

CITY of MIST



CARNIVAL OF MACHINES

A CREEPY CASE OF MECHANICAL DESIRES AND KILLER RIDES

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A CITY OF MIST CASE



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HOW TO USE THIS CASE IN YOUR GAME

You can use *Carnival of Machines* as a standalone one-shot or as a part of the *Nights of Payne Town* story arc.

Within *Nights of Payne Town*, this case is the second of three cases that form the Personal Vein. It is preceded by *Killing Her Softly* and followed by *Broken Glass*.

Throughout this PDF, **red clues** (clues given in red cards) point the investigation to another case in the Personal Vein or in the *Nights of Payne Town* story arc. Reveal them to your players only if and when you wish to lead the story to the given case.

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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.

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When a Rift love triangle ends in a tragic car crash at a Downtown junction, the crew must trace the chain of events back to its source. Was this just another sad story, so common in this City, or did a guiding hand have a part in this? The more they learn, the more the crew members sense that they are being led down a path from which they can't escape, towards the same end as the victims of the crime they are investigating.

Carnival of Machines starts out as a neo-noir murder investigation but pivots mid-case into a classic comic book "death trap" scheme. In its investigation-heavy, moody first half, the crew unfolds the personal misfortune of three Rifts whose Mythoi caused them to become involved with one another. In the second half of the case, the crew reveals the scheme behind the tragedies and must survive a creepy, forsaken, and boobytrapped funfare, designed solely to kill them and those like them. The case also features an NPC on a crash course, Goldie, whose fate is determined by the PCs actions.

MECHANISM n. The philosophical doctrine that all natural phenomena, including life and thought, allow mechanical explanation by physics and chemistry.

THE MECHANIST

Maximilian Drake used to think he had the capability to understand anything. For him, the universe, life, and people were nothing more than complicated machines who could be understood through analysis. He was a genius of applied sciences, making groundbreaking discoveries at Helix Labs, before he awakened as the Rift of **Hephaestus**, Greek God of blacksmiths, craftsmen, and volcanoes. Sight beyond the Mist exposed him to phenomena he could not explain, and he became more and more anxious. This was exasperated by the fact his awakening came in the wake of a lab accident which injured his spine, leaving him with a walking disability. His spirit and body broken, he left Helix Labs, sentencing himself to exile from his beloved sciences.

In his darkest hour, Drake sought the help of what he referred to as a "brain mechanic": the psychiatrist **Archibald Tennant**, a member of **Mending the Broken** (see *Broken Glass*). The psychiatrist seized the opportunity and poisoned Drake's mind, stoking his obsession with understanding through logic and empowering him to regain control over his life "by *eliminating* the unpredictable variables in the equation". For Drake, those unpredictable variables are the wielders of legendary powers: Rifts, whose 'magic' he both mocks and detests. Drake sidelines his own Rifthood, convincing himself his powers are a form of intellectual evolution, capable of bringing order to a chaotic world.

THE CARNIVAL

As an expert engineer, Drake applied his genius to studying and deconstructing Rifts. Researching folklore and comparative myths, he was able to discover the patterns that govern legends. He came to understand the logic in Rifts' powers, and most importantly, the driving force of their legend. Based on this knowledge, he surmised that **Rifts can't help but follow their Mythos**, and devised a plan based on this law: to build a fairytale fairground that will attract Rifts into customized death traps that will kill them when they take the mythic bait.

To that end, he teamed up with an impoverished traveling carnival set up just outside town, the **Lemnos Carnival**, and its members, who refer to themselves as "**Carnies**" (the Sintians, a folk of plunderers who tended to Hephaestus after his fall from Olympus). Touched by Drake's Mythos, the Lemnos Carnies accepted him as their messiah and worshipped him as a god, and he gifted them the uncanny science that would bring their funfair devices and mannequins to life.

To help him collect information on potential Rift targets, Drake hired **P.I. Chuck Holliday** (Sleeper) and equipped him with a camera with a lens that can see through the Mist. He sent the private investigator to find and profile Rifts for him. He then used his Carnies and their lifelike mannequins to lure hapless targets into the death trap fairground.

Drake's hypothesis turned out to be true. Fascinated with Rifts' nearly-mechanic, predictable behavior, Drake devised traps for each victim, deriving a twisted sense of control and pleasure out of the victory of science and logic over his legendary prey. He killed as many as a dozen Rifts before P.I. Holliday sent him three profiles of interconnected Rifts (and one Sleeper), who posed an interesting jigsaw for Drake's intellect to solve.

A DOWNTOWN LOVE TRIANGLE

Drake's new targets were the following.

- **Pauline Woodworth** (Paul Bunyan, a giant lumberjack in American folklore) was a private construction contractor who possessed immense strength as well as the power to grow bigger. She had her own business, **Woodworth Builders**, and a beautiful wife, **Ellie Woodworth** (Sleeper). Her Mythos urged her to settle the wilderness, so she was interested in construction projects outside town.
- **David Nguyen** (Rift of King David) was a high-flying executive in Orimaka Finance. His Mythos allowed him to slay giants (David and Goliath), but also pushed him to covet someone else's wife (as the Biblical king did).
- **Samantha Goldstein**, or **Goldie** (Rift of Goldilocks) was a master thief with the power to get into any home, bypassing locks, security systems, etc. and the drive to take what other people own.

Drake set in motion the machinations that would lead them to their deaths:

- He lured Pauline with a project of rebuilding the abandoned fairground at the edge of town (settle the wilderness).
- He arranged for David to have a bad date at the same diner where Pauline and Ellie dined, predicting that the adulterous king would set his heart on Ellie.

- During that date, he had P.I. Holliday tip Goldie off about a rich man in the Downtown diner who could be an interesting mark. Naturally, she showed up, and started casing David, planning to steal his money.

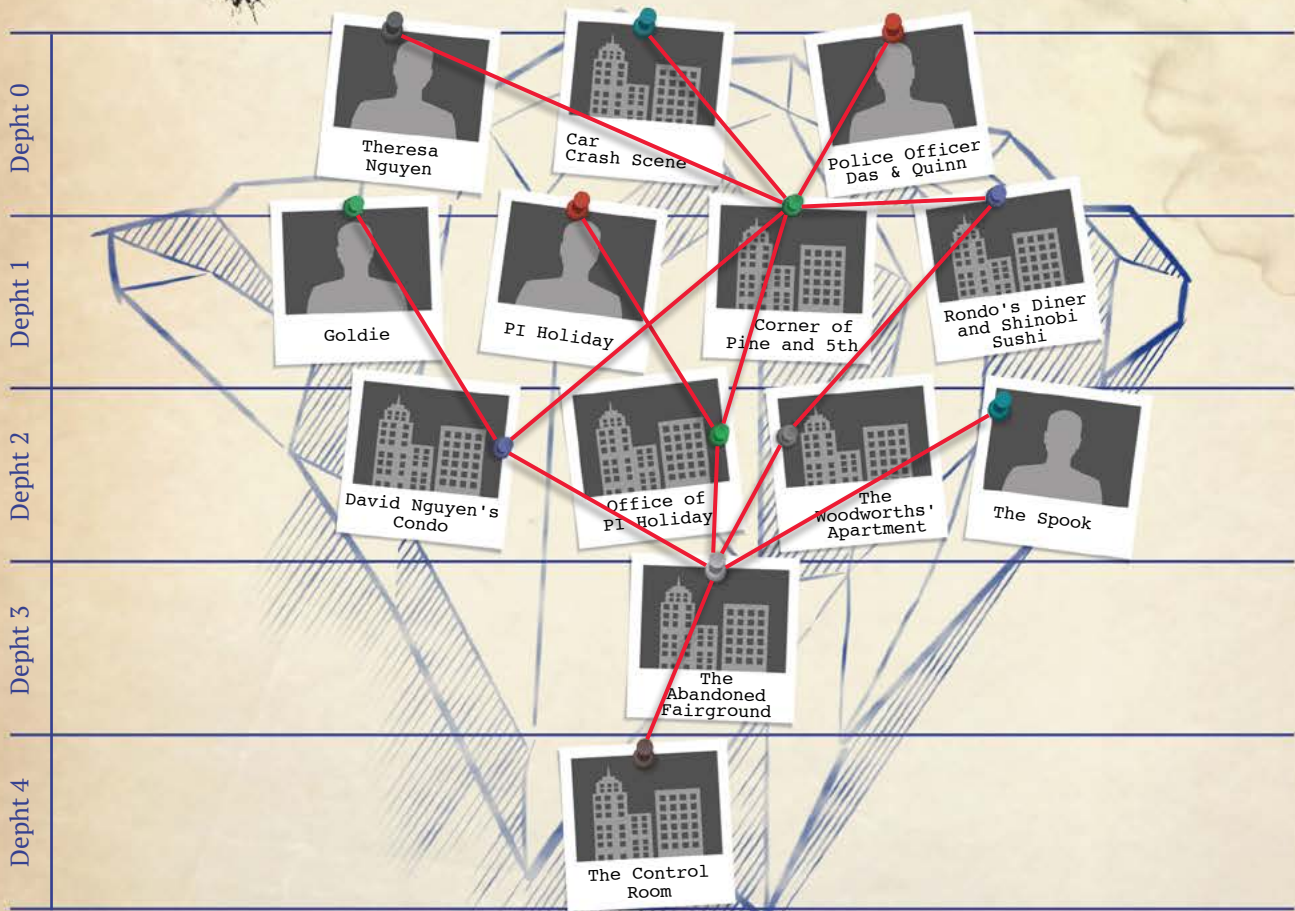
THIS FATEFUL NIGHT

A few weeks passed, with David harassing the Woodworths and Goldie sizing up David and trying to establish where he kept his fortune. Tonight, Drake's plan came to fruition.

- David followed Pauline to the fairground where they battled it out, David and Goliath style, and he killed her, shooting her with a revolver.
- Drake and his Carnies had a death trap waiting for David, a lifelike mannequin made to look like Ellie. When David kissed her, his lips started burning. The mannequin's lips were glazed with poison.
- Realizing he was deceived, David raced back to town to find the real Ellie and get medical help but it was too late. The poison killed him and he crashed his sports car close to the diner where they first met.
- Goldie was present at the car crash site, where she realized David was involved in something bigger and that in order to find out more, she must find out where he came from. A customized death trap already awaits her at the fairground.

The case begins with the car crash.





DEPTH 0: THE HOOKS

The most cinematic way to open the case is by having **crew members present at the corner of Pine and 5th** that night, when David Nguyen's sports car comes hurtling down 5th Street. As the crash takes place in a busy Downtown junction, some of the crew members may be there as part of their daily routines and start the scene as accidental bystanders. Precognitive Rifts could have had a vision of the impending crash, arriving at the scene in time to try and prevent it. Perhaps the crew sits down for a late dinner and conversation, in a diner close to the junction such as Rondo's Diner or Shinobi Sushi.

Those at the scene first hear the rumbling growl of a sports car engine, then spot the out-of-control vehicle running rampant on 5th street, about to crash. The driver seems to be unconscious, head against the steering wheel. **Even if the crew brings the car to a safe stop, David Nguyen is already dead**, killed by fake Ellie's poison kiss.

OUT-OF-CONTROL CAR ★/★★★

SAFELY BRING TO A STOP 5 / CRASH 2

- **Sports Car:** When Out-of-Control Car enters the scene, give it *speeding-4*.
- **Collision Course:** When *crash:2* maxes out, the Out-of-Control Car crashes into whatever hard barrier is in its path.
- Speed towards an impact point (*about-to-crash-1*)
- +★★: Hit someone who isn't being careful or who can't get out of the way in time (*hospitalized-5* or **Make Something Horrible Happen**)
- Speed down the street, engine growling
- Pass a bystander, creating a doppler effect sound

The crew may also become involved in the case in the following ways:

- If the crew has a reputation of working on the wrong side of the law, David Nguyen's grandmother, **Theresa Nguyen**, may contact them an hour after the accident. Icy cold on the phone, the elderly and extremely wealthy lady offers a substantial bounty to anyone who could bring her the head of whoever is responsible for her grandson's death on a literal silver platter. If the crew doesn't take her up on her offer, she'll move on to another crew, but she can still be convinced to pay for information about her grandson's killer.
- **Downtown beat officers Das and Quinn**, who feature in *Killing Her Softly*, will be called to handle the crashed car and the surrounding commotion. If the crew has established a working relationship with them, they may call upon the crew for help with investigating David Nguyen's death.

INTERESTED PARTIES

While the crew is investigating the scene of David Nguyen's car crash, they are watched from a distance by two persons who take great interest in the accident. Alert PCs (and players) who **Investigate** to check if anyone is watching them, may notice either or both individuals spying on them. You can also let the players know they are being watched if you want to introduce these characters. Goldie may approach the crew and introduce herself, as explained below.

GOLDIE

Samantha Goldstein (Goldilocks), known as Goldie, plays the role of the redeemable criminal, an NPC who is on the wrong path and whose fate will be determined by the actions of the PCs. She is a hustler and thief who excels at breaking and entering and robbing people of their wealth. Goldie has a distinct 80s streetwear style: she sports a mane of blow-dried bleached hair, a torn jeans jacket, and lots of iridescent plastic bangles. She is able to shape inanimate objects by declaring they are "too hot", "too cold", "too big", "too small", "too hard", or "too soft", which then becomes true.

GOLDIE ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 2 / REDEEM 5 / CATCH 5

- **Other People's Things:** Once in the series, Goldie can stop holding back and transfer into her possession any single object, privilege, or power possessed by someone else, as long as she can see either the object or its owners. She then leaves town.
- **Too Hot, Too Cold:** Once per scene, Goldie can use her powers as an intrusion to defend herself, nullifying a single status of physical harm of tier-5 or lower by making it too hot, too cold, too hard, too soft, too big, or too small to be effective.
- Make her pursuers' clothing "too hard", "too big", or "too small" (*entangled-3* or *can't-breathe-3*), slow them down by making the floor "too soft" (*slowed-3*), or escape them altogether by making a passage "too small" for them to follow (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- Steal something, or force someone to drop an object by making it "too hot" (burn up to two tags and give herself appropriate tags)
- Escape restraint, making an object "too big" to restrain or imprison her (remove up to 3 tiers of restraint statuses or burn up to 3 restraint tags)
- Expertly circumvent security measures, making locks "too small" and security systems circuitry "too hot" to function (give a security system *override-3* or burn 3 of its tags)
- Turn on a dime, shirking responsibility and abandoning all the progress she's made (remove 3 tiers from any statuses on her *redeem* spectrum or guilt and responsibility statuses)
- Smile ear to ear and flick her hair joyously as she escapes

Mythically attracted to other people's things, Goldie craves a chunk of David Nguyen's fortune and will do whatever it takes to discover where he hid something of value, be it cash, gold, diamonds, bonds, whatever. This legendary kleptomancy already has her ensnared in Maximilian Drake's trap, carefully designed to push all of her Mythos buttons. If she follows David's trail and reaches the abandoned fair-ground, as Drake expects she would do, there's a death trap waiting there just for her.

Goldie will try to use the crew. Once she sees them investigating the accident, her most obvious course of action is to team up with them. She will lie to, steal from, and eventually probably betray the crew, but only as long as no one gets badly hurt, since in

those cases her dormant conscience wakes up for a moment. For example, she may initially pretend to be Ellie Woodworth and try to get the crew to break into David Nguyen's Condo or to share what they discover about his recent whereabouts. Play her as a believable and friendly ally, who then shrugs sweetly when she screws the crew over, as if she can't help it and can't be expected to. Try to keep her betrayals taunting and humorous rather than grievous and play up her charm to get the crew to take interest in her fate.

Goldie has been casing David Nguyen and knows the clues listed under **Investigating David Nguyen** on corner of Pine and 5th. She also knows all the public details of his involvement with Pauline and Ellie Woodworth, given under Rondo's Diner and Shinobi Sushi, and can bring the PCs up to speed.

P.I. HOLLIDAY

The other individual watching is **Private Investigator Chuck Holliday** (Sleeper), the gumshoe working for Maximilian Drake who nonetheless never heard his employer's name or met him (see sidebar). Always in the classic rain coat and fedora hat, P.I. Holliday is well-equipped for Downtown's rainy alleys. A heavy smoker, he leaves a scattering of cigarette butts wherever he's staking out a target.

P.I. Holliday doesn't care who he's working for; in fact, he doesn't want to know. He only wants to get paid at the end of the day. He doesn't see himself responsible for other people's problems ("nobody is innocent"), and he has seen enough dead bodies of people whose problems caught up with them to care. He's a sleazeball, but he's not evil; confronting him with hard proof that his work is used to hurt people would make him think twice about taking on additional work from his mystery employer.

P.I. HOLLIDAY'S TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

P.I. Holliday is employed strictly via mail correspondence and has been offered double his normal fee for profiling Rifts. He received a special camera, with a Mist-penetrating lens through which he can see and take pictures of a Rift's true form and powers (the photos he takes with the camera only reveal legendary phenomena to its bearer and to Rifts). Since then he has been shadowing Rifts all over Downtown at the behest of his employer, sending the report dossiers to an obscure mailbox.

The mailbox is checked twice a day by one of the Carnies who drives into town. Assume that P.I. Holliday is immediately reporting all findings to his employer, perhaps even using an emergency telephone number if he feels what he found was very valuable or pertinent (the same Carnie also answers the phone). Once Maximilian Drake receives the first reports of a new set of Rift targets – the crew – he sets out to build custom death traps for them.

PROFILING THE CREW

Throughout the case, when the PCs score 7-9 on their **Investigate** score, use the counter question option to ask them about their Mythos and Mythos powers.

When a PC uses her powers and P.I. Holliday can see them, ask:

- What is the nature of your powers?
- What do you think could block your powers or contain them?
- Could your powers be turned against you?

When a PC displays a behavior related to their Mythos, ask:

- What does your Mythos really want from you?
- What does it wish for you to find out?
- Which character in your Mythos is most important to you?

Note down the answers and use them when you describe the death traps Drake prepared for the crew at the abandoned fairground. The character doesn't have to reveal the whole story for this to happen; you can assume that both P.I. Holliday and Drake do their research and extrapolate a great deal of information from just a few key details.

FOLLOWING P.I. HOLLIDAY

Giving P.I. Holliday the slip and then following him isn't easy. His custom move **Street Smarts** and his familiarity with the alleyways Downtown, reflected by

the hard move **Deny Them Something They Want**, make him hard to shadow. If the crew manages to follow the private eye, they will find him at his office (Office of P.I. Holliday), following Goldie or spending time with her, or dropping a package into the mail collection box on the street.

SHIPS IN THE NIGHT

To complicate things further, P.I. Holliday fell in love with Goldie while profiling her over the past weeks. He approached her, or rather, allowed himself to be seen by her, and the two now lead a no-strings-attached, on-and-off romantic affair. David Nguyen's car crash has P.I. Holliday worrying about what his employer plans for Goldie, and this concern for her may or may not be enough to drive him to cross his professional red lines and become involved.

Goldie can become a means for the crew to reach P.I. Holliday, but it works both ways: information about the crew, their powers, and their plans can leak through Goldie to P.I. Holliday, and from there to Drake himself.

PI. HOLLIDAY ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / BRIBE 4 / THREATEN 4

- **Powers of Deduction:** When P.I. Holliday surveys the scene for the first time or as a hard move, the MC will ask you one question. You must reply with a straight answer or a solid lead. P.I. Holliday knows your answer, even if your character didn't speak it.
- **Street Smarts:** Whenever you try to follow or fool P.I. Holliday, first give him **alert-2**. This status cannot exceed tier 3.
- **Thinks On His Feet:** When P.I. Holliday takes a status he can avoid or soften with common sense or resourcefulness, reduce its tier by 1.
- **Professionalism:** The first time in a scene you try to get information from P.I. Holliday about his employer, if **bribe** or **threaten** have not maxed out, first give him **my-lips-are-sealed-3**.
- Draw out his revolver and threaten someone to back off, or he'll shoot (**wary-2** or **gunshot-wound-3**)
- Dash down a smokey alley and disappear or fool someone trying to shadow him (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- Grease someone's palm when they're giving him a hard time (give them **wad of cash** if they get out of his way)
- Watch silently from a distant street corner, smoking

DEPTH 1: DOWNTOWN DISASTER

CORNER OF PINE AND 5TH

Steam rolls up from the engine of the crashed sports car and the acrid smell of burnt tires fills your breath. The car lights flash in tandem with a restaurant's neon sign on the side of the building, drowned in the cacophony of alarms from nearby cars. The streetlight above the signpost of Pine Street and 5th Street flickers and then dies. The windshield, smashed into a million glass pieces, still desperately holds onto its frame, hiding everything behind it except for a big, round, blood stain.

The corner of Pine and 5th street is a bustling Downtown junction with a few businesses, including some popular cheap eateries. This is both the scene of David Nguyen's car crash and the setting for his one-sided love triangle with Pauline and Ellie Woodworth, whom he first noticed at one of the local joints, Rondo's Diner. The Woodworths' Apartment is only a block away; this area used to be their go-to destination for a quick bite, and people here know them, at least by their looks.

Following the accident, an influx of curious bystanders swarms the crash site, soon followed by an ambulance and then the police (possibly officers Das and Quinn), who mark out the crime scene and push onlookers back. If the crew members are there first, they can **Investigate** the car and the driver before the police arrive, but they are seen doing so (unless they first **Sneak Around** or create an equally dramatic diversion).

DEATH BY GLASS

If the car crashed, David Nguyen's body is found in a gruesome state, with a large shard of windshield glass embedded in his skull. Modern windshields don't break like this, a fact which you can mention for added creep factor.

The driver is dead. It's hard to tell what exactly killed him, especially if the car crashed. Careful examination will show his lips have traces of lipstick on them, seemingly from a kiss.

According to the driver's license, this is David Nguyen. He is clearly a wealthy person, wearing an expensive suit, watch, and shoes and driving that fancy sports car.

There is gunshot residue on Davids' hands. He recently fired a firearm.

Considering tire tracks, the collision course, and additional dents on the car, Crime Scene Investigation analysis would show David lost control of the car a few moments before it crashed.

It's impossible to determine where exactly the car came from. Extensive and tedious CCTV cameras research or magical means of tracking may show that it drove in from out of town, but that's where the trail goes cold.

A careful investigator would notice David's shoes have mud on them. The same mud can be found in the car's tire grooves. Analyzing the mud can indicate it came from out of town, but sending it to a lab could take one to several dntimes to get results (if the Mist doesn't make the lab lose the samples).

If the deceased's memories or mind are accessible by magical means, the last image he recalls is the sight of Ellie Woodworth when he kissed her (not knowing it was her mannequin clone).

Beyond the Mist, David Nguyen's spirit is still in shock and is *transitioning-3* to the afterlife, or the void. When he comes to, if he's still around, he will become obsessed with Ellie Woodworth and seek her out, possibly going to the Woodworths' Apartment, but he won't willingly share any information about what he had done earlier that night, and, either way, he doesn't know. (Unless he is aided by a Rift, his spirit cannot affect Ellie in any way.)

Beyond the Mist, the Lemnos Carnies' poison which David breathed in gives off a vague Mythos footprint of Greek pirates and plunderers.

Further beyond the Mist, there is an almost impalpable trace of malice in the broken windshield. It's impossible to associate it with anything or anyone related to the case at hand, only with some faraway malintent.

INVESTIGATING DAVID NGUYEN

Once they put a name to the victim, the crew may try to gather more information about David.

Someone local would recognize David or his car, saying they have seen him hanging around recently at Rondo's Diner or Shinobi Sushi.

David Nguyen is a filthy rich high-flying executive in his 30s, an Associate Partner at Ori-maka Finance. His success seems to be ascribed as much to his family connections as it is to his talent and hard work.

He is single, and has been active on dating sites / speed dating cafes / newspaper personals. About two weeks ago this activity stopped after he had one last date with Emma Bailey, a flight attendant who also hangs out at Shinobi Sushi.

He owns a luxury condo in one of the fanciest apartment buildings Downtown (David Nguyen's Condo).

Later, if the crew has access to the morgue and/or the coroner report, they will learn David died from respiratory failure caused by a poison, most likely ingested or breathed.

RONDO'S DINER AND SHINOBI SUSHI

Standing in the rain on the corner of Pine Street and 5th, you notice two bustling eateries on opposite sides of the road. On one side, with red booths lined with pink neon, Rondo's Diner looks like the joint that will serve you a greasy meal or a pancake stack and watery coffee any hour of the night. On the other side, under a blue-lit sign, Shinobi Sushi looks like a place for people who are trying too hard to be seen. Both places seem packed, though, so you figure someone around here must have seen or heard something.

The two local eateries at Pine and 5th can help the crew unravel David's past and point at his connection to Pauline and Ellie. The Woodworths' were regulars in both the diner and the sushi place, so other regulars know who they are and what they've been through recently.

David Nguyen was first seen around these parts on a date at Rondo's Diner with Emma Bailey, a mousy flight attendant (who is eating tonight at Shinobi Sushi). The date night was ruined because he couldn't stop staring at Ellie Woodworth. Emma mentioned to him that Ellie was spoken for, that she's with Pauline, but David didn't seem to lose interest.

David Nguyen started stalking Pauline and Ellie and on some occasions tried to impose himself and join them at dinner. He made overt advances at Ellie in front of Pauline. They refused him politely at first, but at some point Pauline threatened to hurt him if he didn't leave them alone. He kept stalking them, hanging around this part of town more and more often.

It was Emma's request to have the date at Rondo's Diner, a curious choice because Emma doesn't usually frequent the diner. She didn't plan on staying in 'that cheesy place', preparing to be picked up there and move on to a nicer restaurant, but then David saw Ellie.

Questioning Emma reveals a mysterious third party wanted David and Ellie to meet. Someone (P.I. Holliday) who knew she had a date with David left her a note, promising to take care of next month's rent for her if they went to the diner first. She was tight for money so she agreed, thinking it was a publicity stunt, and then forgot about it. After the date, next month's rent was paid.

The Woodworths live just around the corner, less than a block away (the Woodworths' Apartment).



DEPTH 2: A WELL-OILED MECHANISM

THE WOODWORTHS' APARTMENT

Looking up the drab brick building facade, you spot her, the sweetest sight, waiting at the window, raindrops like dew on her figure. The look on her face tells you she's waiting for someone, someone who isn't coming. Is it the love of her life? The dead guy in the car? Someone else? You ring the doorbell and she bolts to buzz you in. You brace yourself for the disappointment in her eyes when she sees it's just you, and for some greater pain you feel you're about to bring into her life.

The Woodworths' live in a modest apartment in one of the few affordable residential buildings Downtown. Ellie Woodworth (Sleeper) is home waiting for Pauline, who did not come back from work today and is not answering any of the messages Ellie left. Ellie is a pretty and petite young woman, gentle and soft spoken, and wears a casual dress. When the crew introduce themselves or when she learns about what happened to David, Ellie's fear overwhelms her, and she starts pacing back and forth, wringing her hands.

Pauline has not returned from work today. Pauline has projects all over town so Ellie doesn't know where she was working today.

David Nguyen has been stalking them for two weeks, making inappropriate advances at Ellie. Pauline was furious and wanted to teach him a lesson, but **knowing how strong Pauline is** (even if not why), Ellie feared a disaster and begged her to stay out of trouble. They reported David once to the police but the case was dropped. They thought of seeking legal help, but realized their budget was no match to David's.

Pauline has been somewhat distant lately and vague about her work. Ellie thought it was something to do with David's harassment but she also thinks Pauline has been hiding something. Maybe a surprise new home in the suburbs?

Ellie's lipstick matches the shade and brand of lipstick found on David Nguyen's lips (except it's not poisoned).

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

To search the apartment thoroughly, the crew will have to get Ellie's permission or sneak in when she's not there. Ellie will want to know who the crew members are and why they are interested in the case before she gives her permission.

Under the Woodworths' shoe rack, there's mud that matches the mud found on David Nguyen's shoes and tires. Analyzing the mud follows the same routine.

Hidden between two boards in the clothes cabinet (Pauline was hiding such a Mythic project from her wife), **there's a folder with construction plans**, describing a theme park to be built just outside town, where now there's the abandoned fairground.

OFFICE OF P.I. HOLLIDAY

Private Investigator Holliday could not have chosen a more typical Downtown P.I. office. Accessed through a narrow stair between two street-level businesses, the second-floor corner office has a nice view of the junction below. The block lettering on the milky glass door, the broad hardwood desk, and the green desk lamp all tell you he's one of those traditional detectives. The Murphy bed folded with the sheets still on and a bottle of whiskey stashed in the file cabinet do a double tap on that assessment.

P.I. Holliday's office is located a few blocks away from the corner of Pine and 5th. If P.I. Holliday is present when the crew arrives, he welcomes them and pretends to be helpful, but keeps his lips sealed regarding his current assignment (tracking the crew and Goldie) or past assignments (profiling other Rifts including Pauline Woodworth and David Nguyen) as per his **Professionalism** custom move. He will use the occasion to collect more information on the crew, trying to discover their Mythoi. If the crew gets information out of him, possibly by bribing or threatening him, he reveals what he knows, partially or wholly.



Searching the office proves difficult as any evidence has been **well-hidden** by the veteran P.I.; if the P.I. is present, searching under his nose triggers his **Street Smarts** custom move, giving him **alert-2**.

A phone number P.I. Holliday recently called or a mailbox address etched in his notepad could lead the crew to the Carnie that receives his communications. Following the Carnie successfully could lead them to the abandoned fairground.

P.I. Holliday keeps a copy of all his profiling dossiers. There are about twenty of them stashed in a cardboard box hidden in a hole in the wall, behind a bookcase. They include the profiles of David, Pauline, and Goldie, but not the files on the PCs, unless P.I. Holliday had a lot of downtime to put together an organized folder.

The profiles contain a host of interesting details and pictures, not an analysis. A good detective can surmise P.I. Holliday didn't really know what exactly his employer was looking for, and therefore just described the subjects' lives and special abilities. The profiles can also point the crew at the Woodworths' Apartment and David Nguyen's Condo.

David's profile contains a pictures of his lavish condo, with some antiques and archeological artifacts hanging on the walls, most notably an ancient shield with a Star of David on it. There is a picture of him playing a guitar in some Downtown dive with a note behind it: "When I woke up, he was gone, everyone in the room was asleep." (This alludes to King David's magical lyre playing.)

Pauline's profile has pictures of her working in a construction site as a giant, lifting a pallet of bricks from the ground to the third floor. There's a map of the City with the locations of her projects; all of them are on the outskirts of town. There's a scribble on the map: "urban expansion?". There are also photos of her and Ellie hiking and kayaking.

Goldie's profile is a fat bundle of police reports, describing unsolved burglary cases. There are photos of shrunk down doors fallen off their hinges and charred alarm devices. Some fetching portraits of her, taken clearly without her knowledge, betray the P.I.'s feelings towards her.

SOMEONE ELSE?

P.I. Holliday's box of profiles can contain a profile on another Rift – a supporting cast character that the crew cares about, a series regular (like officer Das), or perhaps even a Nemesis. The crew must warn this person in time, otherwise they may meet this character at the abandoned fairground, or worse, find her dead in one of Drake's traps.

DAVID NGUYEN'S CONDO

To get to David Nguyen's place, you cross over to the other side of Downtown, the side with the clean streets and endless promises. Amid shiny skyscrapers and lavish hotels, you find an expensive-looking apartment building with a valet waiting outside. In the lobby, a snooty concierge stands watch to fend off any unwanted visitors. He may have died like a dog on the street, but David Nguyen sure lived like a king.

The up-and-coming financial advisor David Nguyen owned and lived in a beautiful 30th floor apartment, overlooking the Financial District, a stone's throw away from his Associate Partner office at Orimaka Finance.

This location contains a few clues about David Nguyen's Mythos and his obsession with Ellie Woodworth. It also serves as a point of obsession for Goldie's wild goose hunt for any tangible assets David left behind.

GETTING INTO THE CONDO

If the crew was hired by Theresa Nguyen or have a warrant allowing them to investigate the circumstances of David Nguyen's death, getting into the condo shouldn't pose a problem.

If they have Goldie with them or if they are following her, getting in won't be a problem but it is illegal and while Goldie can take care of herself, the crew members still need to **Sneak Around** to avoid being caught.

If the crew is breaking-and-entering on their own, they have the condo's security measures to contend with. They may also find that Goldie already broke into the apartment, or perhaps she's still there, dealing with David's pet spider (she didn't break in there until she saw David was dead because she has a terrible tendency to hang around for too long and get caught red-handed by the owners). If the police are alerted, officers Das and Quinn are likely to show up.

HIGH-END SECURITY SYSTEM ★★

ALARM 2 / OVERRIDE 5

- **Red Alert:** When *alarm* is maxed out, create a new Danger: SWAT Team / Elite Security (MC Toolkit, page 150) and give *locked-in/out-5* to unauthorized personnel in the perimeter.
- Increase its internal threat level (give itself *threat-1* on the *alarm* spectrum)
- Make anyone trying to override it *nervous-2* or give them *sweaty-hands-2*
- Present another security countermeasure that must be overcome, such as a magnetic lock, a keypad, a window alarm, a motion detector, an unexpected safe mechanism, etc.

INSIDE THE CONDO

While there are certainly a couple of expensive items to steal in the condo, the secret hoard that Goldie assumes David is keeping somewhere is nowhere to be found. If she is present, Goldie will search the place from top to bottom, possibly helping to uncover some clues, and eventually conclude that David must have stashed his wealth somewhere else, probably wherever he was driving back from on the night he died.

Searching the apartment can yield the clues below, but also holds the risk of triggering the alarm, or more dangerously, attracting the attention of David's **giant pet spider**.

There are ancient artifacts hanging on the wall: a bronze shield, a sling, and a bloodied rock. The shield is etched with the Star of David (also known as the Shield of David). Looking Beyond The Mist will reveal a biblical battle scene where David Nguyen, hiding behind this shield, uses the sling and rock to slay a giant warrior.

David was obsessed with Ellie. There are photos of her on the glass-and-gold coffee table, seemingly taken by a P.I. (not Holliday). There is also a telescope in the window, pointed at the junction of Pine and 5th St. (revealing that the condo is on a street that continues Pine St.).

David was tracking Pauline. Hidden in his cabinet or on his computer, there are the results of a financial research he made into Woodworth Builders, revealing that Pauline was working on a big project in the abandoned fairground just outside town.

GIANT PET SPIDER ★★★

There's a story about King David being helped by a big spider when he flees the soldiers of his political rival, King Saul. The spider spins a web that covers the cave David hides in, making it look as if he couldn't have gone that way. This story is manifested in the City as a huge Familiar loyal to David Nguyen, who watches over his condo against intruders.

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / SCARE OFF 5

- **Giant:** When the Giant Pet Spider takes a physical harm status, reduce its tier by 2, unless it affects all of the Giant Pet Spider.
- **Creepier:** When Giant Pet Spider enters the scene by surprise, the MC can make one hard move. Additionally, give everyone around *terrified-3*.
- Spit out a jet of sticky webbing (*glued-3*), setting up its prey for a bite
- Bite its prey, injecting venom (*poisoned-3* and the target takes the same status again at the beginning and at the end of each Downtime thereafter, until the MC rules they survived the poison. Poison-curing effects only need to remove the poison status once to stop it from repeating.)
- Hiss and poke at its prey with furry legs

THE SPOOK

Once Drake has received enough information from P.I. Holliday about the crew, he may attempt to lure them into his trap by sending one of his lifelike, animated mannequins. These creepy robotic clones are made in the image of someone the lead characters would take an interest in. Drake is not limited in the repertoire of characters and special effects he can create, but he's smart and knows how to elegantly arouse curiosity without giving too much away, so he will target only one crew member first, to make the encounter more believable.

The appearance of the spook is a cinematic moment, meant to fool the lead character as well as the player. The spook is most likely to show up in an alley, in the fog or rain, and at a good distance from the lead character, enough for the character to partially identify this figure, but far enough so it's *hard-to-see-3*. It will then disappear, leaving behind it a message that points to the abandoned fairground. The message would be left in a manner appropriate to the form it took: a mysterious agent will leave a sealed letter, a fiery being will burn its message on the alley wall, etc.

The spook could take the form of any person or character, as long as it's shaped after someone Drake knows about and that it makes sense this person would point the crew to the abandoned fairground. It could be:

- A major character from the PC's Mythos
- A character from the PC's personal life, dead or alive
- A member of an organization or group the PC is seeking
- Someone likely to have information the PC has been searching for

Try to trigger the PC's Mysteries and Identities, tempting them to pursue the spook or mark Fade/Crack.

Attempting to catch the spook can spark off a chase (*catch:5*), but the spook starts with *far-away-3* and will vanish the first time the MC makes a hard move (**Deny Them Something They Want**).

DEPTH 3: SUCH A FUN WAY TO DIE

THE ABANDONED FAIRGROUND

Wind blows over the open gray flats where the old funfair stands, a cluster of rickety booths and faded tents. Once-flashing signs now hang crooked with broken neon tubes and washed-out lettering. Torn and colorless tent tarps flap repetitively. A Ferris wheel looms above the countless crests of rides, games, and oddity shows. The big archway sign, one side of it collapsed, reads THE LEMNOS CARNIVAL. There isn't a soul in sight.

The abandoned fairground was once the home of a successful business operation, run by the Lemnos family, a family of distant Sinti (Romani) descent who over the years assimilated carnival folk from many different ethnicities. The carnival was one of the strangest and most popular shows in town, and it basked in its unregulated status outside City limits.

The more successful the Lemnos family became, the more others envied their unregulated status. Government officials started badgering the Lemnos family, gradually constricting their business activities until the carnival went bankrupt. Some of them left the fairground and emigrated to the city below the City to join the trash-digging Marginals (see *The Undertrash*), while others held out and survived by stealing food and stooping to petty crime. Their seer, **Masilda**, told them a god will eventually come to lead. The fairground spent years in a state of disrepair, rotting and fading. Until, one day, Maximilian Drake rolled up into the fairground on a wheelchair, an outcast-by-choice, mysteriously attracted to this bizarre place.



The clan, who called themselves the Lemnos Carnies (Carnival employees), embraced the Rift of Hephaestus as their newfound god and cared for him; in return for their kindness, he taught them his Mythos-powered sciences and made them weapons that enhanced their abilities and turned them into super-powered marauders. Touched by his Mythos, they awakened as Rifts of the Sintians, becoming his guard, his spies, and his family. Together, they started executing his plan to eliminate Rifts in the City, building the fairground into the fairyland death trap that it is today.

NAVIGATING THE FAIRGROUND

The fairground spreads over many acres of land, most of it densely covered with dilapidated pavilions and broken down game booths and rides. All Hephaestus-powered devices installed across the fairground serve one of three functions: **separate**, **lure**, or **kill**. All of the devices are operated remotely by Drake from the control room using a combination of mundane technology (according to the technological age in which you play) and mythic mechanomancy (which exceeds the technology of the age, giving it a magical twist, in this case, the mysterious magic of the Greek god of metallurgy and crafts).

PREPPING FOR THIS SCENE

Before you run this scene, take a moment to consider the lead characters' abilities, Mythoi, Mysteries, and Identities, and devise a lure and a death trap for each as described below.

1) SEPARATE GROUPS INTO INDIVIDUALS

When a group tries to advance through the fairground, Drake will remotely trigger:

- Props that collapse and block their path, like a huge hot dog from above a hot dog stand
- A tarp that drops between them, separating them among different parts of a pavilion
- Broken revolving doors and turnstiles that let one person in but shut immediately after
- Rides such as a carousel, a Ferris wheel, or bumper cars that come to life just as the PCs cross them, forcing them to wait a long time to reunite

None of these devices are truly dangerous or threatening, and any barrier formed between the PCs can be easily circumvented, if the PCs split up and try to go around. If the PCs insist on reuniting there and then they must **Take the Risk** to scale or cross the barrier. A miss could result in:

- Getting injured or stuck
- Getting lost, coming out a different way than expected
- Triggering a trapdoor that leads to another level of the fairground, such as an underground room, a service corridor behind the tents, etc.

Once an individual is visually separated from the crew, they are considered lost, and need to **Investigate** to locate the other crew members. Musical rides suddenly turn on if the crew tries to communicate by shouting. To keep his prey in the dark, Drake has also rigged the place to interfere with mundane communications and scanners (all tech takes *jammed-5*) and may devise a contraption ahead of time to tackle any Mythos divination powers he is aware of.

2) LURE INDIVIDUALS INTO THEIR PERSONAL DEATHTRAP

When an individual moves alone through the fairground, Drake will remotely trigger his mannequins to tease that individual's specific Mysteries, Identities, or other motivations (see under The Spook, above). Drake will also use extensive special effects such as fog, smoke, lighting, sound effects, etc. to make the experience seem realistic. The purpose of this show is to make the target follow the lure, away from their team and into a separate booth, pavilion, or section of the fairground.

Describe the lure to your players as you would describe a regular scene, e.g., as if the PC truly had a vision of their guardian spirit or as if an informant was really beckoning them to follow him into a pavilion. The only exception to this is that, as a side effect of Drake's mockery of creatures of magic, fantasy, and myth, they all look just a little over the top.

Here are some optional clues for suspicious or observant PCs who **Investigate** what they see:

Everything *seems* real. So why do you still feel like someone is mocking you?

Beyond the Mist, there is only legendary machinery and the din of a hammer striking the anvil.

Any beings that appear mythical to the naked eye do not have a Mythos print beyond the Mist.

If their suspicion is aroused, PCs can **Change the Game** to prepare for whatever is coming.

3) THE DEADLY FINALE

Drake is the master of machines, and he is out to prove human beings in general and Rifts in particular are just different kinds of machines. Once he figured out what makes an individual tick, he uses their deepest wish or fear to manipulate them into the trap.

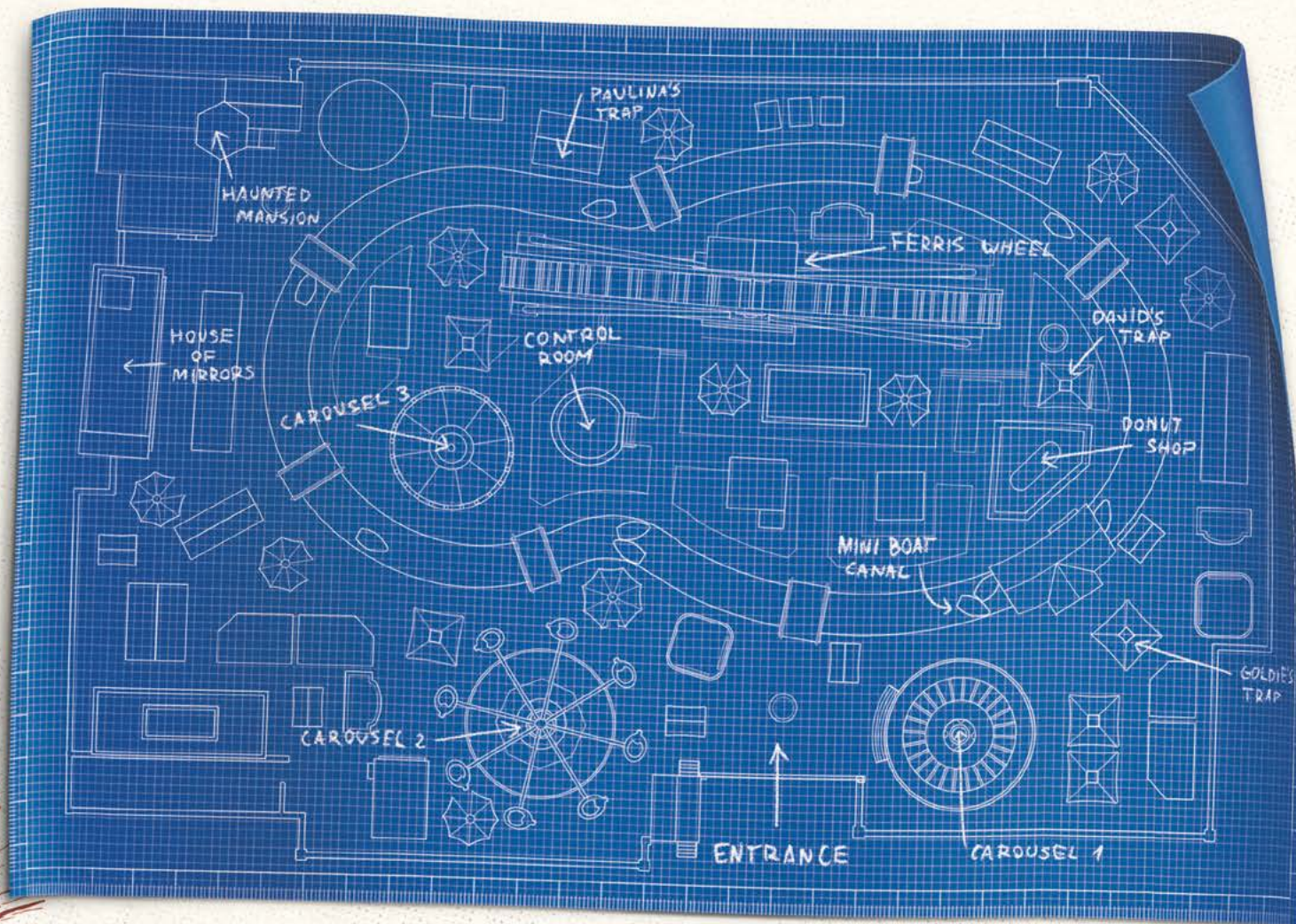
When an individual enters their personalized pavilion, booth, etc., she beholds a spectacle carefully designed to appeal to her deepest mythical questions, for example:

- If she comes from another realm, such as the Pits of Hell or the Enchanted Forest, the trap will be designed to look like that.
- If she was the product of a lab experiment, she could discover a secret lab, leading her to believe the origin of her powers might be inside.
- If she has been searching for someone or something, this person or object would be standing right there (an animated mannequin, of course).

The purpose of this spectacle is to draw the target to the focal point of the room, where a specialized trap awaits. The trap triggers as a soft move (by now, there have been plenty of fair warnings) and the character is hit by a tier-5 status chosen specifically to overcome her abilities:

- A speedster Rift would be beset by a chain of explosions, firing a thousand sharp javelins all around her, so that wherever she's running, she's running towards a shower of javelins (*impaled-from-every-direction-5*).
- A physically invincible Rift could be buried in a tank of molten armored steel, which is then instantly cooled off (*caught-in-a-solid-block-of-steel-5*).
- A Rift that can become incorporeal is shackled with magical bonds (*materialized-5*) before being crushed by an iron weight (*crushed-5*).

PCs get to **Face Danger** if their players can explain how they avoid the death trap; only tags relevant to that method of escape apply. Alternatively, PCs can **Stop.Holding.Back.** and make a no-return sacrifice to avoid getting caught, or to free or heal themselves.



GOLDIE'S TRAP

Goldie arrives at the fairground looking for David's tangible assets. In one of the pavilions, there's a lavish apartment not unlike David Nguyen's Downtown condo. Strangely, however, the apartment has three steaming bowls of porridge on a nice modern glass dining table; three mid-century modern chairs of different sizes around a faux white bearskin rug; and three king-sized beds of different firmness. Not knowing her own Mythos that well, Goldie is not sure what to make of it, but it piques her curiosity in ways she can't explain. After she samples the first eight stations, she finds in the most comfy bed a duffle bag full of money. Satisfied like never before in her life, and under the influence of the sleeping pills mixed into the third bowl of porridge, she goes to sleep hugging the duffle bag and never wakes up. The bed is also equipped to electrocute her to death if she skips the porridge, so her fate is sealed. That is, unless one of the lead characters does something to stop all this from happening.

AFTER THE TRAP TRIGGERS

So long as there are other Rifts navigating the fairgrounds (not including Drake and the Carnies), Drake will have the Carnies bring incapacitated Rifts to him at the control room. He simply wants to prove a point, and he's not getting any satisfaction from preaching to his choir of Carnies, so he is looking to keep incapacitated targets alive for a few more minutes just to show them how he kills the rest of the Rifts. At your option, and if your game group's social contract permits it, the final trap to trigger will deal a tier-6 status, following which Drake will proceed to kill or get rid of his incapacitated audience.

PCs who survive their personal trap are now aware of the situation and can ignore any lures they encounter and warn others (if they can find them or communicate with them). They can also proceed to investigate the fairground without further distractions. Drake won't waste more time trying to lure such a character. Instead, he sends the Carnies to finish the job.

INVESTIGATING THE ABANDONED FAIRGROUND

Once the PCs figure out that the lures are false and turn their attention elsewhere, there are many secrets they may uncover:

There's an area by the edge of the fairground styled to look like a biblical setting with fake stone buildings and palm trees. **The mud here matches the mud on Pauline's boots and David's shoes and car tires.**

There's a **high-caliber revolver** haphazardly stashed behind one of the fake stone houses. The cylinder has only five out of six rounds, having fired the bullet that killed Pauline Woodworth. It matches the gunshot residue on David Nguyen's hands.

There's a large patch of turned earth in the middle of the biblical land display, big enough for a giant to be buried in. Digging for a while reveals **the giant body of Pauline Woodworth**, shot between the eyes.

Beyond the Mist, an act of giant-slaying took place here, echoing with visions of a giant falling to the ground as the earth shakes.

The interior of one of the pavilions looks like a king's palace, where a life-sized mannequin that looks just like Ellie is standing motionless. The lipstick on its lips, identical to Ellie's, has peeled off, corroded by **the same poison that killed David Nguyen**.

Electrical wiring and radio transmissions all point toward an inconspicuous but tall scaffolding structure at the center of the fairground, covered by a patchwork of corrugated metal and endless lights, props, and signs. This is where the control room must be.

Beyond the Mist, seeking the maker of the mannequins or the fairground machinery also leads to the control room, which burns against the horizon as a rusty iron tower overflowing with molten metal.

THE LEMNOS “CARNIES”

The Lemnos Carnies have been living in the abandoned fairground for years, scavenging and stealing for survival after their funfair empire collapsed. Building upon their years of living on the margins of society, Drake's Mythos Touched them, casting them as the Sintians, a strange traveling folk of raiders, pirates, and plunderers who nursed Hephaestus back to life after he fell from Olympus, later becoming his followers. Today, they serve as the carnival's behind-the-scenes operators, builders, and guardians.

The Lemnos Carnies respect outcasts, social pariahs, and those who survive on their own. They have a chip on their shoulder when it comes to City slickers and conformist members of mainstream society (who have turned on them before), nor do they particularly like sociopaths and nihilists with no respect to others and no familial tradition or code. For now, they believe their master's rants that Rifts are abominations who defy the laws of nature, and willingly take part in his quest to eradicate the City's “devil spawn” as they see it. Carnies may, however, find themselves facing a dilemma if someone they see as a social outcast Rift asks them for help or if someone opens their eyes to the truth about Rifts.

The Carnies are often seen in work clothing: a grease-stained sweater, torn jeans, and wooly hat. Many of them embraced a rugged and disheveled exterior, and like to stick long menacing stares at any urbanite who stares at them too long. Their tools glow red like metal out of the furnace when they channel Hephaestus' magic with their **Mechanomancy**.

() Individuals among the Lemnos Carnies became independent Rifts of legendary versions of traditional carnival shows. Drake's strange science further enhanced their abilities. These four Carnies serve as Drake's personal guard and follow his commands unequivocally.

- **Yulanda, the Iron Jaw**, received a literal jaw implant made of smith-god steel.
- **Mariush, the Human Cannonball**, got special fiery boots and an unbreakable helmet that allow him to shoot himself at his foes.
- **Ismail, the Fire Eater**, was gifted an unknown number of flaming scimitars that he can store in his belly and cast at his foes. The swords then fly back to his hand (or mouth).
- **Bartley, the Trick Shooter**, received a pair of six-shooters that never run out of ammo.



LEMNOS CARNIE ★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 3 / THREATEN 3 / TURN 5

- **Rough Exterior:** When you first see a Lemnos Carnie this scene, if you're a City slicker or conformist, take *apprehensive-2*. When a Lemnos Carnie takes a social, emotional, or mental status, reduce its tier by 1.
- **Mechanomancy:** Once per scene, as a soft move (or any time as a hard move), a Lemnos Carnie can bring back to life a carnival ride, booth, death trap, or any other machinery that is broken or malfunctioned. Remove all negative statuses on that machine and restore its tags, if burnt.
- Start a mechanical carnival ride to distract the crew (*distracted-2*, temporary) or block their path while the Carnie gets away (**Deny Them Something They Want**)
- Touch a machine and get it to attack someone (*thumped-2* or *zapped-2*)
- Get violent and stab someone with a pocket knife, a screwdriver, or a broken bottle (*bleeding-2*)
- Stare intently, tapping a tool on her palm

YULANDA, THE IRON JAW ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / TURN 6

- **Impossible Acrobatics:** When Yulanda takes a physical or subdual status she can dodge, reduce its tier by 2.
- **Self-Disciplined:** When Yulanda takes a social, emotional, or mental status, reduce its tier by 1.
- When in a circus tent or close to high structures, perform an acrobatic trick, grabbing someone and throwing them in the air (*broken-bones-3*) or hanging them from a rope (*entangled-and-suspended-3*)
- Snap her iron jaw shut on someone (*shattered-limb-4*) or something (*shattered-4*)
- Chew off restraints (remove up to 3 tiers of restraints statuses, hers or others)
- Tumble and flip overhead

BARTLEY, THE TRICK SHOOTER ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4

- **Quick Draw:** When you attack Bartley, he first gives you *gunshot-3*.
- **Controlled Ricochet, Placed Shot:** When you **Face Danger** or **Change the Game** against Bartley's gunfire, you cannot use tags or Juice that describe cover or armor unless they provide complete protection.

MARIUSH, THE HUMAN CANNONBALL ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / TURN 6

- **Absorb Concussive Force:** When Mariush takes a physical impact status, his magical helmet absorbs it. He converts it to a temporary *velocity* status of the same tier.
- **Olympian Headgear:** When Mariush takes a mental status, reduce its tier by 2.
- Launch himself at someone or something (*broken-bones-3* or *broken-3*; if he has a *velocity* status, it either enhances the tier of the *broken* status or impedes attempts to **Face Danger**)
- Ignite his boots, levitating unsteadily a few inches in the air

ISMAIL, THE FIRE EATER ★★★

HURT OR SUBDUE 4 / TURN 6

- **Flurry of Flaming Scimitars:** Ismail's magical scimitars can parry almost any melee strike or projectile including bullets, beams of energy, and magical bolts. When Ismail takes a status he can parry, reduce its tier by 2.
- **(Almost) Immune to Fire:** When Ismail takes a heat or fire status, reduce its tier by 4.
- **I Know This Trick:** When Ismail enters the scene, give him *alert-2*.
- Cast flaming scimitars at multiple targets and have them boomerang back and hit again (*scorching-cut-2* four times)
- Spit fire in a cone in front of him (*extensive-burns-3*)
- Hold someone's attention with incredible juggling of flaming swords (*entranced-3*)
- Cast a scimitar to hover around a teammate and parry incoming attacks (negate up to three tiers of incoming attacks on that teammate)
- Pull out yet another flaming scimitar from his throat

- **Sharpshooter:** When Bartley enters the scene, give him *aim-2*.

- Fire multiple shots at a single target or multiple targets (*flesh-wound-2* three times)
- Execute a trick shot so that something heavy breaks loose and falls on someone (*obstructed-2*, *prone-2*, or **Complicate Things, Bigtime**, usually forcing them to **Take the Risk**)
- Spin both of his revolvers on his trigger fingers

DEPTH 4: WHAT MAKES FOLKS TICK

THE CONTROL ROOM

Drake's control room lies at the heart of the fairground labyrinth, within a makeshift tower of scaffolding and corrugated steel, covered from top to bottom with signs advertising the various rides and attractions of the funfair. If they haven't been taken out of the equation, the four Carnies that constitute his guard will defend the control room to the end, as their brethren watch from all around the fairground.

Inside, the dark, rusty, and cramped space is filled wall-to-wall with monitoring equipment, such as screens and displays, that allows Drake to know of everything that is happening in the fairground. There sits the demented genius in his motorized wheelchair, monitoring the traps and timing them perfectly while at the same time sketching schematics for new traps.

Masilda, the Carnie elder and tarot reader who helps Drake interpret the information from P.I. Holliday and decypher what each Rift victim wants, is also here. She is watching the traps as they snap shut on the gullible Rifts with enjoyment; as long as they're treacherous City folk, she cares not. If things get messy, she'll try to creep out unnoticed.

THE SPEECH

Maximilian Drake has an axe to grind: he wants someone to understand and reaffirm the genius of his plan, of how he deconstructed the motivations of Rifts as he would little wind-up toy drummer monkeys. As described above, if he captures incapacitated Rifts and forces them to watch their friends fall prey to his traps, he will regale them with the details of his brilliant plan and Mechanist philosophy. This could be an opportunity for PCs that are perhaps physically incapacitated to use other abilities to escape or dissuade Drake from going forward with the killing.

SURRENDER?

Drake is more of a scheming mastermind than a stand-up-and-fight kind of villain. He's a powerful Rift, and has the upper body muscles of a divine blacksmith, but he lacks the guts and motivation required for a physical altercation. If the tides turn against him, and depending on how he gauges his chances, he may opt for different tactical approaches; in deciding how to end the case, factor in your cinematic considerations, e.g., is the story suffering from combat fatigue, etc.

- If he thinks the crew will spare him, Drake is not above surrendering. He figures no ordinary jail can hold him for long (metal has a way of bending to his will), so he could be back on the streets again soon.
- If he thinks the crew is out to avenge the Rifts he killed, he'll try to escape, ejecting himself through a vertical shaft into a converted getaway car (*catch:5*). The crew will have to take action to stop him from escaping.
- Finally, if the crew are on their last legs, Drake might don a suit of armor he created, dubbing himself **the Mechanist** (he's a nerd). This exoskeleton, shaped like a rusty-red metal armor, allows him to walk and take a beating, and so he'll make a final stand, trying to complete the job and kill the crew.

Even if he's caught and defeated, Drake will nonetheless give his speech, only it will be bitter and seething, explaining how concepts like 'magic' and 'gods' always put a wrench in the plans of 'true' logical thinkers. He has a full belly, and he won't miss the chance to unload his anger in the ears of anyone who would listen – even officers Das and Quinn as they escort him to prison.

If the crew interviews Drake about what drove him to turn to such drastic methods and to act upon his philosophy, he will relate his story, mentioning the name of the psychiatrist who helped him cope with his disability: **Dr. Archibald Tennant, of an association called Mending the Broken.**

Drake's personal phone has only ever made calls to one number: the Mending the Broken helpline. He always asked to be connected with Dr. Archibald Tennant.

Drake carries a pillbox with an anti-depressant psychiatric drug. The sticker indicates it was prescribed by Dr. Archibald Tennant. The pills have trace amounts of glass powder in them, possibly due to a faulty manufacturing environment.

THE MECHANIST ★★☆☆

DECOMMISSION 5 / CURE OF HATRED 6

- **Poisoned by Hate:** When the Mechanist enters the scene, give him *seething-with-hatred-2*. This applies to any attempts to convince him or cure him of his hatred to Rifts.
- **Olympian Exoskeleton:** When the Mechanist armor takes a physical or subdual status, reduce its tier by 2.
- Use mechanomancy to create a weapon that would counter a Rift's special abilities (giving an appropriate tier-3 status but giving himself *embarrassed-1* for using magic)
- Use mechanomancy to magically fix the exoskeleton (reduce any status on *decommission* by 2 tiers but giving himself *embarrassed-1* for using magic)
- Punch someone, pick them up and throw them around, or slam them with his oversized blacksmith hammer (*broken-limbs-4*)
- Use a flamethrower (everyone in range gets *on-fire-2* and again after each time they make a move, until the status is removed or the fire is put out)
- Preach aggressively about how Rifts are not legendary, they are just machines (everyone takes *self-doubt-1*)
- Take off, propelled by a jet of fire, and fly away (**Deny them something they want**)
- Ridicule Rifts
- Patronizingly explain to someone why their powers won't work on him

AFTERMATH

Here are a few questions to consider and points to revisit when you wrap up this case:

- Did everyone in the crew and in the supporting cast survive Drake's trap? If not, how are the surviving members dealing with losing a friend? What emotions do each of them experience? Do they vow to hurt Drake as revenge?
- What was the fate of Maximilian Drake, the Mechanist? Was he able to convince anyone with his self-important philosophical rants? Did he see the error of his ways or did he finally accept that there is more in heaven and earth than could be explained by natural science? Has he become more staunch in his opinions, if that's even possible? How does the crew plan to prevent him from killing more Rifts?
- What happens next with the carnival? If Drake is free, will he complete his vision and open the Rift-slaying theme park he dreamed up? If their god is gone, what will the Lemnos Carnies do? Will they wait for his return in the ruins of the carnival? Or will they rebuild, and if so, would it be to reopen the place as a legitimate funfair or to continue their master's legacy?
- How does the crew plan to approach the organization of Mending the Broken? If you played through *Killing Her Softly*, they now have met two villains connected with the therapist group.
- What ever happened to that street hustler, Goldie? Did she make it out alive of the death trap Drake set for her, or did her mythical and worldly urges seal her doom? If she survived, did she repent, or continue to steal from the rich and give to herself? Perhaps she becomes a series regular and continues to tail the crew, getting herself into dangerous situations.
- And P.I. Holliday – did he make it safely out? Or did he follow Goldie and got caught up in the fairground drama? Will the crew blame him for his part in the deaths of Pauline Woodworth and David Nguyen?
- What about Ellie Woodworth? Is anyone going to tell her that Pauline is gone? That it was David Nguyen who killed her? Would seeing the giant body cause Ellie to awaken and join the Rift underworld? Or would the crew decide to spare her the truth and let her hope she'll someday see Pauline again?
- If Theresa Nguyen hired the crew, she'll want to know what happened with Maximilian Drake, unless she gets his head on a silver platter as she asks. Such a brutal elimination is bound to gain the crew a nefarious reputation on the streets.
- Finally, what about Drake's technology, lying about in the mud just outside town? Someone could pick up a magical part and use it as a Relic, wittingly or unwittingly, sparking off a whole new origin story.