus, see *Tourist Trap*), but the dark horse turned out to be an unknown newcomer, one **HARDIK SHAH** (Rāgarāja, Buddhist deity who transforms worldly lust into spiritual awakening). This strapping hunk with his smoldering gaze has the power to incite passion even in the most ascetic individuals, regardless of their orientation, leaving behind him lustful mayhem and many things to explain. Rosaline is developing a soft spot for this new favorite of hers, but the Budreau sisters warn her to keep her distance if she wants to keep her Avatarhood. If Shah's powers evolve, he could potentially attain the ability to purify a person's urges and use their

energy for good – and Rosaline would be no exception. However, as a protege, he may become an ace up her sleeve when it's time to bring down Chairman Chow, who also thrives on mortal desires.

To facilitate their goals, Rosaline's proteges sometimes pass down some of her knowledge or abilities to people who can be useful to them. **HOMEWRECKERS** are individuals who consciously agree to take part in a protege's tragic scheme out of loneliness, envy, love, or revenge, and receive the power to seduce and manipulate others. Homewreckers bring about nothing but ruin and pain to those around them but, like Rosaline, they're at a point where they really don't care. These restless souls sometimes get a taste for the drama, and once they have conquered and/or ruined the person they wanted, move on to wreck the next home.

**POTION-MAKERS** are matchmakers, psychic readers and mediums, meddling elderly family members, and the like who are tasked with preparing and dispensing love potions, poisons, truth serums, and the likes. They also craft bewitched lovers' trinkets, such as claddagh rings, that attract Rosaline's proteges, bringing woe and tragedy to their wearers. Naive lovers often stumble into a Potion-Maker by fate, chance, or uncanny attraction and get exactly what they need to start really making bad choices in their love life.

Those under the effect of a love spell or potion, called by proteges **STAR-CROSSED LOVERS**, are suddenly able to perform superhuman feats of athleticism and stamina, helping them down the path of desire and at the same time nudging them towards their eventual doom. When these powers are active, they are usually accompanied by the scent of perfume, cologne, or musk, or a trail of purple-pink glowing particles. Unlike other Avatar-created Touched, Star-Crossed Lovers are often too preoccupied with their feelings to notice legendary powers of others, unless such a discovery supports their intense feelings. Love is blind, after all.

## KEY LOCATIONS

Rosaline's proteges know every **ROMANTIC SPOT** in the City. These thin places, created through repeated exposure to powerful emotion, enhance the proteges' seductiveness and make people more susceptible to their advances, while at the same time filter out other Mythoi (the Mist uses lovers' obsession to distract them from non-Romantic Mythoi). From boat restaurants cruising on the river to secret vantage points at the top of a broadcast tower favored by young run-aways who feel they're on top of the world, the City has an endless list of must-see locations for lovers where the proteges prowl.



On the flipside, proteges like to end with a bang in one of the City's **DRAMA-PRONE SITES** like the steps outside the courthouse, the corridors of a highschool, or the airport escalators. Their ability to erode their victim's sanity is increased tenfold in these strange thin places, causing more people to lose their marbles and common sense and react stupidly and drastically.

Talented proteges can even set up a **POP-UP BACK-DROP** to create a similar effect, like the set of a soap opera or a classic Romeo & Juliet theater balcony overlooking a garden. Their victims are easily fooled, too caught up in their own emotions to notice it isn't real. Dr. Wedlock is particularly notorious for luring victims into a pop-up set of *Together Forever*, forcing them to open up on live television.

When a protege needs to truly deceive someone, especially a Rift with discerning powers, they ask permission to call into **MELANY RICE'S COSTUME SHOP** in the Old Quarter. Melany (Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy and the tragic theater mask) is trained in crafting Cothurnus buskings, special boots worn by tragic actors. When worn, these boots completely and utterly (but temporarily) mask one's identity, on the condition that they are acting to bring forth a tragedy or under tragic circumstances. This is one of the City's

most powerful masking spells, capable of deceiving even Isaac Mortensen's all-seeing Gawkers (page 29). Rosaline always has her own pair on; consequently, no one knows what she really looks like.

**THE FORSAKEN LOLITA THEATER** is a century-old rundown playhouse tucked at the end of a paved side street in the Old Quarter. Anyone considering walking down the street feels a flutter in their heart and a heavy stone in the pit of their stomach. If they listen to their gut, they turn back and never come near that place again; if they follow their emotions and start walking, they will meet a protege waiting under a mood-setting streetlight before they make it halfway to the theater (and from there the ending is known). The Budreau sisters reside in an apartment at the top, with a skylight to the night sky. Rosaline herself lives in the theater proper, among the seats, in the dressing rooms, and backstage. She is often found lying across several seats, wearing ridiculous, even creepy theater costumes of ostentatious renaissance dresses and with running makeup, laughing or sobbing hysterically at the empty stage. She's not hallucinating; she can see every tragic love story in the City as an apparition on her stage, and can grant anyone present the ability to see it as well.

## ROSALINE'S HISTORY

Most people miserable enough to cross paths with Rosaline assume she was hurt or betrayed herself, thinking either a man left her for another or she was abused as a child. Some think it's her envy that drives her to ruin others. All of them are wrong.

Rose Dudson was just a very ordinary person. She studied economics and worked at a desk job. She met another analyst, Andrew, at a conference and dated him for a while. Finding him reliable and good-natured, even if not handsome, she married him and together they raised a family, first in a starter-home apartment and then in a more spacious single-family townhouse. All in all, things were going well for her.

But the better her life became, the more Rose's emotional discontent grew. The happiness she was expecting to feel wasn't there, and instead there was only a vast emptiness. Secretly, she watched soap operas and read romantic novels and fantasized about a life where her emotions ran high, where she *felt* something. To her dismay, she discovered nothing made her heart pound as much as sad stories and tragedies. That was when her Mythos first struck root.

Armed with the ability to infatuate others and drive them to acts they normally wouldn't dream of, Rose hit the town, breaking hearts and bonds of loyalty at every turn. This went on for years, and her husband, while he knew and kept his distance, never disowned her. Rose kept on with her life of abandonment and even started her promiscuous "school of drama", all this time trying to bring her husband to despair and send her away. He never did; he just looked disappointed, and sad, but he never broke down the way she wanted him to. She could have forced him to turn away from her, but she didn't, either because it wouldn't have gratified her – or because she really did love him.

With his steadfastness, Andrew showed her that drama and tragic love are not always the result of random misfortune; they can be a choice, a destructive wish towards which certain hearts gravitate. Rose wanted to revel in tragedy, to feel the strongest and most sweeping emotions: love, passion, misery. One day she packed a suitcase and just upped and left, leaving her family behind, unscathed and anonymous, to become the Avatar of tragic love. This was decades ago, but somewhere in the City, Andrew and her family may still be waiting to receive her with open arms – a notion she dreads more than anything.

## ROSALINE'S STORY SEEDS

As an emotion-focused Avatar, Rosaline's involvement in the game should feature relationships among the lead characters and between the lead characters and supporting cast (especially those represented in a Defining Relationship theme). She should be introduced gradually, with whispered rumors of scandals and off-handed remarks slowly adding up to reveal an insidious attack on the hearts of the City residents.

- Some kind of psychic terrorist (Hardik Shah) seems to be taking pleasure in removing peoples inhibitions in public, putting them to shame. After a group of executives out golfing ends up in a naked fight in a pond on the golf course, the crew is tasked by the company's PR team with figuring out what exactly happened and making sure it never happens again.
- A lead or supporting character falls head-over-heels in love with a new love interest, ignoring some obvious difficulties or problems with this new relationship. At first it seems sweet and admirable, but over time they begin to lose their head, acting carelessly and even dangerously, forcing the crew to intervene before it's too late.
- When P.I. Hargreaves crosses paths with the crew, perhaps as part of a collaboration on a case, he unearths all the dark secrets the crew members don't want each other to know, or reveals a sore betrayal by a supporting cast NPC. When the crew starts falling apart, Rosaline's proteges pick them off one by one.
- The crew is invited to work out their issues as a family on the *Together Forever* show (or at Dr. Medlocke's clinic) but the more help they get from the doctor, the more they seem to fight and hurt each other.
- A popular downtown bar area is producing a wave of new couples and is hailed as the best place in town to find love. Simultaneously, a high-society matchmaker is making millions off the higher echelon's lonely hearts, fixing them up with new dream relationships. But one-by-one these new relationships seem to crash and burn, costing some their broken hearts, their fortune, their future, and even their lives. Further investigation will reveal the love potions and charms sold by peddlers in the bar area and by the callous matchmaker, but who is behind it all?

## ROSALINE'S CUSTOM MOVES

**Lover:** When you take a tier-5 infatuation status, you suddenly feel energized and positive about your new love affair. Take the temporary story tags *increased vigor* and *throw caution to the wind*. So long as you are

involved with your love, you or the MC may have your character regain both these tags (together) at the start of a scene.

**Star-Crossed Lover:** Your careless infatuation takes a sudden turn for the worse. The MC can burn your *throw caution to the wind* tag to make a hard move.

### NEW HARD MOVE: TAKE HELP POINTS / GIVE HURT POINTS

Rosaline grants her proteges the ability to manipulate relationships, and the crew's relationships are no exception. One way to undermine the crew's unity is to take away their ability or wish to help one another, represented by taking away their Help points, and to give them the means and urge to interfere with one another, represented by giving them more Hurt points.

## ROSALINE'S EXTRA THEMES

The Budreau Tarot Deck is a useful item to have, but it's hard to come by. These Art Nouveau illustrated decks are enchanted by the Budreau sisters as a special gift for a favorite protege (usually male). With a deck such as this, and trusting one's intuition, one could assess another person's fate and detect any manipulations enacted upon it, maybe even change it.

### BUDREAU TAROT DECK

*Relic*

#### MYSTERY

*How can I interfere with this person's fate?*

#### POWER TAGS

*tell someone's fortune, reveal intimate feelings, subtle fate manipulation, beautiful illustrations, draw the Death card (or another major arcana card), detect fate manipulation, reads lovers like an open book, intuit how to bring misfortune, tear a card to alter fate, map out relationships.*

#### WEAKNESS TAGS

*vague and symbolic, subject always has a choice, easily torn, nosy*

#### THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **Black Juju:** When you **Investigate** using tags from this theme, you can convert some of your Clues to Juice, one-to-one, to reflect your influence on the object of the reading. On a 10+, you can use the 10+ options from **Change the Game**.

## ROSALINE'S DANGERS

### HOMEWRECKER MYTHOS POWER SET + ★

Anyone can become a Homewrecker. All it takes is enough hurt, envy, or entitlement to make you blindly believe you deserve more than others or that others don't deserve what they have. Homewreckers have a knack for pushing people out of balance, getting them to do and say things they don't mean.

To create a Homewrecker, combine this Mythos Power Set with a mundane Danger from the MC Toolkit (starting on page 141). The Homewrecker could be a vindictive City Official (page 141), an unassuming Helpless City Resident (page 142), a Social Butterfly (page 144), or a Troubled Individual (page 144).

- **Here Comes Drama:** When a Homewrecker enters the scene, the MC may burn one tag of mental fortitude and stability belonging to each PC present.
- Beguile someone (*enamored-2*) or inflame their emotions (*emotional-2*)
- Cause lovers and friends to fight and break ties (burn one relationship tag or crew theme tag, remove one Help point, or **Complicate Things, Bigtime** in a way that invites the players to mark Crack on Defining Relationship, Crew, Ally, or Familiar themes)

### POTION-MAKER ★★

Potion-Makers use Rosaline's knowledge of poison and love essences to create substances and trinkets with enchanting or deadly properties. They are often older or reclusive individuals with a lot of free time, who practice their potioncraft in the kitchen or the basement, and then sell it to a distressed or overzealous youth.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / SURRENDER 2

- **You Wouldn't Hurt An Old Lady/Man:** When you attack a Potion-Maker, you first take *guilty-3*.
- **I Have Just The Thing For You:** As a soft move, the Potion-Maker discovers one of your Mysteries or Identities, or figures out your current predicament, and offers a suitable solution.
- **Love, or Death:** When you ingest a potion, you take *infatuated-4* or *poisoned-4*, depending on the potion. You then take the same status again at the beginning and at the end of each Downtime thereafter, until you shake off the enchantment or until the MC rules you have survived the poison. Enchantment- and Poison-curing effects only need to remove the potion status once to stop its action.
- Manipulate someone into taking a potion (*interested-2*)
- Suddenly throw a potion at you (treat as if you ingested it)
- Offer to craft an antidote, for a price (**Force Them To Choose**)
- Sell a potion with glinting eyes
- Grovel and beg for forgiveness



## WHITE PEONY ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / CHARM OR SEDUCE 6 / CATCH 5

- **Ki Transfer:** When you sleep with White Peony, you take *drained-4*. She takes a *Ki-charged* status of the same tier (modified by your **Face Danger** move, if any). Her *Ki-charged* move enhances her attacks and makes her resistant to attacks or magical effects.
  - **Agent Combat Training:** When White Peony takes a status she can dodge or block, reduce its tier by 2.
  - **Non-Negotiable Objective:** When you **Convince** White Peony, reduce the tier of any status she takes by 2.
- 
- Catch her target's attention with her untold beauty, making them fall head-over-heels with her (*in-love-5*)
  - Use her training to get the drop on someone or avoid incoming attacks (give herself *stealthy-2* or *evasive-2*)
  - Strike a lethal blow with a hidden rope dart, dagger, or butterfly swords (*bleeding-out-4*)
- 
- "Innocently" approach her target, wearing a dazzling evening dress and glaring with beautiful large eyes
  - Use acrobatic maneuvers to evade pursuers and position herself in the shadows
  - Zoom away on a getaway motorcycle she had nearby

## HARDIK SHAH ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / CHARM OR SEDUCE 4

- **Love-Stained King:** As a soft move, Hardik Shah gives anyone he sees or who is in the same room *enraged-5*, *impassioned-5*, or *in-love-5*. This status cannot exceed tier 5 and expires at the end of the scene.
  - **Mysterious Dark Stranger:** When Hardik Shah enters the scene, give him a *leather jacket*, a *smouldering gaze*, and *mysterious*.
- 
- Inflare the passions of anyone or everyone around (as in **Love-Stained King**)
  - Get into a fist fight (*bruised-2*)
- 
- Walk dramatically into a room full of people, stopping all conversations

## TROY STEELE ★★★★★

As the *Iliad's* Helen of Troy, Troy Steele can make any power-seeking individual desire his companionship so greatly that they would do anything for him, especially go to war with one another or with Troy's enemies. This army of thralls gives him immense social and political power, but Troy is mostly interested in playing out his thralls' downfall to the utmost extent.

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / CHARM OR SEDUCE 6

- **Trophy-Wife Material:** Any power-seeking individual and who can perceive Troy (with any sense) takes *enthralled-5* as an intrusion. Troy can repeat this effect as a soft move.
  - **Tragedy Architect:** As a soft move, Troy can **Complicate Things**, **Bigtime** or **Make Something Horrible Happen** anywhere within the domain and power of his thralls.
  - **Trojan Beauty:** When you try to harm or manipulate Troy, the MC first burns three of your tags granting resistance to Troy and then gives you *mesmerised-by-beauty-5*.
- 
- Make his thrall or someone mesmerised with his beauty forget their other relationships (remove all Help points from victim, give all other crew members a Hurt point against victim)
  - Fortify his thralls against outside threats, both physical and social (give *fortified-3* or remove up to 3 tiers of unwanted tactical, social, or legal statuses from thralls)
  - Call one of his thralls to his defense (Create new Danger: Corporate Lawyer, Elite Security, Mover & Shaker, etc. See MC Toolkit starting on page 131)
  - Betray one of his thralls to their doom (**Make Something Horrible Happen** or any appropriate status with a tier equal to the *enthralled* status)
  - Dazzle everyone around with his beauty, style, and wealth, spreading envy (*dazzled-3*, *fascinated-3*, or *envious-3*)
  - Shoot someone unexpectedly with a hidden holdout pistol (*shot-to-the-heart-6*)
- 
- Enter the room, captivating all who behold him
  - Identify power-hungry individuals nearby
  - Whip out a phone and call or text one of his thralls

## RELATIONSHIPS IN THE TRUTH

Rosaline plans to make her own 'family', the Truth, her greatest work of art, setting them up for an epic war of gods after which the City will never be the same. She has been following the internal relationships in the pantheon from day one. Here is what everybody thinks of everybody else, including herself.

### CHAIRMAN CHOW

- **Ganesha:** Intimidating in her power but can be used to my advantage.
- **DA King:** A steadfast ally, who keeps crime at bay at no cost to me.
- **Dr. Leyland:** A weak-minded crybaby, easily manipulatable. Great for new products.
- **Rosaline:** Over-emotional harlot, let her play her games. Useful for taking out politicians.
- **Monte Wolfe:** Great kid, goes with his gut. If he keeps disrupting sales there will be hell to pay.
- **The Gatekeepers:** Number one allies. As long as our goals align, I can trust them.

### GANESHA

- **Chairman Chow:** The worst man in the City. I want him gone.
- **DA King:** She needs to learn compassion and learn to tell the good guys from the bad.
- **Dr. Leyland:** A good man, but very sad. He can help me help everyone.
- **Rosaline:** I don't like her. She's an evil woman and she makes people fight.
- **Monte Wolfe:** Funny but so loud. I want to give him a hug and tell him to hush and listen to his heart.
- **The Gatekeepers:** They protect the City, but make people sleep too deep. I must talk to them.

### DA KING

- **Chairman Chow:** Despicable, but stable. He's the least of my concerns right now.
- **Ganesha:** She's just a kid. Her people will align with me or suffer the consequences.
- **Dr. Leyland:** Weirdo. As long as he keeps his science quiet, I guess I can let him be.
- **Rosaline:** She's pathetic and gives women a bad name. Might be more dangerous than she looks.
- **Monte Wolfe:** A troublemaker and instigator of civil unrest. I'll take him out first.
- **The Gatekeepers:** They only care about Rift problems, I get stuck with controlling the masses.

### DR. LEYLAND

- **Chairman Chow:** A manipulator and user of the worst kind. I deal with him only when I have to.

- **Ganesha:** Means well, but her religious streak hinders people's ability to think for themselves.
- **DA King:** It's good that she's keeping the order in the City, as long as she leaves Helix Labs be.
- **Rosaline:** A charmer if there ever was one. I'd fall for her, if I didn't have so much work to do.
- **Monte Wolfe:** Scandalous and empty. People like him give nothing to society but demand everything.
- **The Gatekeepers:** They want to hold back the evolution of mankind. That's not going to work.

### ROSALINE

- **Chairman Chow:** Tricky one. The key is to manipulate his desires, and then he has to follow.
- **Ganesha:** A naive little child. The more relationships she builds, the more I get to ruin.
- **DA King:** Her power is tantalizing. Whatever, I don't care. She'll be easy to turn against the others.
- **Dr. Leyland:** More naive than the little girl. I am going to have him wrapped around my finger.
- **Monte Wolfe:** What an attention slut. We share some laughs but I know what makes him tick.
- **The Gatekeepers:** A mystery to me. I'm still not sure how to handle them once the war breaks.

### MONTE WOLFE

- **Chairman Chow:** My big daddy! Love doing business with him and the Gatekeepers.
- **Ganesha:** Cute ethnic chic but I'm so over this holier-than-thou attitude.
- **DA King:** Hag. We have some... *creative disagreements* about what the people really want.
- **Dr. Leyland:** In desperate need of a makeover. And a vacation.
- **Rosaline:** I don't like how she prys into my past. She likes to stir the pot too much.
- **The Gatekeepers:** BFFs. I keep the people distracted and they watch my back.

### THE GATEKEEPER REPRESENTATIVE

- **Chairman Chow:** Longtime partner. He understands that the City has its limits.
- **Ganesha:** A disruptive force. We're still assessing her seemingly-good intentions.
- **DA King:** Another reliable ally we can count on to help clean up the mess.
- **Dr. Leyland:** Profiling shows he intends to overturn the Mist. Terminate as soon as possible.
- **Rosaline:** *Appears* to be the least of our concerns. Therefore, we need to double our alertness.
- **Monte Wolfe:** Not the most elegant ally, but he gets the job done. Good working relationship.



## **MONTE WOLFE**

### *The Boy Who Cried Wolf*

“You know, when I was young, they said I wouldn’t amount to anything. That I’ll always be that small, insignificant child. But I showed them, didn’t I? Look at me, just look, you have to admit, darling... I’m fierce, I’m powerful, I’m popular, and I’m absolutely fabulous! It’s no small wonder everyone is constantly begging to hear what’s on my mind. Everybody wants me on, all the time. You know why? Because I bring the ratings, darling, believe me, I give the people what they need, and I tell it to them, plain and simple... I may be a diva, but I’m also a man with a plan, and that plan is simple enough - all eyes on me.”

– Monte Wolfe

A trendsetter, an uninhibited news pundit, a fashion icon, a diva - Monte Wolfe (The Boy Who Cried Wolf) is all of those things and more. He's flashy and extravagant just as much as he's witty and charming, and knows exactly how to use his irresistible presence and charisma through all channels of the media to exert influence and sway public opinion to satisfy his mythic need: to cause alarm to as many people as possible.

Wolfe revels in the limelight. He yearns for attention and makes sure he constantly receives plenty of it. This craving to be at center-stage means that, as opposed to some of the other Avatars in the City, Monte Wolfe, as a public figure, is at the forefront of his operation. He is an omnipresent talking-head that can be found offering fashion advice on the morning show, and come evening spits his no-holds-barred take on immigration reform as an expert panelist. Wolfe operates out of a need to be the one and only voice for the people, the one who says the things they crave to hear. Wolfe doesn't care for the facts or the truth (whatever that means); to him, whatever he decides to present as the truth is what people should believe. He gets a mythic-level kick out of watching the masses lose sense of which threat is real and which isn't.

Wolfe's entire life-mission is based on a few simple principles: to push toward and promote sensationalized news, larger-than-life items about rising stars and scandalous politicians; to sprout disinformation through the circulation of false data and made-up reports; and to undermine those who seek to publish the facts in good faith. Through these efforts, Wolfe aims to achieve his goal: mass hysteria on a citywide scale. He doesn't intend to actually cause harm, but he also doesn't care if people get hurt along the way. The Boy Who Cried Wolf draws a feeling of power and amusement from leading people away from the truth and by triggering mass panic with his sensational claims. In his ideal endgame, the City is constantly alarmed with the false news that he puts out, with no-one being able to tell true from false.

Within the council of the Truth, The Boy Who Cried Wolf often finds himself drawn to the drama created by Rosaline, although he doesn't understand her fascination with small-scale, personal affairs. Sometimes he might even promote her tragedies to larger, and therefore worthier stages, if they serve his agenda. As the Avatar of distorted truth, Wolfe has a special scratch-

## OVERVIEW OF MONTE WOLFE

- **Agenda:** to cause mass hysteria by spreading falsehoods
- **MO:** sensationalize the media, promote fake truths, undermine facts
- **Emotion:** Fear and alarm
- **Motifs:** glamor, glitz, sheep's skin, wolves, shepherds, alarms
- **Frontliners:** sponsored reporters, Shepherds, the Town Crier, Emerald Studios
- **Stronghold:** Wolfe Tower

my-back-and-I'll-scratch-yours relationship with the Gatekeepers. His work in the past few decades has done wonders to keep the residents of the City distracted and cut-off from their inner selves, making the work of the Mist easier. Among the Truth members, he is the member whose long-term goals are most aligned with the keepers of the Mist, although even they roll their eyes at some of the rubbish he publicizes.

## MONTE WOLFE'S MODUS OPERANDI

Monte Wolfe's media conglomerate divides and conquers like a well-organized military junta. It does so despite the whimsical, and often blasé nature of its leader. To his merit, Wolfe has surrounded himself with qualified individuals who share in his agenda and promote it for him. The Boy Who Cried Wolf no longer needs to raise the alarm himself, he has his interns and apprentices to do that work for him, so he has time to enjoy the show, while the City alarms keep wailing. This tight-knit group of media savvy geniuses, known simply as Monte's entourage, are the ones responsible for the great potency and efficacy with which tall tales and outright blatant lies are pushed through Wolfe Tower's propaganda machine.

This network of fraud extends its outreach and influence over all channels of the news media. It does so mainly through the wit, craft, skill (and magic) of the entourage. Each of these highly-capable Legendaries has a full arsenal of assets at their disposal at all times - newspapers, tabloids and magazines, radio and television channels, production studios, talent agencies, PR and marketing firms, and more. Every news network that is sponsored by Monte comes under the entourage's magical influence. They pull the right strings so that everything seems and sounds more dramatic and has a stronger impression and impact on the audience: a minor report of a small house fire turns into a gas leak panic across the City, a drunken fight in a local bar evolves into inter-community enmity, and so on.

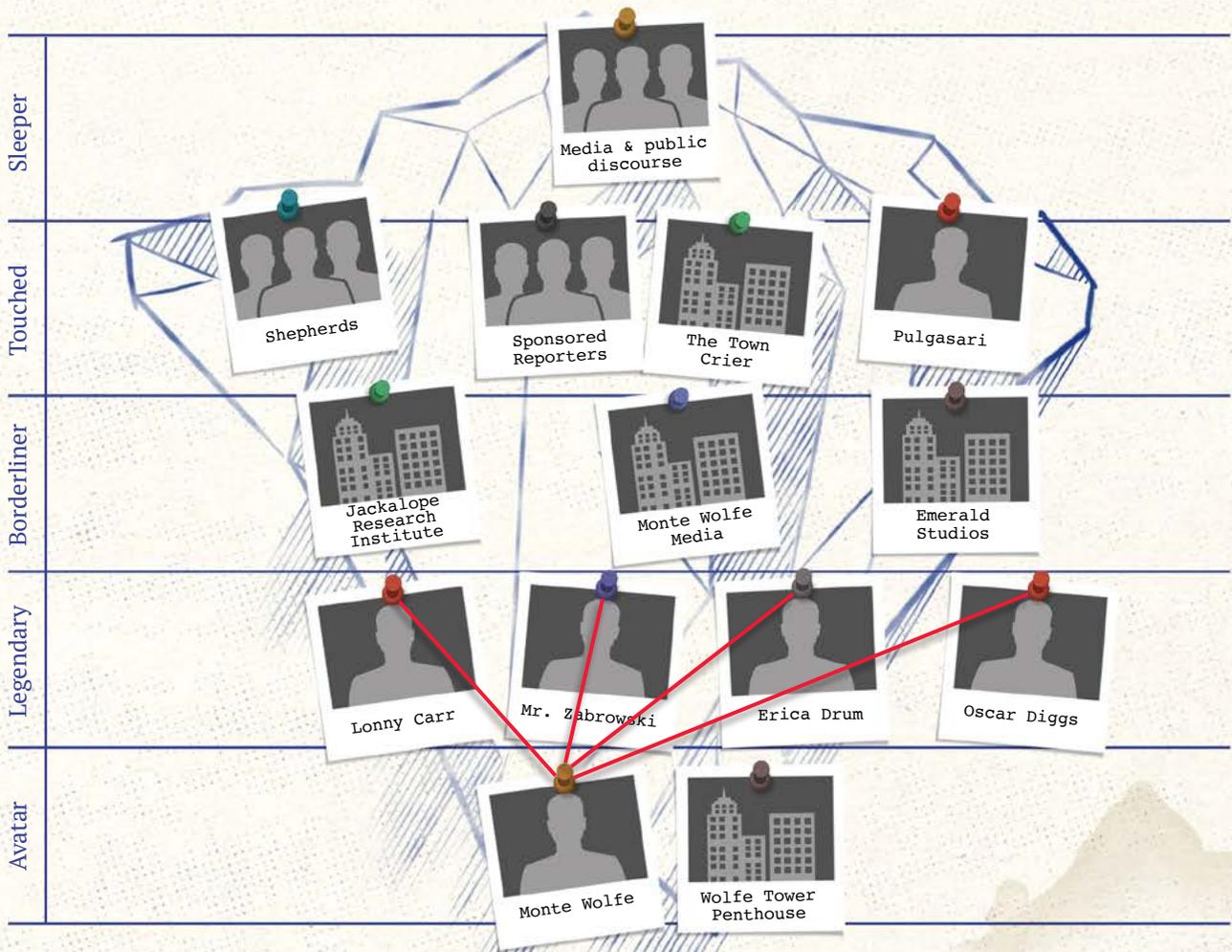
Monte's entourage deliberately misinforms the public by fabricating "scientifically-proven" claims and passing them off as actual science, using self-appointed think tanks and pseudoscience journals. These publications in turn feed fear-mongering Shepherds, infused with the mythic ability to fuel rumors, spread false information, and incite fear. Through the use of mass trends and movements, they are able to fan out the disinformation and cause panic amongst their flock and in the general populace.

The spread of disinformation among the City's residents is coupled with a constant discrediting of the City's most honorable straight-shooters - investigative journalists, honest politicians, leading science researchers, and honorable benefactors of education - all targets for defamation, debunking, and utter disrespect.

In effect, Monte Wolfe practically controls the mass media in the City. He gets to choose what's true and what's false, and most importantly, what reaches the masses and what drowns in the noise. Through that immense control he is able to raise the alarm he so craves, spreading fear in the hearts of the City's people, and through it he builds a sense of mistrust of the system and its officials, ultimately leading to a sense of chaos and mass-hysteria.

## MONTE WOLFE'S OPERATION

Wolfe is perfectly capable of heading his own operation, but who has time for that when you're the most popular man in the City? To free himself to go to all those fancy soirees and speak his mind all over the news media, he has his **entourage**, a group of four Legendaries, to run his operation.



Monte's operation, just like his hairdo, is bound to change and adapt to the current zeitgeist. Instead of giving each entourage member her own purview and "branch", Monte has his people pool their assets and resources. Even if one of his Legendaries heads a specific asset, the others are entitled to make use of that asset to promote their agenda, and through it, Monte's agenda. Working in a framework without clear boundaries is bound to make sparks fly, but that's exactly how Monte likes it; it would be so boring otherwise. The other benefit of an ever-changing structure is that it's extremely hard to trace any single media spin to one entourage member.

The Touched level of Monte's operation is made out of **Echoes**, "independent" media agents and brokers who serve as his eyes and ears – but most importantly mouth – all over town. Their job is to sound and repeat Monte's messages in different ways, sometimes even by contradicting him (Monte loves this), creating a media silo around the City where all anyone can hear is Monte, or nothing at all.

### KEY CHARACTERS

Monte's entourage is a handful of cherry-picked professionals who are the City's greatest liars and deceivers.

He chose **ERICA DRUM** (Baron Munchausen), a fabulous conwoman with an equally epic beaked nose, to head **Monte Wolfe Media (MWM)** and serve as his personal broadcaster, helping him sensationalize new items across media. Erica doesn't come from much, and has lied her way to the success she has now, tricking banks, hotels, and fashion designers into giving her credit, accommodation, and clothing she could not afford and setting herself up as royalty in the eyes of the rich and popular. The Baron in her makes any tale she yarns into a reality, as long as there are non-believers in the audience, and magically retcons the facts or fabricates the proof to support it. Erica can single-handedly blow a story out of proportions and into a total media meltdown, ensuring that the public attention is fixated on what Monte wants them to see.

**OSCAR DIGGS** (The Wizard of Oz), head of Emerald Studios, is a stocky, greasy, and balding self-professed film director who has founded his studio to create popular blockbusters but, despite his stunning pyrotechnics and special effects, never seemed to get funding. Wolfe offered Oscar the funding he wanted so badly but in exchange for two things. One, Diggs had to use his magic to make sure every public appearance Monte makes is exploding with star-quality and leaves everyone absolutely flabbergasted. Secondly, Monte had him produce and direct material for MWM's propaganda purposes: telemarketing ads, televangelist broadcasts,

and talk shows promoting poisoned discourse and fear; pseudoscience documentaries about space aliens and sasquatches; and staged recordings of celebrity scandals and deep fakes of politicians promoting hate speech, evoking public outrage. At first, Oscar Diggs was hesitant to accept this offer, but the promise of realizing his cinematic dreams and becoming a household name was just too hard to resist.

**BARRY ZABROWSKI** (The Devil's Advocate), a dashing grizzled lawyer who Monte likes to mock as the entourage's 'daddy', serves as Monte's personal legal bodyguard while his firm represents MWM. Barry's uncanny powers of refutation and doubt-casting are used daily to deflect legal bullets from Monte and MWM. He can twist words and make postulations that make one doubt it's daytime at high noon. In addition to his legal responsibilities, Mr. Zabrowski handles the methodical discrediting of trustworthy sources of information in the City. Whether by pinning a misconduct accusation on his victims or by publishing entirely contradictory research which casts doubt over their work, Mr. Zabrowski is an expert at smearing the reputation of good people and turning them into social pariahs, making sure the truth is never perceived as true, even if it sees the light of day.

**LONNY CARR, real name YANNIS PAPADAKIS** (Pan, Greek god of the wild, shepherds, and flocks, whose name is the root of the word "panic"), is a popular country singer who first gained stardom as a judge on TV talent shows and later gained notoriety for hitting on the contenders. Monte, who has a soft spot for Yannis (likely due to their shared Mythoi properties) made all that media drama go away and even flipped it to boost Yannis's support and record sales, and the two became fast friends. The dark horse of the entourage, Yannis makes very little public commentary, sticking to the occasional striking photo pose. He's still pissed with the people of the City for denying him his satisfactions, so he just smiles to the camera, while behind the scenes he is brewing mass panic and hysteria on a mythic scale, using his godlike power to evoke heightened emotions, from ecstasy to terror.

Scattered across the city, Monte's assets and resources take on projects initiated by the entourage.

**Emerald Studios** creates any kind of real or fake video content that the entourage wants to broadcast. Some movies feature a zany troupe of chameleon actors known as **THE SIONARA SIBLINGS** (the Somnia, "dream shapes", Greek gods who can mimic any form), known for their ability to take the form of any personage with remarkable detail, mimicking not just facial features, but also voice, gait, movement,

and even mannerisms. Others star actual monsters of legend – from great big lizards and dragons that spew fire and lightning, to big apes, grand moths, and even weirder and otherworldly creatures. These **KAIJU AND DAIKAIJU** (strange beasts of Japanese cinema) are Familiars of these legends, or Conjurations created by Oscar Diggs visionary mind. None are as popular or as feared as the **PULGASARI** (a North Korean monster that featured in propaganda films). Sometimes Monte has the director unleash his beasts downtown, causing mass hysteria and evacuation of the district, then later convincing everyone it was just a movie shoot.

The **Town Crier** is a gossipy, yet highly popular City-circulated tabloid, whose chief editor is **SUSANA APPLGATE** (Pinocchio). Once a rising star journalist for a “real paper”, Susana has since fallen from grace after she was caught fabricating details in a story about a high-ranked City politician and a young starlet, in order to force the politician to spill the beans on a conspiracy she was investigating. Susana dreams of becoming a real journalist again, though the pay at her new job is good and she finds she excels at it, drawn more and more to telling lies. Everything is made that much harder due to her escalating ‘nasal problem’ – her debilitating cocaine addiction.

**The Jackalope Research Institute** publishes academic journals as well as pseudoscientific magazines filled with ‘research’ that has dramatic bottom lines. These are used by Monte’s media outlets to refute truthful claims or accurate research or to ruin the City residents’s sound sleep by claiming the existence of false threats like a new virus, an upcoming financial crisis, a new crime wave, etc. just when the public attention should be focused on other, real threats in the same categories. Those who dig into these papers find such a maze of claims and data that they are forced to admit ignorance or accept the results of the research. Only Mythos-powered researchers can penetrate the spell and see the falsified research for what it is, but it doesn’t matter because no one else will believe them (and if someone does, Mr. Zabrowski will get to them).

On the streets of the City, **Echoes** pick up what the entourage and their “assets” put down, and amplify it.

Yannis seeks out those who feel they’ve been unjustly attacked by society, like he feels he was, and grooms them into **SHEPHERDS**, public speakers and fear mongers who seed supernatural fear and terror in the hearts of listeners, fixating their attention and amassing greater and greater flocks. Shepherds wear many skins: from televangelists through self-help gurus, from anti-vaxxers to medical hysterics, from lifestyle celebrities to the-end-is-near hobos preaching on a

box in the park. All of them aim for the same set of goals: spreading fear and debasing the level of discourse in the City, repeating the twisted tales created by others in Monte’s operation.

**SPONSORED JOURNALISTS** are “independent” media generators, from rookie reporters at local papers to anchors of the six o’clock news, who work around the clock to promote MWM’s news agenda, getting the “correct” story out there and making sure that Monte’s “truth” is pumping out 24/7. In return, they get better coverage when all of Monte’s followers flock to their networks. Sponsored Journalists wear clothing from Monte’s **FAKE!** woolskin brand (Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing) that make them appear completely authentic while speaking absolute lies.

## KEY LOCATIONS

**EMERALD STUDIOS** have taken over a portion of the docks, converting the hangars there into cinema studios. Anyone who strays into the complex is bound to accidentally walk onto a set, and find themselves embroiled in an action movie or space opera. In fact, the only people able to see the backstage are authorized personnel or awakened people who can see through the Mist as well as resist Oscar Digg’s “Big Red Curtain” effect. Sometimes the bodies of curious interlopers turn up floating further downstream, mauled or torn in half by Kaiju and Daikaiju beasts.

Wolfe Tower is a modern skyscraper, home to Monte Wolfe Media and all of its departments and divisions. Once a month when Monte has some downtime, he and his entourage like to hang out in his mansion-sized **PENTHOUSE AT THE TOP OF WOLFE TOWER**. Lounging by the infinity pools and drinking mimosas, while surrounded by giant screens broadcasting every Monte appearance and all news channels, the entourage enjoy analyzing every item down to its finest detail. Sometimes, when the Pulgasari is unleashed downtown, Monte will hush them and switch off all media, and they will giggle at the sound of thousands of people screaming together, Monte’s favorite pastime. There is a no-fly zone around the building, not because it’s physically dangerous but because pilots seems to panic and crash their aircraft when coming near it. Furthermore, anyone targeting the building from afar is struck with paranoia, starts hearing sirens, and is convinced someone is coming after them; even if they get a clear shot (photographic or from a weapon), they discover they got the wrong building, the wrong penthouse, and the wrong man. Police choppers suddenly surround them with news helicopters in tow, and a televised drama ensues, after which they can never step outside again without being recognized and followed around by Monte’s paparazzi and reporters.

## MONTE WOLFE'S HISTORY

Monte Wolfe came from humble beginnings; at least, that's the way he would spin it. For him, "humble" means 'without much media coverage'. He grew up in suburbia, fourth among five brothers and sisters. His parents worked late, leaving him with his siblings, who had their own interests. In the chaos of a full house, his own unique voice was constantly drowned out and no one really noticed him much. To get some facetime with his parents he had to lie, tell them something shocking, horrible, or out of the ordinary. He tried a few times to claim to see aliens and dinosaurs, but eventually his parents had enough and he was scolded and sent to his room. Little by little he understood that his story had to be good: it had to be believable, it had to be personal, and most of all it had to be too dangerous to ignore. With this realization, the Boy Who Cried Wolf awakened in him.

The rest of his childhood was fraught with conflict. He became the troublemaker, and clashed with his parents often. He eventually left to attend a preppy college, carrying loaded baggage brimful of daddy- and mommy-issues over his shoulder and seeking the attention of others at every turn. His first big break came after he publicly shared (in a reality show, talkshow, or radio program, depending on the period the game is set in) a graphically detailed yet completely concocted dramatic background story about an abusive relationship with his schoolteacher, gaining extensive cover-

age and propelling him into the public's awareness. Monte continued to capitalize on each news item he could get, earning himself a celebrity status as well as a prominent spot in the local tabloids and gossip shows. Monte craved more and more of the spotlight with every round of applause – even when they booed him for his outlandish, eye-poking, extravagant style. He found that whatever he did onscreen became the conversation of the day on the streets. He soon got to host his own show about the lives of the rich and famous, which he still hosts today. His ratings remain constantly high.

Monte never stopped growing as a media personality, but just when he reached what seemed to be the apex of his popularity, a forgotten urge from his childhood resurfaced. It wasn't enough to lie anymore – Monte wanted to see them panic and scurry. He was always afraid that shouting wolf! too many times would make people numb to him, that it would cost him the limelight. But now that he had all the power, he wasn't afraid anymore. He knew how to keep their attention fixed with bigger lies and louder sirens. Out went his last mortal fear, in came Avatarhood. Now tremendously rich and popular, Monte snuggled in his woolly coat of falsities and fabricated tales and sat to watch the City burn. He often wonders if there is a wolf, the Wolf, who would be the end of his show, but until such a thing arrives, if ever, he is enjoying the spectacle.

## MONTE WOLFE'S STORY SEEDS

- A once reliable and respectable investigative reporter begs for the crew's help with restoring her lost reputation. After years of exposing corruption and conspiracies, and holding fast to her principles despite threats from politicians and crime lords alike, someone finally got to her. The media started circulating photos of her receiving money from a dubious businessman (perhaps of Chow Industries), but she swears she has never met him in person.
- The neighborhood where the crew operates is in turmoil over the warnings of a manic homeless street preacher, claiming he used to be a scientist for the City Waterworks who discovered strange contaminants in the water and has the research to back it. While the crew investigates, the preacher gains power and influence in the neighborhood, instilling fear into the locals, who turn on the crew when they try to refute his unfounded claims.
- Time and time again the crew is alerted to a drama downtown, where a building-sized monster wreaks havoc and terrorizes the district. The damage and the destruction the creature causes are real, but the trauma seems to blow over quickly, with most people believing it's a media stunt. Things take a turn for the worse when a supporting cast member is caught by the monster, who climbs a skyscraper while holding them captive.
- When the crew has meddled in Monte's business for too long, the Town Crier publishes a series of unflattering or blatantly defaming articles about them, baring their secrets to the entire City and embellishing, or flat out faking, the juicy parts. Made out to be the City's greatest villains, the crew must withstand the public shame, humiliation, and hatred, and rebuff the aggressive media attack against them while investigating who is really behind it.

## MONTE WOLFE'S CUSTOM MOVES

**Biased:** When you **Investigate** using media reports as your source, you always get clues that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false. On a 7-9, the MC may choose an additional complication.

## MONTE WOLFE'S EXTRA THEMES

The exclusive *FAKE!* brand sells woolskin jackets, coats, cloaks, tunics, vests, boots, shoes, hats, barrettes, sandals, belts, and even watches with woolskin straps. New models are released periodically, and a self-respecting fashionista wouldn't be caught dead wearing last year's designs. The wool is either sourced from a private farm just outside town which is owned by Monte or it's completely fake and synthetic, depending on the day you ask the brand representatives and the current spin they're angling for. Not all of the garments in the line are magical, of course; a garment must be a gift from Monte's entourage to be enchanted and it is not transferable; a thief who steals a garment must fool it to accept her as the original recipient of the gift, if she wants to use its enchantments. Unfortunately, *FAKE!* Garments are not easily tricked.

### FAKE! WOOLSKIN GARMENT

Relic

#### MYSTERY

How can I get the greatest coverage?

#### POWER TAGS

*make lies appear to be truth, gatecrash, adopt a false identity, warm and fuzzy fur, hidden pockets, tell wolf from sheep, fool the watchdogs, herd the flock, become inconspicuous in a crowd, transform into a wolf*

#### WEAKNESS TAGS

*itchy, can't fool the shepherds for long, flammable, forgot how to be authentic*

#### THEME IMPROVEMENT

○ **Like Lambs to the Slaughter.** When you attack a Sleeper, they don't see you coming. You always have an opening for **Hitting With All You've Got** against them. If you do, instead of *holding their attention* you may choose to *appear harmless to them*, making them think you didn't attack them.

## MONTE WOLFE'S DANGERS

### SPONSORED JOURNALIST ★★★

FOOL 4 / SCARE 4 / GAIN RATINGS 6

- **Inquisitive:** As a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. The Sponsored Journalist knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
  - **On the Ball:** When the Reporter enters the scene, give her *alert-1*.
  - **FAKE! Woolskin Garment:** When you **Investigate** the truthfulness of Journalist's words, you always get clues that are fuzzy, incomplete, or part-true part-false. On a 7-9, the MC may choose an additional complication.
  - **Public Panic:** Once per session, if the highest status on the Sponsored Journalist's *gain-ratings* spectrum is at tier 3 or higher, she may as, a soft move, cover a story that sparks mass hysteria or outrage. Create a Mob (*MC Toolkit*, page 142) with a size factor equal to the tier of that status. At tier 5, the whole district is affected. At tier 6, *gain-ratings* is maxed out and the whole City is affected.
- 
- Disappear in a crowd to escape or sneak into a guarded place (giving herself *inconspicuous-2*)
  - Sensationalize a report, spurring a heated public debate (give herself *in-the-news-1* if her *gain-ratings* spectrum is empty; otherwise, increase the tier of that status by one).
  - Expose someone publically or give them a bad reputation (*exposed-2* or *infamous-2*) or threaten to do so unless they do something for her
- 
- Show up at the worst time, snooping around
  - Find an unlikely witness and start interviewing them
  - Shove a microphone, camera, or notepad in someone's face and tell them they're live or that what they say will be on the morning newspaper



## OSCAR DIGGS ★★★★★

Although he is one of the most powerful reality benders in the City, Oscar Diggs still thinks he's a fraud because his powers don't actually change reality, they superimpose upon it. Interestingly, believing he is a fraud, as with his Mythos of the Wizard of Oz, also makes him one of the only people in the City immune to any form of illusion and deception. Oscar's insecurity is his biggest weakness and anyone who knows him can easily get him to drop the theatrics by calling him out as a charlatan.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / DESTROY ALL THE REPLICAS 5 / CALL HIM A CHARLATAN 4

- **Special Effects:** When you take action against Oscar Diggs, you first take *wow-3*, becoming distracted.
  - **Lifelike Replicas:** When you physically harm or subdue Oscar Diggs, if *destroy-all-the-replicas* hasn't maxed out, you discover it's a replica of him. Increase the tier of *destroyed-replica* on *destroy-all-the-replicas* by 1. Reset it at the end of the scene.
  - **Daikaiju:** Once per scene, Oscar Diggs can introduce a huge monster into the scene (Create Danger: Pulgasari).
  - **Cut!:** At the end of a scene, Oscar Diggs can (and usually does) remove any physical or emotional harm statuses he or his monsters gave to other characters, including tier-6 statuses, saying "it was only special effects".
  - **Takes One to Know One:** You cannot invoke illusion and deception tags against Oscar Diggs, and illusion and deception effects don't apply to him.
- 
- Conjure a realistic cinematic spectacle, captivating the attention of all around as if they were on the set (*wow-4*)
  - Have something bad happen to someone standing in his illusory movie (give a harmful status equal in tier to the target's *wow* status)
  - Make an impossible escape, optionally by sacrificing one of his replicas, if he has any left (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- 
- Whine about how his movies are underappreciated
  - Shout *Action!*

## PULGASARI ★★★

The Pulgasari looks like what would have happened if Godzilla and King Kong had a baby together. It is a gigantic dragon-like humanoid creature that walks on two feet and is covered in scales. It has two bullhorns on its head and four talons on each hand. When the Pulgasari is set loose in a district, the ambient city noises make it panic and it just starts smashing everything. It loves children and would try to protect them from any harm, but it cannot distinguish them in a crowd.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 1 / HURT WITH METAL -

- **Gargantuan:** When the Pulgasari takes a physical harm status, reduce its tier by 4, unless it can affect all of the Pulgasari.
  - **Metal Eater:** When the Pulgasari consumes a large mass of metal, it grows. Increase its *hurt-or-subdue* spectrum maximum by 1. To activate this move again, the Pulgasari must eat five times more metal than the previous activation.
  - **Hysterical Stampede:** When the Pulgasari strikes at a City district, create a Mob (*MC Toolkit*, page 142) that is fleeing the scene, overrunning all in its path.
  - **OFF Switch:** When you find the Pulgasari's activation circuit, give it a *shut-down:3* spectrum representing your efforts to reach it or switch it off.
- 
- Slam down his arm or foot on an area (everyone takes *buried-under-debris-4* or *smashed-4*)
  - Breathe special effects fire or roar (everyone around takes *terrified-3*)
  - Shake someone off him or drop them from a great height (target must **Take the Risk** to stay on the Pulgasari; otherwise, the target takes *mortally-injured-5* after the next PC action)
- 
- Move its arms robotically and roar mechanically



## ALL-OUT MEDIA ATTACK ★★★★★

When Monte's people target one of the lead characters, or all of them as a group, all media hell ensues. The target of the attack must clear her name, or somehow prove to the public that the unwarranted attack has an ulterior motive. Since this is an ongoing conflict that can stretch over sessions, you can reward players for narrative achievements, such as a successful press conference or favorable heroic coverage, by placing an appropriate status on this Danger's *clear-name:6* or *control-the-narrative:6* at the end of a scene.

### CLEAR NAME 6 / CONTROL THE NARRATIVE 6

- **Turn Up the TV:** When All-Out Media Attack enters the scene, give its target *tarnished-reputation-3*. The target may **Face Danger**, if they are able to.
- **Don't Feed The Trolls:** Whenever you do something in public that plays into your demonized public image, the All-Out Media Attack makes one of its hard moves.
- **Ostracized:** *tarnished-reputation-3* statuses apply to any action that puts a status on *clear-name:6* or *control-the-narrative:6* by the target or their representatives.
- **Restless:** When you spend time away from the media, things get worse. At the beginning of downtime, roll+your *tarnished-reputation* status. On a miss, you take downtime as usual. On a hit, the MC introduces a new Danger from the list below; if you can't deal with it quickly, your downtime is lost and you do not benefit from it. On a 10+, the MC also gives the Danger *persistent-2*.
  - » a City Official (*MC Toolkit*, page 141) or a Detective (*MC Toolkit*, page 148) asking questions
  - » an angry Mob of protesters outside your door (*MC Toolkit*, page 142)
  - » a snoopy Sponsored Journalist (see above)
  - » a gang of Delinquent Teenagers responding to the media trends (*MC Toolkit*, page 146)
- Publish false or sensationalized information about its target (*tarnished-reputation-3*)
- For a target with *tarnished-reputation-3* or higher: implicate its target in legal or financial difficulties (*legal-trouble* or *broke* with a tier equal to *tarnished-reputation*)
- Sow hatred and antagonism in the public (remove up to two tiers of *clear-name:6* or *control-the-narrative:6*)
- Exhaust its target's resources and supporters (burn one appropriate tag)
- Announce a breaking news story about the target

## LONNY CARR ★★★★★

Yannis Papadakis, better known as his stage name, Lonny Carr, harbors an immensely powerful god inside him. Often confused with the Stag Head or Dionisus for their shared attributes, Pan is a god of many talents. For now, Yannis isn't showing his full strength; he's on Monte's good side and wants to keep it this way until he is sure he can survive a head-on collision with him as an Avatar. This Danger represents only some of his powers, the ones he is willing to reveal.

### HURT OR SUBDUE 5 / HERD THE FLOCK 3

- **Take a Chill Pill:** When you try to attack or trick Lonny Carr, he first makes one of his hard moves against you.
  - **Dance For Me:** When *herd-the-flock* maxes out, Lonny Carr gives one of his musical statuses to an entire City district.
  - **Mystery Cult God:** When you **Investigate** Lonny Carr, he first takes *unfathomable-4* renewed as a soft move. This status cannot exceed tier 4.
- 
- Play guitar or sing country music that can induce any emotional state or put listeners to sleep (*playful-5, impassioned-5, panicked-5, enraged-5, sad-5, pensive-5, or asleep-5*; this may apply to any collective regardless of its size)
  - Broadcast his music to an entire City district, either using mass media or standing at a high point in the City (giving himself *play-for-my-flock-1*)
  - Transport someone to his pastoral enclave of Arcadia (*fading-away-5*)
  - Transform a person into a natural phenomenon such as wind in the reeds, falling leaves, or a rural wildlife animal (*transformed-5, or transformed-6* if that person already has another tier-5 status from Lonny Carr)
  - Change the emotional state of anyone around him (change the tag of existing emotional statuses, keeping their tiers)
- 
- Playfully waltz into a serious or dramatic scene, acting as if it wasn't
  - Whip out of nowhere a strange guitar carved from a single piece of wood
  - Smile knowingly

## SHEPHERD ★★★

### HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / SCARE 6 / GATHER FLOCK 6

- **Bodyguards:** When a Shepherd takes a status from which her flock can protect her, the flock takes the status instead (use Mob, *MC Toolkit*, page 142).
  - **Unfazed:** When a Shepherd takes a fear status, reduce its tier by 2.
  - **Public Panic:** Once per session, if the highest status on the Shepherd's *gather-flock* is at tier 3 or higher, she may as, a soft move, give a speech that sparks mass hysteria or outrage. Create a Mob (*MC Toolkit*, page 142) with a size factor equal to the tier of that status. At tier 5, the whole district is affected. At tier 6, *gather-flock* is maxed out and the whole City is affected.
  - **Instigator:** As long as the Shepherd is within a mob, its *quell* spectrum maximum is increased by 1.
- 
- Convince a person or a crowd of an imaginary threat (give herself *fear-mongering-1* on her *gather-flock* spectrum if it's empty or increase the tier of that status by one; give a mob *panicking-2* regardless of its size; or give someone *panicking-3*)
  - Insinuate that the mob she created should hurt a person, a group, an organization, or a location, either physically, financially, socially, etc. (**Complicate Things, Bigtime** and give the mob *panicking-2* regardless of its size)
  - Steal the attention from another speaker (remove up to 3 tiers of social and emotional statuses on the audience)
- 
- Preach their word to the masses

