

INTERSECTING FATES

THE IDEA

Have you ever been in a game that started arbitrarily at a tavern? Everyone magically knew everyone else and it all seemed contrived and disingenious? After doing some reading and also after seeing a RPG called “Fiasco”, I got an idea that led to this creation. This is an attempt to help others avoid those types of starts and to create a more integrated and realistic party at chargen, in Exalted 3E.

HOW IT WORKS

The concept is to have your players come up with a few extra intimacies at game start. Specifically, ties. I recommend a minimum of four for each player, and the ST is welcome to come up with some as well, but it isn't necessary.

These connections should be thought of as additional ties that the players might have to each other and the game world. Your ST may give you guidance on the theme/tone of the ties. Depending on the theme of the campaign, I generally tend to let the players imagination run wild. Keep in mind, just because it is entered into the pool, it doesn't mean that it will necessarily be selected, or even if it is selected doesn't mean that it will domineer over other more prevalent intimacies.

After the intimacies are gathered up the ST will put them into a pool and assign them a number. The ST will also need to take a look at the ties, make sure they are appropriate for the game, and then generate a list of how those ties could be defined. This could be relationships, common activities, etc. An example will be provided after the rest of the process is explained.

At this point, select a player to roll a die (with the appropriate amount of sides equal to the amount of ties in the pool). All the players will get multiple chances to roll! The result of that player's roll is then defined by the roll of the next player in line. The players would then write down the ties on their character sheets. You can choose to discuss and define the specifics of the tie at this time, or wait until after you finish with the amount of ties you want the players to have. I would recommend the latter, so the players do not have to reforge ties if new ones come through thought would alter them.

AN EXAMPLE

For this example, I will play the part of the ST. I have three players in my group Link, Sonic, and Inspector Gadget. After soliciting for some inputs, I get their ties and add a few of my own. Here is what we have for our game, that will be set for a kickoff in Gem.

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|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Ore thief | 5. Dimsum cart |
| 2. Slum knick-knack vendor | 6. Low level city guard |
| 3. Mayor's garden | 7. Ghost flower tea |
| 4. Traveling band | 8. Mine shaft 18 |

Knowing when and how the game is going to start, I have decided to keep things relatively simple in terms of how the ties are defined. My criteria are that the ties must be shared by at least two of the players, but could involve more. So I have made my list to reflect this. Feel free to expand the scope of your connections in your own games.

1. Knows/connected to two players
2. Knows/connected to two players and an non-group entity
3. Knows/connected to three players
4. Knows/connected to three players and an non-group entity

Now we are ready to roll and start the process. I decide I want each player to roll one tie and one definition, depending on how many intimacies your players already have, you should probably increase this number. I am purposely only doing three to keep the example small.

Link is to my left and I tell him to go first. He rolls a d8 and gets a result of 5. Next is Sonic, who rolls a d4 to define the tie, and gets a 2. Typically, I would wait until after the rolls are done to jump into the details, but for example's sake we will go ahead and expand on this here. Sonic's roll means that Link, one of the other players, and a NPC will all be connected to a specific dimsum cart in the city of Gem. I decide I want to let the person who rolls the definition to choose the other players (as applicable) for that roll. As the ST, I can either create a NPC on the spot (as a QC) or I can just give them a name and wait till later to flesh out the NPC.

Sonic chooses himself as the other player, and I tell the players that the NPC's name is Floating Stone, a revered dimsum chef that cooks up the best dimsum in the city, ever morning, and then hits the streets to sell his delicious pastries.

The players get to decide how they are connected through the tie, and in this case, both Link and Sonic decide that they both ran into each other after catching a waf of the magical dimsum smell and discussed their love of the pastry for a few moments as they each ate and listened to the other's tales of adoration for the dimsum. Link and Sonic would now add the intimacy to their sheets (Minor tie - Floating Stone's dimsum cart). I've selected a minor tie for this example but players and ST should ensure they discuss what they think works best for their characters and the story.

Next up is Inspector Gadget who rolls a d8 gets a result of 6. Link is up next to roll a definition, and gets a 3. All the players now have a tie to the low level city guard, and could come up with some sort of narrative explanation that explains the connection to that guard.

Keep in mind, there is no requirement for a player to have a positive or negative interaction with the tie. For example, we will say that the last tie was ghost flower tea. Maybe one of the players had a bad trip after drinking some before his sleep, so now he is incredibly hesitant to go around the herb. Whereas another player may choose to be a regular user of the tea, and has a positive tie indicating such.

The whole goal is to help integrate intimacy ties to the group and help give some context to the group forming or coming together. Feel free to modify the categories, and change this formula up as you would like. My hope is that gaming groups will be able to use this enhance their characters, and thus, the story.