

Feedback

Copies of email and board updates to go through and incorporate-

CCCXLII

I've been reading through the rules a lot lately and doing some research on the setting, as I'm somewhat unfamiliar with Faction Paradox. Here are some thoughts I have.

A Faction Shrine should always be the time-travelling method of choice, as they evoke The Faction and core themes of the game. Coteries could instead focus solely on what kind of gameplay/missions the group wants to focus on and what tools they want access to. A Combat Coterie could get special weapons, designed for fighting on the frontlines of the time war; while more Espionage and Influence focused Coteries could get Biodata Hacking tools, Tracking Knives, or Remembrance Tanks. This also brings the unique elements of the setting to the forefront, where they ought to be.

As far as the Shrine blood sacrifices go, moves could be added to the playbooks (coterie or player) that modify how the Shrine is used or mitigate certain costs. Such as, keeping biodata samples on-hand so sacrifices aren't always necessary and the group has a list of locations they can always visit; or a device that deposits the sacrificed person back to their own time and rewrites their biodata to make their injuries be the result of an accident; and so on... A Shrine has rules that enact a heavy cost for it to work, but The Faction is about breaking rules and tradition (even when it's their own), so this kind of thing could be encouraged.

Faction Embassies are iconic, but I think it's better to focus on them only as an occasional mission, since they detract from the time travel element. Besides, a Shrine can already fit perfectly within the existing architecture of whatever building. Perhaps there could be Coterie or Playbooks moves that are about establishing an Embassy, providing support for the Coterie's activities during missions or downtime.

The Eleven Day Empire should be something visited through Downtime. It's a neat place and the heart of The Faction, but it's not great for focusing a whole game around. Add Downtime Moves for doing cool things there, like consulting with the Unkindnesses, performing rituals, or attending parliament. Since some form of time travel is necessary to get there, this could create interesting decisions on whether it's better to get an asset from the local time or if it's worth it to make the trip to the Empire.

Species could be removed. A big part of joining The Faction is renouncing your ancestry, so it doesn't make sense to me that what race a character is be so intently focused on. Not to mention, as cool as it is to be a Gallifreyan or a Dalek, they muddy the narrative and cause problems, such as being an oversized pepper pot that is completely unable to blend in with the local natives during missions. Even when it comes to more interesting ideas, like being an escaped citizen from the City of the Saved, I feel like it's best relegated to the backstory of the character rather than adding new mechanics.

The Citizen, The Homeworlder, and The Killer also don't really fit in with the other playbook archetypes, The Chosen One, The Diplomat, The Fighter, and The Leader, as these focus on what you DO while the others focus on what you ARE. Homeworlder could be 'The Engineer', Citizen could be

'The Spy', and Killer has Moves that could be split up into the other playbooks.

On that note about Playbooks, I think its worth merging The Potential Recruit playbook into the Little Sibling rank, and allow most of the playbooks to be this rank. "A Little Help" and "What Does This Do?" fit really well with the idea of being an apprentice/initiate.

If species must be a thing, then racial abilities could be treated as a type of 'biological' Gear that permanently takes up a slot. This works well with Completion, balances them with other player characters, gives options for representing many different species, and all while not making the choice of race too much of a focus. For example; being cyber-converted could mean losing your Packed slot, as you're forever in armor; being a Time Lord could mean choosing to lose your Ready slot in exchange for a Regeneration ability, as you're more at home in libraries and not time wars and action. One idea might be to allow players to take Completion during character creation, so that they can have extra gear slots to be used with racial abilities.

Consider making Metatime a spendable resource. I think this will be easier to keep track of, while also encouraging more timey-wimey shenanigans. For example, every Coterie starts missions with 10/10 Metatime (MT). Instead of Length, and the arbitrary measurement of 'Game Sessions' (which don't really work for those running the game as a play-by-post), the Coterie must spend 1 MT every time the players enter the Downtime phase, as long as the mission is incomplete; and if they run out of MT they gain Completion and consequences as normal. Instead of Width, the Coterie must spend 1 MT every time the players split the party between multiple points in the timeline; and if they run out, the split can't happen. Instead of Lag, the Coterie can spend 1 MT to have a change in the timeline happen immediately, otherwise it happens during the next Downtime phase. There could then be options, with perhaps some unlocked via spending Flux, such as: spend 1 MT to have a previously non-time aware NPC remember changes in the timeline; spend MT to create an unstable time loop, where time repeats itself but events don't necessarily happen the same way as before; and spending MT to keep track of alternate timelines.

I feel like Malevolence and Stress should really work differently. Since Stress leads to trauma, it just makes sense that it should be the go-to initial penalty as a consequence for doing 'bad stuff', like murdering someone or screwing a native's life over. Malevolence should be something that is incurred for controlling time, as you attract the wrath of other Participants, who notice shifts in timelines. Malevolence could even be a resource in this way, such as incurring it when hacking biodata, or to give yourself a spooky otherworldly aura, or so on. Perhaps it could then also work as a resource for The Grandfather, with a list of effects they can activate, such as having a Participant start a time loop of their own or do their own biodata hacking, or even just bad luck (courtesy of The Enemy).

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