

CITY of MIST



DEMONS IN CROSS END

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



CITY OF MIST

In the heart of the crime-ridden slum of Cross End, a crumbling old church becomes the epicenter of a battle between two ancient Mythoi. The waning Holy Faith, once the revered protector of order and sanctity, is using the last of its power to try and stave off the Stag Head, a deity of uninhibited animal urges. The crew is drawn into this bloody struggle while investigating local crimes, and eventually must choose a side and make an unspeakable sacrifice.

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CONTENT WARNING

This game contains mild language as well as strong themes of violence, crime, and immorality. Parental guidance is advised.

PRONOUN USE

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



BACKGROUND

Centuries ago, with the arrival of the first settlers to the City, the church of Santa Teresa of Ávila was constructed over a site sacred to the indigenous tribes in order to reform them and prevent their wild practices from affecting the City.

In actuality, it was the Mythos of the Holy Faith that arrived in the City with full force, trying to secure and control the sacred site – actually an Enclave, a location-based Rift, for the Stag Head Mythos (see sidebar). The Holy Faith had its followers construct the church in order to protect this location in the years to come.

As the years went by, however, the power of the Holy Faith waned, the City grew, and a neighborhood was constructed around the site which later became a slum known as **Cross End**, after the church and the district's relatively remote location. With every passing year the church fell further into disrepair until it became little more than a ruin. The church falling apart was in fact the physical manifestation of the Faith's weakening presence. While the church remains a safe place, the influence of the Stag Head has permeated throughout Cross End, turning it into a literal concrete jungle.

THE STAG HEAD

Bacchus. Pan. The Green Man. Dionysus. The Horned God. Many names were given to the Stag Head over the years: some acknowledging the different aspects of this Mythos, others confusing it with other Mythoi. Whatever the name given to it, it has always been clear that the Stag Head is not exactly looking to tell a story about firm boundaries and self-discipline.

Manifestations of the Stag Head always promote revelry, ecstasy, and abandon. They invite you to throw the burden of cultural restraints off your shoulders and give in to the intoxicating freedom of not caring anymore. Everyone has that feeling in the pit of their stomach, the feeling that they are playing a role and holding their breath. The Stag Head calls you to let go and unleash the most raw version of yourself into the world: only through complete release can you truly experience the meaning of being alive.

Nowadays, only one custodian remains to protect the church, an angelic young gunslinger called **Christina** (Avenging Angel), deadly as she is dedicated. On the other side of the ring, the Stag Head's growing influence has been manifested through a street gang known as **the Beasts**. While the Beasts still can't enter the church, due to its mystical wards, they have been picking it apart stone by stone and spray-painting psychedelic graffiti of animal forms on its remaining walls, gradually wearing down its protection.

Both parties are aware of the fact that on the eve of Halloween, when the veil between the worlds is thinnest, the Stag Head will make its attempt to break loose of its centuries-old prison and manifest in the City once again. Therefore, Christina has been working tirelessly to restore the church's power. To do so, she requires the heart of a true believer, to be sacrificed at the altar before the clock strikes midnight on All Hallows' Eve. She has been hunting for it on the streets of Cross End for the past week, masking her killings as the work of the Beasts. Furthermore, aware of the Beast's plans to acquire the schematics of the church so they could bring it down altogether, she commissioned a mercenary called **Proximo** (Will-o'-the-Wisp) to steal the schematics from an art gallery in the Old Quarter and bring them to her for safekeeping.

THE MURDERS IN CROSS END

To save the City (as she sees it), Christina needs to simply place the heart of a true believer on the church's altar before midnight on All Hallows' Eve. As she found out in recent days, that is more easily said than done.

The main problem is, it's not quite clear what constitutes 'a true believer' (see sidebar). Christina tracked down and murdered three different people whom she identified as possible 'true believers', one on each of the previous three nights. She did so with a heavy heart, but knowing the danger of the Stag Head breaking loose, she felt she had no other choice.

All three hearts did not yield the result Christina hoped for when placed on the altar, and the guilt for the lives she has taken for naught now hangs over her young shoulders.

HISTORY & CULTURE IN CITY OF MIST

As described in the Demo Game rulebook, the City of Mist may or may not be a real city in our modern world. However, to keep the game focused on the cinematics rather than on worldbuilding, you can assume that the City of Mist at the very least *appears* to be a modern city in our world. This way, historical and cultural references are still relevant even if the City has no definite location on the planet.

If you choose to place your City of Mist at a specific point on the globe, you should adjust the details of this case to match the historical and cultural context of your chosen location.

THE HEART OF A TRUE BELIEVER

The question '*What makes a true believer?*' is the mystery at the center of this case. Does being a true believer mean you are a follower of the Holy Faith? Does it mean being a good person – and if so, good in what way? Does it mean having hope? This is not a question for the MC to answer before the game, but for everyone to answer together as the game unfolds.

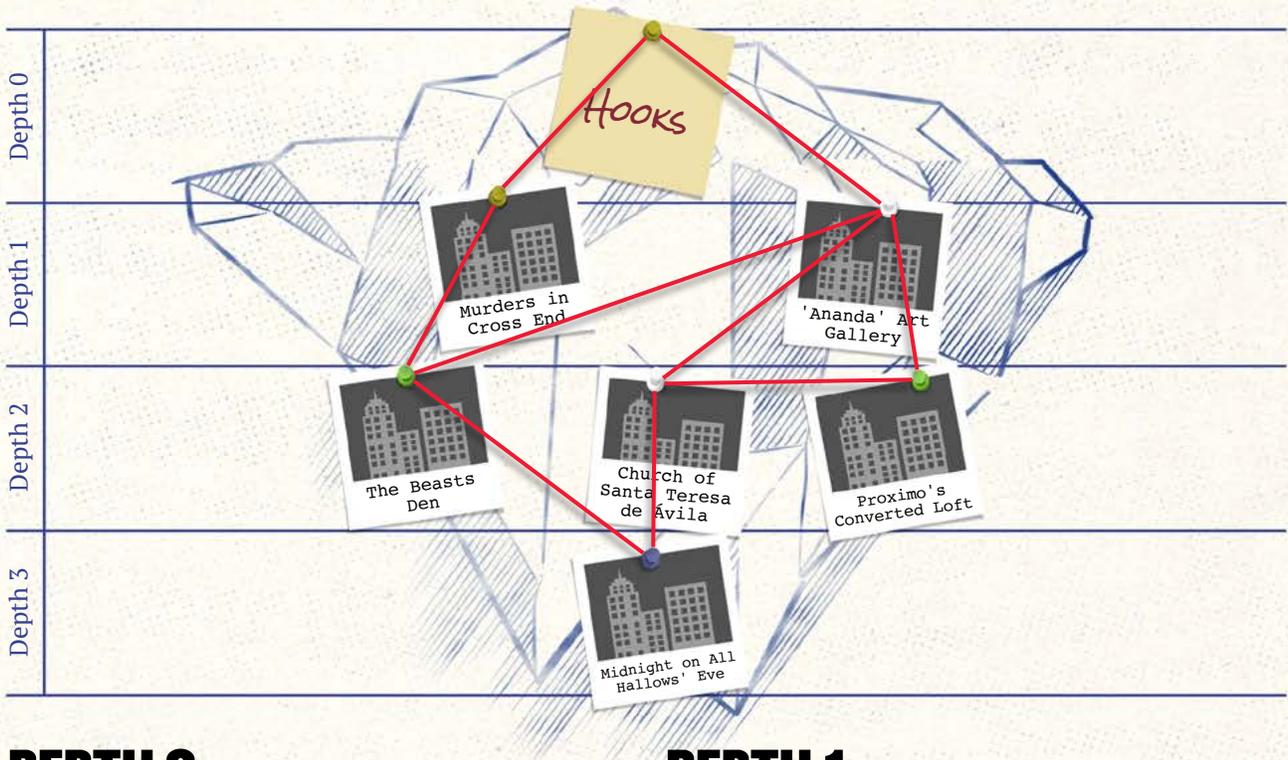
While it is not advised that the MC spell out this question for the players (a mystery should be, well, mysterious), you can use it to build up suspense.

When one of the players rolls 7-9 on the **Investigate** move, you may choose the option to ask a counter-question. Describing the character's feeling of being watched, either by some higher force or perhaps by something in the Beasts' strange graffiti, you can ask that player a simple question: "Are you a true believer?". There is no need to identify the source of the question; it goes out from the MC to the player, not necessarily from an NPC to the PC. However, it refers to the player's character.

Knowing which character is a true believer, or at least considers herself to be one, could set up the scene for the grand finale. You can assume that Christina or the Beasts (or both) are given this information about the PC through their Mythoi.

THE ICEBERG

The Iceberg diagram represents the locations in the case and their possible connections.



DEPTH 0: THE HOOK

The crew may become involved in the investigation in the following ways:

- **Michel Ahmagi**, owner of the Ananda art gallery, approaches the crew and asks to hire them to retrieve the stolen church schematics. Calling his old university chum Declan L'Estrange (or any other connection in the crew), Michel would report that a trained professional broke into his gallery the previous night and stole several items. Since one of the items was on loan from the City municipality (the schematics), he is reluctant to call the police and is willing to pay a considerable sum to have the item returned to him, no questions asked.
- The crew may hear or read about the **barbaric, possibly ritualistic murders in Cross End**. As scattered reports of gruesome murders in Cross End reach the media, any crew member can bump into a small and very much downplayed newspaper article on the matter. Characters with contacts on the streets, like Excalibur, Salamander, or Post-Mortem, may even get a call from someone related to the victims or a concerned leader of the community.

DEPTH 1: MURDERS AND THEFTS

'ANANDA' ART GALLERY

Tucked away in a typical paved side street in the Old Quarter, the Ananda art gallery resides on the second floor of an old two-story house. The crew will be ushered in by a nervous but rather striking middle-aged man in a dark purple designer suit, sporting a heavy French accent: Michel Ahmagi.

The gallery is a mess: the robust door leading to a staircase going up to the roof was ripped off its hinges by a blast, and there are signs of another explosion in the middle of one of the showrooms. However, even a quick glance can reveal that the job was rather surgical and that nothing was harmed beyond what was necessary for the job.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE

Proximo (Rift of Will-o'-the-Wisp) is an expert saboteur with the ability to make himself appear to be a short distance away from his actual location. It was easy for him to reach the roof via the fire escape stairs, blow up the roof security door with an extra potent charge, run down the staircase, then blow up the second security

door into the gallery. Once inside, he quickly located the schematics of the church in a glass display, carefully burned a hole in the glass with a special burning gel, and rolled up the schematics into a plastic case he had prepared. Shopping around for a moment, he also picked up two other items to sell later. By the time he was heading out, a security guard showed up, fired a few shots that missed the mark, and then took a swing at Proximo, at which point the burglar seemed to have exploded, knocking the guard out (in fact, he was not standing there at all, and instead had a mine set up where his illusion was). Stepping out of the smoke, Proximo collected everything he needed, went out through the roof, made his way back to the alley behind the building, mounted his bike, and disappeared into the night.

Here is what the crew can discover during the investigation:

Three items were stolen:

- **A modern art necklace** made of gold and silver, which Michel considered to be utter rubbish, but had displayed as a favor to a friend
- **A miniature Persian carpet**, which he has a personal attachment to as it is a family heirloom
- **The old schematics of a church in Cross End** (Church of Santa Teresa de Ávila), a part of a series of twelve old schematics of landmark buildings, that were on loan from the City municipality to the gallery. This is the item Michel is most worried about due to the possible implications for his business.

The security camera feed shows Proximo in action. He is a swarthy and muscular man wearing a military jacket, combat fatigues trousers, and heavy boots, carrying a backpack and a belt of what seems to be hi-tech explosive charges. His face always seems to be hidden or turning away from the camera (he was using his powers to ensure that). The moment when the security guard goes through him as he ‘explodes’ is blurry at best.

The job was done by an expert. A careful study of the explosion sites by an expert can reveal that the charges used were entirely custom-made. The chemical compound used to burn a circular hole in the glass case also seems like a home-brew substance.

The burglar arrived and fled on a motorcycle that was parked in the back alley. If the crew can identify the bike or somehow track it, it will lead them to Proximo’s Converted Loft. The crew can also identify and locate Proximo by calling contacts, hacking military files, pulling underworld strings, etc.

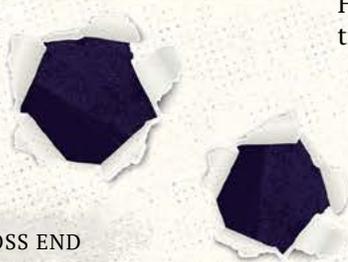
Someone else was also trying to get into the gallery recently. There are signs of previous attempts to break through the roof door that are much less sophisticated than Proximo’s explosives – claw marks cover the broken door.

A strange gang-related activity took place here. The roof is covered with fresh-looking graffiti of animal and plant motifs in bright colors. The graffiti seems to be centred around the door to the gallery. There are feathers and clumps of fur on the roof. Studying them shows they do not necessarily belong to local cats and birds, but rather to bigger creatures not native to the City. A study of comparative art or a mystical sense can link these marks with the Beasts (leading to the Beasts’ Den).

MORTY

As they investigate the roof or back alley, the crew is being watched by Morty, a corvine member of the Beasts appointed to watch the gallery in case anyone tried to get the schematics. Morty already informed his leader, Bear, about the break-in last night and was told to wait and follow any police or investigators who may become involved. If one of the characters is investigating the roof or back alley on their own and rolls 7-9 on the **Investigate** move, you can decide to expose them to danger: panicked by their presence, Morty may try to flee and report their involvement (or even attack them).

Morty is a 15-year old gang member with a pouting mouth that seems like it’s forming into a gray beak and a coarse plume of black feathers growing out of his brow, temples, and cheeks. He is rather panicked and isn’t really thinking straight; he might make a lot of stupid moves as he tries to deal with the crew. You can use him as a way to connect the gallery with the Beasts and Cross End but note that Morty doesn’t know about the Stag Head or why the church is so important. For him, being a part of the Beasts is simply a way of life. He has heard talks about the Green God as an inspiration for the Beasts’ street art.



MORTY ★

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / THREATEN 2

- Caw and screech (*shaken-1*)
 - Claw or bite (*injured-2*)
 - Flee (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
-
- Try to look and act macho

CROSS END MURDER SCENES

The last three nights saw three people murdered in Cross End, creating a public panic about a serial killer or killers. This panic was further inflamed by the apparent ritualistic nature of the murders.

By the time the crew arrives at Cross End, all crime scenes have been sealed off by the police, who left the place and moved the bodies to the morgue for autopsy. The three victims were:

- **Corrina Dulak** (three nights ago), a righteous lady who frequented church regularly and was well-known in the community for her charity work. However, though they will not speak of it openly after her horrible death, her own family knew Dulak as a harsh and domineering matron who demanded the highest standards of purity and self-discipline from everyone, sometimes to the point of abuse.
- **Frank Dalton** (two nights ago), a genuine and kind high-school student who was always welcome anywhere in the neighborhood thanks to his rolling laughter and ability to defuse any animosity by cracking jokes. For all his love for Cross End's people, Frank always dreamed of leaving the neighborhood and making a better life for himself elsewhere. Did that make him "untrue"? Who knows.
- **Saeed Beshara** (last night), a local rapper known for his inspiring lyrics that often talked of a direct relationship with the divine. Saeed may well have been a Rift in contact with something from beyond the Mist, but studying his lyrics would also show he was terrified of opening up to that greater force and often wanted to turn his back on his gift.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE

Christina was hoping to kill two birds with one stone: get the heart of a true believer while also framing the Beasts, getting them out of her way. Here's how she did it:

- She would make her move when her victim was alone and where she knew she had a few hours before anyone would show up, i.e., at home or in a dark alley, and usually late at night.
- First, she would shoot them right through the heart and kill them. She needed the heart for its mystical properties; keeping it biologically intact was not important.
- Next, she would break the victim's ribcage and tear the heart out using an instrument she obtained, made out of a bear's claws. This took some time and made a big bloody mess.
- After acquiring the heart, she made sure to claw away at the entry and exit wounds of the bullet.
- She would then spread feathers and fur around the body (she collected these from around the church walls).
- She meticulously spray-painted art similar to that of the Beasts all around the body.
- Finally, she would unleash a cage full of rats at the scene and let them tear at the flesh.

If the crew investigates the three murder cases, they will find similar clues in all three crime scenes. These clues can point at the Beasts (the Beasts' Den), but you can reward exceptionally good investigation with clues that reveal the Beasts were framed.

The victim was somehow **instantly incapacitated**, possibly by a form of cardiac arrest.

The victim's heart was **clawed out and removed whole**; subsequently, the entire body was mauled and chewed, with shreds of flesh found around the body.

The entire crime scene was **covered by creepy graffiti** depicting beasts in the forest. However, a direct comparison may reveal differences in style, or even that the art was copied.

Overlooked and hidden somewhere on the crime scene, a **single bullet case** can be found.



DEPTH 2: AN ANCIENT WAR

PROXIMO'S CONVERTED LOFT

Proximo's somber loft is positioned above a crummy old warehouse laden with crates and boxes; a shaky metal staircase in the warehouse is the main access point to the loft. A dirty skylight lets natural light in from above, overlooking a broad and heavy workbench covered with parts, cans, casting gear, machinery, tools, boxes, etc. Other than that, the place seems quite spartan, with a tiny sink, a small but loud refrigerator, and a cramped bathroom. The only comfort is a gallery with a double bed.

If the characters arrive at Proximo's loft before the showdown on Halloween, they will find him there. He has already delivered the schematics to Christina and was paid, but he still has the other two items. He is getting ready to sell those items for some extra cash, planning to leave town with all the money he made.

If Proximo is caught or if an agreement is reached, Proximo may tell the crew about Christina and the job she hired him to do. However, as a professional, he did not ask and therefore does not know why Christina needs the schematics.

If he flees, the crew may find a note with Christina's name and phone number somewhere around the workbench.

PROXIMO'S POWERS AND SETUP

Proximo's powers are a reflection of his Will-o'-the-Wisp Mythos: by projecting illusions of himself, he tricks his foes into following him or coming near him. Then, he suddenly disappears, but it's too late for his victims: an explosive charge is usually waiting for them where he once was.

Proximo is expecting trouble. He has the entire place boobytrapped and his powers activated, projecting an image of himself a few feet away to trick any onlookers. When the PCs secure a line-of-sight, you can assume that whatever the characters are seeing is not the real Proximo. As he is very skilled at using his powers, the illusion will behave exactly as he would have behaved had it really been him: either he is packing up or he listens suspiciously, then hides in the gallery or warehouse and prepares to attack, etc.

If anyone attacks the illusion, Proximo uses that moment to set off a mine near the attacking character (as per his custom move **Boobytrap**, see below). If the character comes close to the illusion to attack, Proximo has a mine waiting where the illusion is standing. If the character is attacking from a distance, Proximo sets off a charge he has set there in advance (he has them all over the place) or as a last resort throws a charge at her. When this happens, the PC hears a rapid beeping sounds or sees a mini-charge with a flashing light. Instead of **Hitting With All She's Got** or **Going Toe to Toe**, the PC must **Face Danger**. Once this happens a few times, PCs can start **Investigating** to avoid areas with pre-set charges, or in order to identify from where the charges are thrown.

Crew members can only directly attack Proximo after they discover where he really is. Proximo's other custom move, **Misguide**, forces them to do so via indirect questions. When they spot him, they may see a man-shaped disturbance, or notice other details in the environment, such as footsteps in the dust or a bend in the floor where he is standing.

GUS

If the crew calls someone for help in dealing with Proximo, they may be referred to the city's Bomb Disposal Unit. When help arrives, it seems somewhat less impressive than the title. The 'Unit' consists of a single young officer named Gus, who arrives on a scooter equipped with a rotating flashing orange light. Mechanically, Gus is more of a tag than a Danger with his own moves. If anyone wants Gus to take a shot at defusing bombs, they can roll **Take a Risk** with the tag *Gus* adding to the Power of the action.

Narratively, though, Gus is a stand up guy, who is willing to put himself at risk in order to save people from blowing up. If you're short of a true believer, perhaps he is the one.

Gus was conceived in one of the online playtests of this case; the credit goes to Nicholas Law, James Gantry, Justin Lafontaine, and John Lamb.

PROXIMO ★★

Proximo was an expert army demolition man when strange things started happening to him: people would see him several feet away from where he was, sometimes having an entire conversation with him without noticing he wasn't really there. In time, Proximo discovered he could use this ability to displace light to lead people to where he wanted them, often somewhere he had boobytrapped with his custom-made mines. This got him into trouble and he was eventually dishonorably discharged from service. Now he works as a mercenary, fooling the enemies of the highest bidder.

Depending on the tone of your game, you can portray Proximo as downright villainous or as a merely selfish man who is trying to get by but doesn't really want to hurt anyone too badly. This will determine his attitude in case he is somehow confronted with Christina's atrocities.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / THREATEN 3 / STIR HIS CONSCIENCE 4

- **Boobytrap:** When you try to hit Proximo without having first discovered his real location, you miss and he hits you with a mine of his choice, if he wants.
 - **Misguide:** When you try to discover where Proximo is by **Investigating**, you cannot use your Clues to ask direct questions such as *where is he?* or *is this vision of Proximo really him?* You must discover where he is using only indirect questions about the scene.
-
- Concussive mine (*disoriented-3*)
 - Sleeping gas mine (*sleepy-4*)
 - Adhesive gel mine (*glued-down-2*)
 - Use a never-before-seen and possibly experimental mine he recently invented (**Give a Status**)
-
- Be seen acting as he would normally (while he isn't really there)
 - Move athletically across obstacles
 - Sell off his employer to save his skin

THE BEASTS' DEN

The Beasts hang out in an abandoned office building in Cross End, overgrown with trees and vines. What bare walls remain are densely covered by rich graffiti art of various forest animals motifs. It almost seems alive if you stare at it for too long from the outside; walking inside the Den, one can become lost in the hallucinations of the Stag Head. If relevant, you may ask each affected character's player to make the **Face Danger** move against a status of *delirious-2*.

The gang counts a total of a few dozen members. All members display partial transformation into beast forms: half-crows (like Morty), part-stags, semi-boars, quasi-badgers, etc. The ringleader is **Bear**, a towering figure standing at seven feet tall, hairy and brawny beyond what is humanly expected, with a roaring voice and two beady brown eyes. Currently, Bear keeps the gang at a low profile since they have been associated, even if informally, with the loss of three cherished members of the community.

If the characters come to snoop around or make accusations, the Beasts will try to teach them a lesson, and if things heat up, it could get violent and gruesome. Alternatively, if the crew takes a friendly and respectful approach, they might be treated as impartial observers, perhaps even allies. The following clues are available here:

The Beasts are certain that **the three murders were pinned on them**.

Bear can't prove it, but he thinks **Christina is behind the killings**. He will only reveal this to a person he trusts.

The Beasts are **no saints**. Following the laws of the jungle, gang members often leave a trail of destruction in their wake. Their vices include raiding shops, harassing people on the street, breaking into private property, and a whole lot of vandalizing, loitering, and tagging.

The Beasts are **no demons, either**. Unless provoked, they rarely turn violent. They are mostly trying to have fun and make sure no-one can impose obedience on them.

The Beasts are preparing to mount one final attack on the church on the night of Halloween, during which they intend to usher their god into the City. Everybody is talking about it, but only Bear has the full details and motive for this attack.

BEAR ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / THREATEN 4

- Bare his teeth and brandish his claws (*terrified-3*)
- Tear someone to shreds (*slashed-4* or *mauled-4*)
- Preternaturally sniff out the truth (give someone deceptive *exposed-3*)
- Roar to rally his Beasts (remove up to 2 tiers of negative emotional or tactical statuses from his gang)
- Come up to a challenger chest-to-chest and size them up
- Give out a low rumbling growl

THE BEASTS ★

The Beasts are typical slum gangsters and thugs with one difference: they are transforming into actual beasts, growing feathers and fur, claws and antlers, scales and tails.

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / THREATEN 2

- Bare their teeth or swoop down (*shaken-1*)
- Claw, bite, or crush (*slashed-2* or *mauled-2*)

When the Beasts act as a gang, treat them as a **collective**. Their size factor is 1 for a small group, 2 for a large group, and 3 for the entire gang. Statuses they take as a collective are reduced by their size factor (unless the attack affects the entire collective), and statuses they give as a collective are increased by their size factor.



CHURCH OF SANTA TERESA DE ÁVILA

The church is the focal point of the struggle between Christina, the recently awakened Rift of the Avenging Angel, who was called to protect the Church, and the Beasts, the Cross End gang chosen by the Stag Head to serve as his army.

In the days leading up to the fateful night of Halloween, the church is a location where the crew can meet Christina, investigate the murders and the Beasts' activity, and piece together the backstory for this conflict; on the night of Halloween, a showdown will take place – see [Midnight On All Hallows' Eve](#), below.

The building is a dramatic-looking ruin situated at the edge of Cross End, where it meets with the airfield; beyond it there is little but a tract of empty land covered with wilting brown grass. The church has three distinct areas:

- **The sanctuary and nave:** This area was recently renovated. New pews were placed in straight rows, the marble altar was polished, all the trappings of worship were set up. Most notably, on the wall behind the altar, the great stained glass window was repaired, depicting an angel spreading her wings. Despite the renovation, the sanctuary is still somewhat exposed to the elements with nothing overhead but a few heavy and crumbling stone arches.
- **The ruins:** Outside, all around the main hall, there are piles of debris and collapsed enclosures, the remains of the various sections that previously made up the church. The ruins are covered with the Beasts' graffiti, especially the walls.
- **The crypt:** Beneath the main hall, accessible through several spiral stone staircases, lies a spacious, dank, and dark basement. In the center of the basement, there is a massive and very old fresco depicting the Stag Head in a circle, studded with many sigils of protection. This is the Stag Head's point of entry – where his Enclave connects to the City – and what the church was built to keep locked away.

INVESTIGATING IN THE CHURCH

Clouds broil overhead as the PCs approach the church, and it soon begins to rain. A single column of light breaks through the clouds and illuminates the church, fading out at times.

Investigating here could link Christina with the murders, but it shouldn't be easy; see **Clues and Suspense** below on some tips on how to pace the investigation.

The altar is stained with blood which seemed to have been scrubbed off (it's covered by a cloth). Linking the stain with the victim's blood requires mystical powers, or, if the crew has a DNA sample from the victims, expertise with crime scene investigation.

The plastic case with the rolled-up schematics of the church is hidden in one of the pews. Touching it, however, may incur the wrath of the holy forces present.

Christina's bear claw instrument is stashed away behind a large loose brick in the wall of the church.

CLUES AND SUSPENSE

Remember that the **Investigate** move allows you, the MC, to decide how much you wish to reveal with each clue. Even if a player uses the move to ask "who is the killer?", the rules stipulate you owe them nothing more than a single detail that will somehow help them solve this question. This detail could fall anywhere between instantly revealing the truth to merely pointing at a new lead (which must be useful). Depending on how you want to pace the investigation, you can adjust how much is revealed with each clue.

At the same time, do not limit yourself to the clues listed above. If a player finds a clever and reasonable way of gaining more information about the case, figure out what they discover and grant them the clue they deserve. For example, Declan L'Estrange can use his historical knowledge or business connections to dig up some details about the church and its esoteric history; Flicker can learn similar facts searching the website of a local history buff or Wiccan group.

CHRISTINA

Depending on your pacing considerations, Christina may be gone when the crew first visits the Church or she may be present. If she is around, she will be kneeling at the altar, praying for one last chance to save the City from the Stag Head.

Christina will try to play out a meeting with the crew in one of two ways: ask for their help and possibly their ultimate sacrifice, or, if that fails, take by force the heart of whoever seems to be the true believer in the bunch (perhaps based on the questions you previously asked them, see the sidebar **The Heart of a True Believer**, page XX). If the crew tries to apprehend Christina, she will use their first miss to flee (**Deny Them Something They Want**), only to return later for the big showdown at Midnight On All Hallows' Eve.

Remember that while this church still stands, this is Christina's turf. Any imaginable divine effect can emanate from her, from the altar, or from the stained glass window; see her moves for some ideas. **Proximo** may also be present, most likely as a hired gun assisting Christina.

CHRISTINA ★★★

The Rift of the Avenging Angel, Christina is a modern-day paladin of the Holy Faith. She has cropped, platinum blonde hair, fair skin, flushed cheeks, and piercing icy-blue eyes. She's usually sporting combat boots, jeans, a tank top, and a leather biker jacket. Under the jacket, she has two over-sized pistols tucked into her belt against the small of her back. When she is at the altar, the light going through the stained glass falls on the floor around her in a strange pattern, creating the optical illusion she also has wings.

Dedicated and pious, Christina would do anything to push back the forces she considers dark and unholy. She is an expert gunslinger, always ready to put a bullet through the agents of evil and isn't afraid to get blood on her hands, if necessary.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / GUILT 6

- **Guardian Angels:** When Christina takes a status of physical harm or subdual, reduce its tier by 2.
- Rain down bullets from her pistols on an area (everyone takes *gunshot-3*)
- Shoot someone through the head or heart (*mortally-wounded-5*)
- Speak to someone's conscience, inspiring them to make right their moral transgressions (*guilty-2*)
- When in the church, use its powers (see page XX)
- Break down and ask for help

DEPTH 3: MIDNIGHT ON ALL HALLOWS' EVE

Eventually, everything culminates in a final showdown at the church. On the night of Halloween, when the veil of the Mist is at its weakest, both parties will make a last attempt to secure the church. If the heart of a true believer is not sacrificed on the altar by midnight on Halloween, the Stag Head will emerge into the world once again, probably destroying the church in the process.

The Stag Head sees this night as its long-awaited opportunity to reopen the Enclave at this location and manifest as a physical entity in the City (whether or not it needs a person to act as its Rift is up to you; if not, it is considered a powerful Conjunction). If necessary, the Stag Head will communicate with any crew member who may agree to help it take physical form.

Until midnight or until the church is destroyed, **the Beasts** are the Stag Head's only physical manifestation. They will mount their attack to try and physically bring down the church and free their god. It doesn't take much to topple down the crumbling walls of this old building. Armed with quads, chains, and hooks, as well as jackhammers, chainsaws, and crowbars, the Beasts can definitely do some damage to the church: every time they all strike together as a collective, they give the church *collapsing-2* while if only half of them are engaged in the destruction, they cause *collapsing-1* (this already factors in their size factor and the Church's **Gargantuan** custom move). The Beasts don't know what exactly is going to happen or why they are doing this, but the Stag Head does: once they shatter the altar, there will be no sacrificing of hearts and the power that holds him back will be gone forever.

Christina, and the force of the Holy Faith guarding the church, will be grasping at straws at this stage, looking for a godsent true believer to sacrifice at the altar (a PC? Bear? Gus?). If he's still in the game, **Proximo** will also be here as hired muscle to help curb the destruction of the Beasts.

THE DILEMMA

Sooner or later, the party will have to face a decision: who should they help? Does the fear of an entity of ecstasy tearing through the streets of the City outweigh their possible moral aversion of helping Christina? Or will they find a solution that does not involve taking sides?

Depending on how your group feels about Player vs. Player games, this dilemma could even split the party and turn them against each other. In any case, this is a great place to invoke the PCs and the crew's Mysteries and Identities, have them **Make a Hard Choice** and mark Fade or Crack, and to remind players of their option to **Stop. Holding. Back.**

THE CHURCH ★★

COLLAPSE 6

- **Gargantuan:** Reduce by 4 the tier of any single status given to the structure of the church that does not affect the entire area of the church, or by 3 if the status affects a large section of the church.
 - **Stained Glass Angel:** When you take an action against the Holy Faith in the sanctuary or nave, you are first hit by its guardian angel (see its hard moves below).
 - **Reduced to Rubble:** So long as the church stands, the stained glass window is unbreakable, protected by the heavens. When *collapse* maxes out, the church walls fall and the stained glass window shatters into a thousand pieces. Everyone inside takes *buried-under-rubble-5*.
-
- Blind the “blasphemous” with a bright light (*blinded-3*)
 - Hurl “evil” out of the church by a heavenly force (*pushed-back-3*)
 - Smite “unholy creatures” (like the Beasts) with flames (*burned-3*)

THE STAG HEAD ★★★★★

If it emerges into the world, the Stag Head manifests as an enormous creature that can best be described as a walking forest. It's about as big as the church's main hall; it's made of dense foliage, running rivers, and creaking roots; it has eyes like two turbid green ponds in which mesmerizing colorful lights flicker. The ruckus of wild beasts echoes from deep inside it along with some deeper, unearthly growl. Antlers as large and as complex as tree branches grow out of its topside. It can grow protrusions to serve it as arms if necessary, but mostly it will simply move through things and swallow them whole.

HURT OR SUBDUE - / BANISH 6 / BURN 6 / APPEASE 5

- **Regeneration:** When the Stag Head takes a status on its *burn* spectrum that isn't holy by nature, reduce its tier by 4.
-
- Squash someone like a bug (*shattered-5*)
 - Swallow up something with grasping thorny vines (*entangled-4, nicked-1*)
 - Force someone to unleash the animal within (*no-restraints-5*)
 - Spew out more humanoid Beasts (use The Beasts Danger profile)
 - Change the weather (add a story tag to the scene: *windy, pouring rain, heavy fog, etc.*)
-
- Creep out towards the City, inspiring ecstasy in everyone around
 - Heave upwards, preparing to knock down an obstacle or resistance

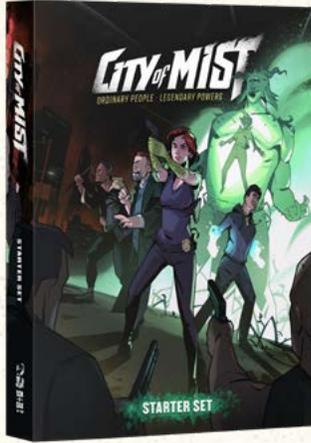
THE AFTERMATH

The outcome of the showdown at the church can have a wide spectrum of implications. As you wrap up the case, you may want to consider the following questions:

- How did the moral dilemma and the events that transpired affect the crew members, their personal beliefs, and how they view themselves and one another? How did it affect the crew as a whole?
- If the Stag Head broke loose, what will be the implications for the City?
- If Christina is still alive, will she be brought to justice? Does she repent or is her faith bolstered? Will she try to hunt down and punish those who stood in her way?
- What is the fate of the Beasts? Do they see their god for what it is and, if so, does that make them more loyal to him, or less? If the Stag Head is out in the world, do they become his followers? What powers do they gain as a result?
- What will happen next with the church or the pile of rubble it's been reduced to? Will it become the Stag Head's new lair? Or a base of operations for Christina's missionary work?
- What about Cross End? How is it affected? Does anyone talk to the families of the three murdered victims to let them know the truth? How do they take it?
- And will Michel Ahmagi ever see his precious exhibit again?

WHAT'S NEXT?

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



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

