

SITUATION CREATION REFERENCE

This is the players' reference for situation creation. It lacks the GM advice and guidance found in the book.

STEP 0: BRIEFING (10MIN)

Instructions

1. The GM explains the game's premise and objective
2. The GM explains the basics of the setting and the baseline for the city
3. The GM goes through the player and GM agendas
4. We'll now create the situation together. Some steps limit discussion, the GM informs the group about the limitations. All steps require you to make individual choices following your own sense of drama.

STEP 1: RECENT PAST (15MIN)

Instructions

1. The GM highlights 1-3 interesting events from the Tragic Events list.
2. Going around the table, the players do the same.
3. Discuss and pick the most popular one. If the event offers two factions, pick which one is relevant in your situation.
4. Take a blank sheet of paper, write the event on the very top of it and underline it.

Tragic Events

An unjust war initiated by our **noble houses**, barely won, but killing the wisest leaders and heirs

A plague, killing thousands, allegedly set loose by a terrorizing **witch coven** or a **cult**

A famine, killing thousands, the only food supplies open to townsfolk controlled by **criminal gangs**

A mass migration, assisted by an **ethnic community**, leading to civil unrest

A wild demon, driven off by a **mercenary company** or the **city watch** with unethical tactics

A witch panic, numerous innocents and heretics burned at the stake by the **Church**

Religious or ethnic community cleansing done by the **Inquisition**

A failed people's uprising, suppressed with unnecessarily heavy use of force by the **city council**

An economic collapse, having something to do with a corrupted **bank** or **guild**

A volcanic eruption, ruining people's health, but leading to improved medical research at the **university**, though only for the benefit of the rich

STEP 2: SIDES AND FACTIONS (15MIN)

Instructions

1. Adhere to the discussion rules in this step.
2. Divide the blank area of the paper into three equal sections.
3. Handpick the bolded faction related to the tragic event and place it on the conflict web.
4. Starting from the player sitting left from the GM, each person picks either a faction or a descriptor for a faction, following their own sense of drama.
 - » If you picked a faction, place it on one of the sides. One of the sides will end up with two factions while the other two sides end up with one.
 - » If you picked a descriptor, add it to a faction that doesn't have one.
5. Continue until there are four descriptor-faction pairs on the conflict web.

Factions

- A Cult
- A Noble House
- A Witch Coven
- A Criminal Gang
- The City Watch
- The Church
- A Mercenary Company
- An Ethnic Community
- A Merchant/Craft Guild
- A Religious Community
- A Bank
- The City Council
- The Inquisition
- The University

Descriptors

- Wronged
- Unlucky
- Ruined
- Desperate
- Oppressed
- Dominant
- Envious
- Indebted
- Vengeful
- Misguided
- Zealous
- Influential
- Sinful
- Two-faced
- Murderous
- Intolerant
- Populistic
- Self-righteous

STEP 3: THE ALLIANCE (5MIN)

Instructions

1. Adhere to the discussion rules in this step.
2. Continue from the next person. That person chooses a relationship for the allied pair of factions
 - » Draw a labeled arrow between the factions for the relationship, indicating which faction initiated the alliance.

Alliances

- Has hired
- Shares ideology with
- Bribes
- Shares goals with
- Blackmails
- Is bound by the leaders' witchcraft to
- Manipulates
- Is bound by the leaders' friendship to
- Trades favors with
- Is paying off its leader's personal debt to
- Shares ethnicity with
- Shares religious beliefs with

STEP 4: FACTION GOALS (10MIN)

Instructions

1. Adhere to the discussion rules in this step.
2. Continue from the next person. That person picks a faction that doesn't have a goal, chooses their goal and points it at another faction.
 - » You can't point more than two goals at one faction.
 - » Allied factions don't need to point their goals at the same target.
3. Keep going until all factions have a goal.

Goals

- Exact revenge on
- Sabotage an endeavour of
- Gain dominance over
- Take something valuable from
- Collect a debt from
- Enforce a deal struck with
- Utterly destroy
- Manipulate to change the course of
- Purify the deviants of
- Reveal the misconduct of

STEP 5: SITUATION DETAILS (30MIN)

Instructions

1. Continue from the next person. That person picks a faction and asks the first faction question from the next person.
2. Once they've answered the question, they pick the next faction and ask the current question from the next person.
 - » Feel free to add notes on the conflict web along the way
3. When the current question has been answered for all factions, move on to the next question. Keep going until all the faction questions have been answered for all factions.
4. Then go through all the connections (the goals and the alliance) and ask the corresponding question as you did with faction questions.
 - » When going through the goals, make sure the whole situation can't resolve itself trivially. There's a reason why this is the starting point of play. If the conflicts are trivial, they should've already been resolved.

Faction Questions

- Why/how is the faction <its descriptor>?
 - » For example, how is the noble house unlucky?
- How large is the faction?
 - » An adjective is enough at this point, no need for numbers.
- Was this faction involved in the tragic event in any way? How?
- How has the tragic event affected this faction's current goal?

Goal Question

- Why does the faction want to achieve this goal?

Alliance Question

- Why do the allied factions need this alliance?

STEP 6: OPTIONAL DETAILS (15MIN)

Instructions

1. Decide whether you have time to answer the optional questions and skip this step if you don't.
2. Stop taking turns now. Go through the optional questions one by one, but this time let everyone answer the questions that they find interesting
 - » If the group doesn't have a strong opinion on something, leave it to the GM and move on.
3. When no one has anything to add or you've used up your 15 minutes, go to the next step.

Optional Questions

- What do the townspeople call the factions? Name them.
- What makes a faction unique, colorful or interesting?
- What kinds of resources does a faction have access to?
- What characters obviously belong to one of the factions?
- What's the history of a faction like?
- What kinds of informal ties exist between the factions?

STEP 7: FREE DISCUSSION (15MIN)

Instructions

1. Take a look at the situation you've created. Do you have a shared idea of what's happening? Does the situation make sense? Discuss.
2. Add details if something critical is missing or change details if something doesn't make sense.
3. Move on to the next step when everyone has a clear idea what the situation is about.

STEP 8: PLAYER CHARACTERS (30MIN PER PLAYER)

Instructions

1. Each player picks a faction they would like their character to be a part of.
 - » All player characters must belong to different factions in the beginning.
2. It's likely that the players have come up with character concepts by this point, but if not, they need ideas now.
 - » If you need ideas, skim through the lifepath list in the character creation reference and pick a lifepath that you fancy. This is your last lifepath, i.e. the target lifepath for character creation.
3. The players should take their character creation references while the GM follows the instructions in the character creation chapter.
4. Create the characters.
 - » The GM facilitates character creation, asks provocative questions and makes sure they're tough and determined enough for this mess.