

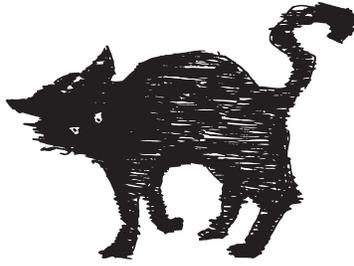
# CATS IN THE GRAY CITY

A story game by Dirk Leichty



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## INTRODUCTION

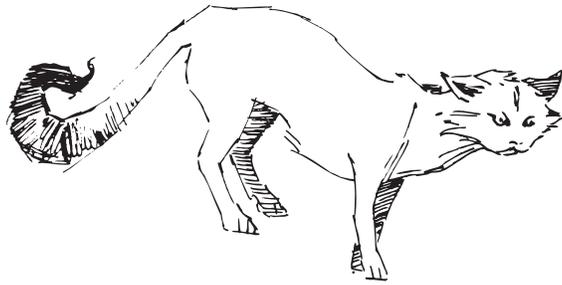
This is a game about cats. Not housecats, but not wild, feral beasts either. It's about free cats. Free cats live in a human world, but they're not owned by humans. To humans, they may be friends, allies, enemies, moochers, but never pets.

Free cats are intelligent, but it's not a human intelligence. They can think and reason as well as any human person, but they think about *cat* things, not human things. They recognize the street they live on by smell and sound and the rumbling of the train in their whiskers, not by reading words on some sign.

Free cats live in the City. It's a big city, maybe endless. It's not any city you've heard of—as far as the cats are aware—but parts of it may be familiar.

Free cats live in society and there's always one cat at the top. A queen maybe, or an emperor. Collectively, the sovereign and the free cats under their rule are called the Court.

Free cats are creatures of two worlds. There's the surface world, which we can all see, but there's also the secret world—underneath the surface, where lurk ghosts and spirits and magic.



## SETTING UP THE GAME

### 1. Gather game materials

Print the game materials from the end of this document and gather together the following:

3-6 enthusiastic, creative players

Pencils and coloring materials

A big pile of six-sided dice, about 10 per player

### 2. Decide player roles

Select one player to be the MC (Master of Cats.) The MC facilitates the game, and speaks for the world and supporting characters that surround our protagonists.

The remaining players will be Cats, and will speak for our story's protagonists.

### 3. Complete the Prologue

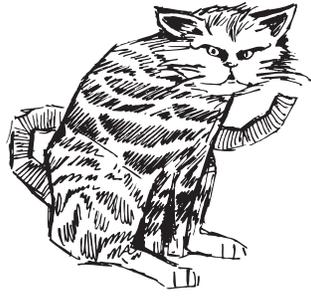
As a group, read through the Prologue sheet, and follow the instructions there to create your city.

### 4. Prepare characters

The MC reads and follows the instructions on the MC Sheet from the printed game materials.

Meanwhile, the Cats must each select a character sheet from the game materials and follow the instructions on it to prepare their character.

All players prepare their sheets simultaneously, at their own pace. When a player is ready to introduce their character, they may interrupt at any time to do so. The other players must pause what they're doing to listen and ask questions.



## PLAYING THE GAME

The game is a conversation.

Everything that happens in Cats takes place within a conversation. During that conversation, players make up a story—the MC describes an imaginary world, and the Cats say what their characters do in that world.

The rules exist to mediate that conversation, to distribute narrative authority among the players, and to push the story in unexpected directions.

The goal is to find out what happens.

After you've completed the prologue and prepared your characters, you'll have sown the seeds of a good story, and you'll have questions you want answered. Will the Queen keep her throne? What is the true nature of the menace that haunts the city?

The reason to play is to answer these questions together. Don't decide too much in advance. Ask each other lots of questions, and build on the answers.

The game is divided into scenes.

Like a play or a movie, the story you tell in Cats will unfold as a series of scenes. Not everything that happens needs a spotlight on it—include only what's interesting. Some things happen off-screen and we get caught up on them later on. The MC is responsible for setting up and facilitating scenes.

To start the game, the MC follows the instructions on their sheet to start a scene.

# PROLOGUE

The first phase of play is the Prologue. During the prologue, we'll outline the basic shape of the City and the cats who live here. Beginning to the left of the MC, each player chooses and answers one of the questions below. As each question is answered, the other players should ask for details, suggest ideas, but leave some things to wonder about. Continue until all the questions have been answered.

## 1. The city's borders

The city is endless, but there are borders that cats fear to cross; say why:

- The spirits have forbidden it
- The territory is ruled by another sovereign
- The streets are overrun with feral beasts
- The Catchers hunt there

## 2. A growing menace

Something new and dangerous lurks in the City's shadows. What stories are told of it? Choose two: it takes many shapes, it is the size of a bear, it can be in two places at once, it is a thing made by humans, it flies on black wings, it moves in silence, it has spies among the court, it's voice is mesmerizing, it breathes smoke and fire, it hunts the wicked

## 3. The sovereign

Who rules the court of the cats? Give them a title and a name, then choose two:

- Their rule is just
- Their health is strong
- Their authority is not contested

## 4. The shape of the kingdom

In the space below, draw a map of the City. Include the home of the sovereign and three of the following:

- a dangerous body of water, a natural refuge, a hermit, a contested territory, forbidden ground, an abandoned house, an entrance to the spirit world, a kind human, an outlaw's hideout, a zoo, a pack of wild dogs, an old ghost

## 5. A common origin

Shared history holds our main characters together. Who are they? Choose one:

- the remnants of an ancient clan, a band of outlaws, the trusted knights of the sovereign, refugees from the beyond the borders

## 6. The concrete wilds

In the city, bounty and famine walk hand in hand.

Choose two:

- There is enough food
- The weather is not harsh
- There is little sickness

## 7. The rights of power

What rights does the cat sovereign hold? Choose two, and say how they've been exercised:

- to award or seize territory, to demand service, to wage war, to collect taxes, to declare taboos, to arrange breeding, to settle disputes, to kill who they will

## 8. The taking of the throne

How did the sovereign win their throne? Choose one and say how it happened:

- a bloody coup, a rite of birth, a glorious battle, a popular election, a sinister conspiracy, a heroic quest, a divine decree



# THE BRUISER

You're big. You're tough. You're mean. You've won some fights and you've lost some fights and you wear your scars with pride.

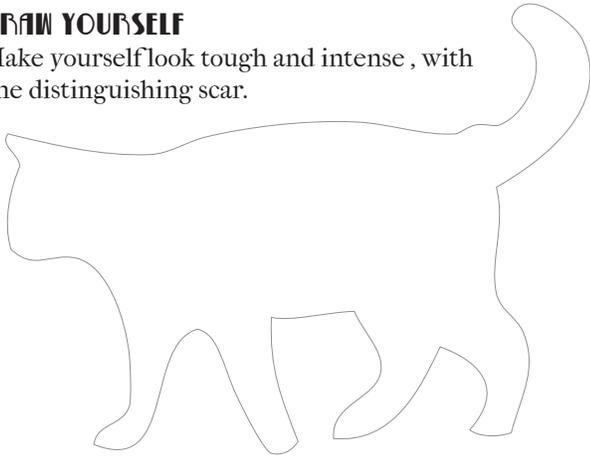
## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Bruiser, Moxie, Raz, Monster, Redbeard, Bigfoot, Bastion, Beefcake, Athena, Tiger, Torque

### DRAW YOURSELF

Make yourself look tough and intense, with one distinguishing scar.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your rival. Whenever you or your rival makes a move but doesn't succeed in their goal, the other may discard a die to step in and get it done, gloating viscusly afterwards.

### SPECIAL MOVES

- Choose two special moves:
- o Killer instinct: while you're bloodied and you make it your goal to take someone down, you may assign a die here. If you do, they choose one: they fall and don't get up; they'll never mess with you again; they offer you something in exchange for their life.
  - o Dangerous demeanor: when you make it your goal to impress or intimidate someone, you may add dice to your roll for each of your scars.
  - o Grudge: when you make a move against someone who's declared themselves your enemy,
  - o Pin down: when someone tries to run from you, you may discard a die to corner them, one-on-one.
  - o Big as Hell: at the start of each scene, add three extra dice to your pool.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place ten dice in your pool. When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. Ask the MC if you're in harm's way, and if you're at an advantage or disadvantage, then roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY STRENGTH PREVAILS

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I'M THE ALPHA

Assign a die here to show them who's boss. Choose another character; the next time they make a move, they must get your permission first or declare themselves your enemy. Otherwise, ask the MC who's challenging your authority and confront them about it.



### I KEEP MY COOL

Assign a die here to contain your inner beast. Otherwise, mark a box:

- A wild gleam lights up my eyes  
 I will attack anything that gets in my way  
 I am a feral beast, lost to myself forever

When someone puts their life in your hands, you may erase one box.



### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a box:

- I'm bloodied  
  I'm lamed but still dangerous  
 This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a box. If you do, add a scar to your drawing.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

# THE SHADOW

You're swift and quiet, careful and shy. You pass through hidden places, and commune equally with the seen and unseen. You feel the pull of the secret world everywhere, and hope not to fade away.

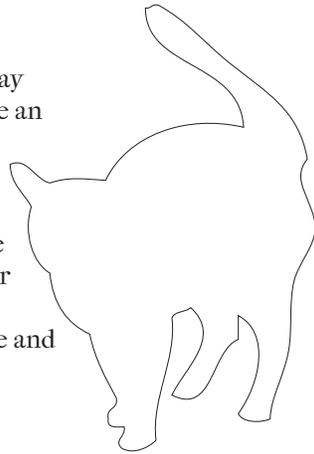
## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Shadow, Grim, Luna, Po, Moonkitty, Whispersilk, Carbon, Sweetsleep, Cloud, Quicksilver

### DRAW YOURSELF

You are pitch black, slate gray or stark white. Your eyes are an odd and vibrant color.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your tether. That cat always knows where you are and sees you when others don't.

### SPECIAL MOVES

Choose two special moves:

- o Black as night: while you stand still and don't make a move, you may mark one box under "I don't fade away" to go perfectly unnoticed.
- o Into the dark: When you make it your goal to escape, you may go seen or unseen for free.
- o Shadow step: While you're see-through, you may discard a die to pass through a wall or solid object. Be careful, though—no telling what's on the other side.
- o Haunt: When you start a scene as a disembodied voice, you may choose to possess another character. Whenever you make a move while possessing someone, assign a die here to keep ahold of them.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions or tell you how you're in harm's way. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY WITS PREVAIL

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I'M SEEN / UNSEEN

Assign a die here to say who does or doesn't notice you. Otherwise, ask the MC.



### I DON'T FADE AWAY

Assign a die here to stay firmly real. Otherwise, mark a box:

I'm slightly see-through

I'm a floating disembodied voice.

I've passed through the veil, gone forever

Once per scene, when someone calls you by name, you may erase one box.



### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a harm box:

I endure my pain in silence

I'm hurt and moving slowly

I disappear into the city to die in peace

At the start of a scene, you may discard a die to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place six dice in your pool, then steal a die from your tether's pool.

When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

# THE MAGUS

You're a wild, wizened warlock of a cat. You're a weaver of spells, a forger of pacts, a vessel for a thousand years of memory. You're also pretty into canned tuna.

## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Cleopatra, Geist, Serpico, Viscious, Loki, Leviathan, Lookfar, Draco, Fortuna, Maev, Arrietty

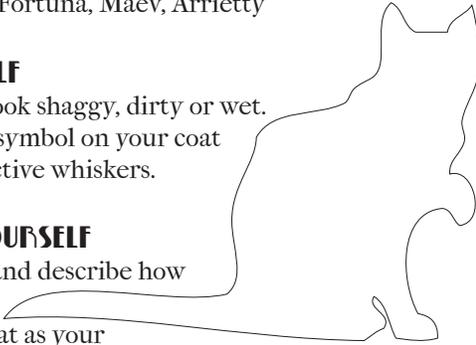
### DRAW YOURSELF

Make yourself look shaggy, dirty or wet. Draw a strange symbol on your coat and long, distinctive whiskers.

### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look.

Name another cat as your protégé. Draw your symbol on their fur. When you seal away your power, you may give them the dice to hide away instead of keeping them yourself. Once during the game, they may erase the symbol to return all of their hidden dice to their pool.



### CHOOSE SPECIAL MOVES

You get the move "void summons," and one other.



**Void summons:** You may call on spirits of darkness to follow, find or spy on someone for you. If you do, assign a die here, or mark a box:

- Something watches me from beyond
- I am haunted day and night by tormenting spirits
- I've been dragged into the void, gone forever

o **Void discipline:** When you call on spirits of darkness, you may discard a hidden die to instead choose one of the follow effects: steal someone's voice; bring mayhem down around you; open a door or shut it and lock it;

o **Reaper seal:** So long as something watches you from beyond, your bargains are sealed by the grim powers; neither you nor any other may break them.

o **99 lives:** Your memories go way, way back; at any time, discard a hidden die to ask the MC for a useful memory.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions or tell you how you're in harm's way. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY ARTS PREVAIL

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I SEAL AWAY MY POWER

Assign as many dice as you like here, and hide them away somewhere, keeping track of them. Once during the game, you may erase the strange symbol you bear to return all your hidden dice to your pool.



### I RESIST THE DARKNESS

Assign a die here to deny the call of the void.

Otherwise, mark a box:

- I think first of my own safety
  - I'm convinced someone plots against me
  - I'm a creature of the shadows, an enemy to all cats
- When someone risks themselves on your behalf, you may erase one box.



### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe.

Otherwise, mark a box and describe what happens to you:

- I'm lamed and can't move well
- I'm spitting up blood
- I need to get someplace warm
- This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place eight dice in your pool, then steal a die from another character's pool.

When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

# THE GREMLIN

You're smart; like, freaky smart. Actually, you've heard the word "freak" a lot during your lives. You know how stuff works, and how to make it stop working. Oh, and you have a radio in your head, so that's something.

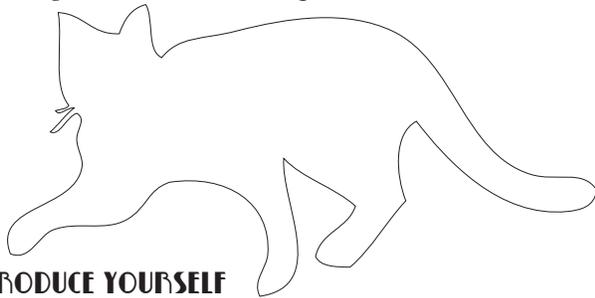
## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Rocket, Radar, Radio, Pounce, Looper, Skipper, Mischief, Red, Wirewhisk

### DRAW YOURSELF

You're cute, but a little weird-looking. Your fur is singed or rubbed bare in places.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your conspirator. They have the other piece of your radio set. It's small, so it fits on a collar, but its up to them to keep track of it.

### CHOOSE SPECIAL MOVES

- You get the move "copy that," and one other.
- o Copy that: you have a two way radio set. One half's in your brain. Your conspirator has the other half. You can use it communicate over long distances, or quietly in the presence of others.
  - o Baffling panoply: you carry an arsenal of little objects with you, somehow. When you need something specific, you may discard a die to have just the thing or know where to find it.
  - o Monkeypaw: you can work most simple human devices. Once per scene, you may discard a die to ask, "How's this thing work?"
  - o Signal booster: while static crackles behind your eyes, you may discard a die to patch your radio into any other radio, speaker, microphone, or brain around you.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions or tell you how you're in harm's way. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY SKILL PREVAILS

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I STAY FOCUSED

Assign a die here to avoid distraction. If you do, add a bonus die to your next roll. Otherwise, ask the MC where curiosity leads. Follow it.



### THINGS DON'T GO HAYWIRE

Assign a die here to keep your mischievous sprites at bay. Otherwise, mark a box and ask the MC how things go crazy.

- Static crackles behind my eyes
- My radio's giving me odd signals
- My heart's stopped beating

When your feet touch the bare earth, erase all your boxes.



### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a box:

- I'm bruised and disheveled
- My forepaw is lamed
- This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place seven dice in your pool.

When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

# THE ACRO-CAT

You're a paragon of athleticism and grace. You move like a trapeeze artist across the city's skyline, ever in pursuit of that singular, soaring freedom.

## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Sylvan, Copper, Lulu, Prancer, Howl, Wind, Daywisp, Opera, Kite, Haku

### DRAW YOURSELF

You have short, windblown fur with long, sweeping markings.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your muse. Your special moves only work when you have your muse's faith and encouragement. If they withhold it, they must tell you why and give you a way to get it back. When you win back your muse's faith, both of you mark experience.

### CHOOSE SPECIAL MOVES

- Choose two special moves:
- o **Aerialist:** When you make it your goal to climb up or get on top of something, you always succeed, even if you don't assign dice, even if it's absurdly high or dangerous. This does not help you get down.
  - o **Leaf on the wind:** When you're in the zone and something comes at you with claws bared, you may discard a die to get out of harm's way. This works for things without claws, too. Cars, for example.
  - o **Keen eyes:** Your eyes can see farther than other cats. When you survey your surroundings from a high place, ask the MC to draw you a map, including who's around, and anything that's strange or out of place.
  - o **Elfenstep:** You're light as a feather, and never off-balance. You can walk easily across any surface, no matter how shaky, fragile or narrow.
  - o **Great leap:** Whenever you make a move to take a daring leap, add two bonus dice to your roll.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions or tell you how you're in harm's way. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY GRACE PREVAILS

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I FEEL THE WIND IN MY WHISKERS

Assign a die here to ask the MC for a warning. When you heed the warning, add two bonus dice to your roll. Otherwise, the MC will tell you what you missed, but a little later, after it's no longer useful.

### I STAY GROUNDED



Assign a die here, or give in to your daredevil nature. Otherwise, mark a box:

I'm in the zone, can't stop me now!

I feel invincible, I'm oblivious to risk

I will take the riskiest route available to me

When your muse withholds their encouragement, erase all these boxes.

### I GET OUT UNSCATHED



If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a box:

I'm bruised and shaken

I'm lamed and can't move well

This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place ten dice in your pool.

When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.



# THE DANDY

You're gorgeous. Stylish, show-quality, a true specimen. You're charm and beauty make you an object of envy and desire in the court.

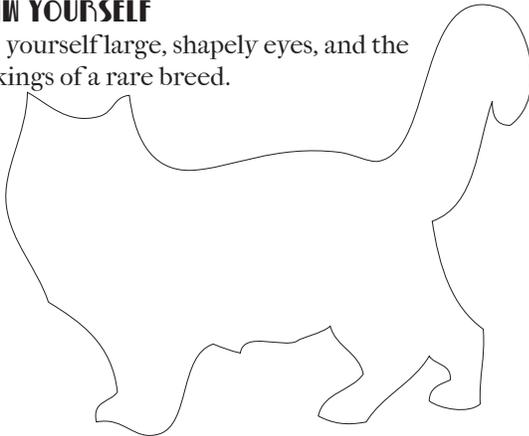
## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Reis, Queen Mary, Sebastian, Iridium, Plum, Gabriel, Mercury,

### DRAW YOURSELF

Give yourself large, shapely eyes, and the markings of a rare breed.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your admirer. Wanting to impress you, they add a bonus die when they make a move in your presence. Once per scene, when you bestow your approval on them, take two dice from their pool.

### CHOOSE SPECIAL MOVES

You get the move "rare stock," and one other.

- o Rare stock: so long as you're not dirty, no human will ever take you for a stray. Most will let you into their house if you beg, taking you for a lost pet.
- o Enthralling gaze: when you give someone your full attention, you may discard a die to get theirs in return. They won't break attention until you do.
- o Silver tongue: whenever someone makes a demand or sets a condition in exchange for a favor, they'll always take your promise in place of the real thing.
- o Cuddle monster: when you put your life in human hands, add two dice to your pool.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions about it, or suggest revisions. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the options below and then discard them.



### MY BEAUTY PREVAILS

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.



### I'M THE STAR

Assign a die here to stay in the spotlight. If you do, all eyes are on you, waiting to see what you do next. Ask a question, then say what you do next:  
What do they most hope or fear I'll do?  
How can I impress them or win them over?  
Otherwise, your moment's passed. Wait until another character's made a move before you act again.



### I KEEP MY POISE

Assign a die here to keep the city's grime at bay. Otherwise, mark a box:

I'm a bit ruffled, but I'm holding together

I'm dirty

I'm fed up with this life and must retire to comfort

When you take a bath, erase these boxes.



### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a box:

I'm wincing with each step

I'm wheezing and and crying

This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. If you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves instead.

## DICE POOL

At the start of each scene, place eight dice in your pool.

When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

# THE WILDCAT

You're not actually a cat, though you're sometimes mistaken for one. You're something a older, more primal. For now, you're loose in the City, but the Catchers are after you, eager to put you back in your cage.

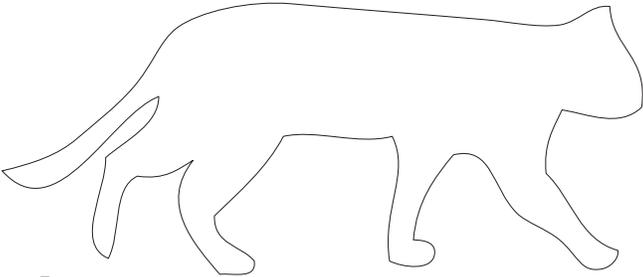
## IN PREPARATION...

### CHOOSE A NAME

Lynx, Jaguar, Wildcat, Bobcat, Ocelot, Caracal, Tiger, Leo, Panther, Sabertooth, Snowcat

### DRAW YOURSELF

Give yourself spots or stripes, with long ears, and sharp claws and teeth.



### INTRODUCE YOURSELF

Say your name and describe how you look. Name another cat as your advocate. Your advocate believes you really are a cat, and acts as your liaison to the court.

### CHOOSE SPECIAL MOVES

- Choose two special moves:
- o Predator: when you make it your goal to track someone down, add two bonus dice to your roll.
  - o Primal Authority: While you are feared and hated by the court and make it your goal to intimidate or command someone, add two bonus dice to your roll.
  - o Gnawed Bones: When you take down your prey, leaving no trace of them behind, add two to your dice pool at the start of the next scene.
  - o Wildspeak: You've spent time around other animals species and have learned many languages.
  - o Secret den: You have secret safehouses scattered around the city. Add three of them to the map.

## MAKING A MOVE

When you make a move, say what you do and state your goal. The MC and the other players may ask you questions about it, or suggest revisions. Roll as many of your dice as you like and discard any that land 1, 2 or 3. Assign the remaining dice to the choices below and then discard them.

### MY INSTINCT PREVAILS

Assign a die here to succeed in your goal; ask the MC what happens. Otherwise, ask the MC for a hard choice or a worse outcome.

### I KEEP A WARY EYE

Assign a die here to stay vigilant. If you do, until you next make a move, nothing can surprise you. Otherwise, expect the worst.

### I MIND MY MANNERS

Assign a die here to pass for a member of the cat court. Otherwise, mark a box:

- I am feared and hated by the court
- None but my advocate dares speak to me
- I am an outlaw, banished from the court forever

At the start of a scene, your advocate may discard a die to erase one box above.

### I GET OUT UNSCATHED

If you're in harm's way, assign a die here to keep safe. Otherwise, mark a box:

- I'm bloodied and breathing hard
- I'm lamed and can't move well
- I can't keep my eyes open
- This is where I die

At the start of a scene, you may discard two dice to erase a harm box.

## EXPERIENCE

When you mark your fourth experience box, erase them all and choose a new special move. Once you've learned all your special moves, choose one of the unused character sheets and pick one of their special moves.

## DICE POOL

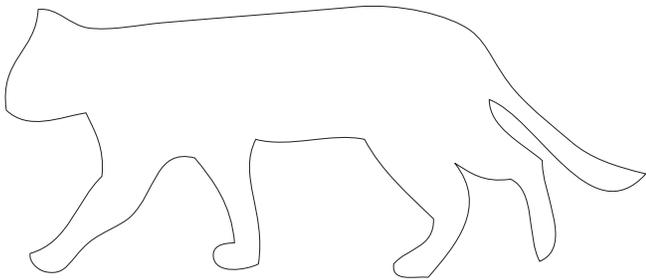
At the start of each scene, place ten dice in your pool, then give one to your advocate. When you run out of dice, mark experience. If you were the first to run out this scene, mark experience again.

# THE MASTER OF CATS

## IN PREPARATION...

### DRAW THE CAT SOVEREIGN

Take what was decided in the Prologue and give form to it. Ask the other players for a distinguishing characteristic.



### THINK ABOUT THE SOVEREIGN

What are their plans? What do they think of our protagonists? Who do they trust? Come up with a few ideas, but don't write them down. Let them simmer and develop as you play the game.

### THINK ABOUT THE MENACE

What might it's true nature be? What might not be as it seems? Again, come up with ideas, but don't make them real yet. Listen to the protagonists' fears and use the Menace to harvest them.

### CREATE SOME SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

On the supporting characters sheet, draw a few more cats, and give them names:

Daisy, Southpaw, Jayjay, Kalispel, Sly, Scooter, Belle, Zealot, Nanaki, Curry, Ginger, Hoplite, Skinner, Bangerang, Click, Ranger, Kink, Fleet, Booker, Rose, Irena, Pudding, Opal, Bravo, Sammy, Greensand, Rio, Commodore, Kingston, Kirk, Spalding, Senator, Fishy, Lupe, Snead, Bouquet, Clipper, Rainbow, Glass, Nutmeg, Squeek, Windrunner, Foxglove, Coal, Ivy, Cheese

Give your characters simple motivations that threaten or bolster the protagonists.

### ASK THE OTHER PLAYERS LOTS OF QUESTIONS

As the Cats introduce themselves, ask them questions. Make them elaborate on details. Make suggestions. Push them to form opinions. Ask "why" a lot.

## MAKING A MOVE

As the MC, you don't roll dice—your moves are more like prompts for improvisation. Use them to keep the other players in the drivers seat, making decisions.

### STARTING A SCENE

Think about the Prologue, the characters and what's happened in your story so far. Turn to one or more other players, and choose one:

- Ask what they want; dangle it in front of them
- Ask what they're afraid of; confront them with it
- Announce a danger; ask what they do about it
- Put humans in their way
- Offer an open door or window, hinting at the risks and prizes beyond
- Confront them with hunger, cold or disease
- Use the rights of the sovereign against them
- Ambush them; ask how they react
- Put them face to face with the Menace
- Give them something to eavesdrop on
- Put them together with another character
- Ask what they do next

In addition, always say or ask:

- Who's there?
- Where is it happening?
- What does it look/smell/sound like?

### DURING A SCENE

Listen to what the other players say and react to it, then make them react to you. After each move you make, ask someone "what do you do?"

- When something's at stake, make them roll dice
- Speak for the supporting characters
- Bring humans capriciously into and out of the scene
- Give something a cost or a condition
- Play with the passage of time
- Put them in harm's way
- Foreshadow trouble
- Ask what they're thinking
- Tell them what they see/smell/hear
- Use their marked boxes against them
- Separate them
- Turn their question around and make them decide

### ENDING A SCENE

Anytime after two players run out of dice, do whichever seems most appropriate:

- Fade to black
- Cut away to action elsewhere
- Wrap up the scene in narration
- Immediately start a new scene, picking up right where this one left off

### BETWEEN SCENES

Talk about how the game is going. Ask what the other players are excited about, or what they want to see happen. If time passes between scenes, ask or say what happens in that time.

