

# 05 Running the Game

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# Agenda and Principles

Players and the Grandfather have agendas and principles to follow. They help enable this game to be played in the manner it is intended and improve the play experience for everyone.

## Agenda

- Fill the vortex and void with danger and excitement
- Show how epic the participants are and how small the PCs are
- Journey with your players

### Fill the vortex and void with danger and excitement

The Vortex of Time is a chaotic web with pools, oases, loops and whirls. It has its own weather and hazards. Travelling it through the web of linearity enforced by the Great Houses is easy. Finding the eddies and cut off nodes caused by the War is difficult. Finding alternative timelines and weak spots to alternate dimensions is near impossible. But then everything is possible to some extent.

The Void of Space is no less a vast area where almost anything can be encountered - there are over 2,000,000,000,000 galaxies in our universe. Why should there be less in your game? Each galaxy has at least 100,000,000,000 stars and nearly all those stars have satellites of some sort - planetoids, asteroid belts, gas giants at least. The universe of Faction Paradox and Doctor Who (the Whuniverse) is populated by vast empires and multiple races and tends to be centred on just a couple of these galaxies. Although in some stories the Daleks have conquered an entire galaxy and have vast amounts of resources with which to invade others...

### Show how epic the participants are and how small the PCs are

### Journey with your players

## Principles

- Earn the trust of the group
- Actively engage in the conversation
- Be a fan of the characters and tragedy
- Cut to the action
- Always assume competency

### Earn the trust of the group

Be a supportive and fair advocate of the integrity of the fiction. One of your main purposes is to portray the fictional setting in an intuitive way. Things should flow, if not logically, at least with a

mostly rational chain of reasoning. The situations players end up in should not feel contrived or intended for particular outcomes. When you advocate for something, the players know that you do so on behalf of the integrity of the fiction, not to get your way or to arrange situations to your liking.

## Actively engage in the conversation

You are playing to find out what happens. Ask players things that feed the fiction. Paint the scene - encourage players to describe important objects, events or NPCs in a scene. Don't outright block any ideas given by players, you aren't the only authority in the game, all players are helping with the fiction. Instead use leading questions to create choices to be made that are interesting.

## Be a fan of the characters and tragedy

## Cut to the action

## Always assume competency

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# Scenario Creation

The PCs in general will be given missions to do by their bosses. What those missions are depends on which Coterie Playbook they have. Much like ships in Impulse Drive and Scum&Villainy, the Coterie Playbooks have different flavours. Currently there's 4 -

- Stolen Timeship (aka TARDIS) which will mostly be related to who they stole it from and the reasons why they did it
- Faction Shrine - the official most often used method of travel/base. It's there for specific espionage missions
- Faction Embassy - unlike the first two this is stationary. This is for more diplomatic and clandestine missions with lower profiles
- A Minute in London - this is inside the main Faction base. Again stationary, but with a lot more access to resources - and the missions are more dangerous

Missions can range from "make sure person A is in this location at this time" up to "assassinate the agent of the Time Lords, track down all their devices and blow up their base" etc. Similar to most missions in Blades but with a scifi twist. It is less about acquiring wealth however, and more about data and significance - changing who invented something or where it was invented can be as important as changing the wording in a book. Certainly if that book is a sacred text, for example.

There are multiple ways to create scenarios in which to put your players-

- [Random Generators](#)
- [The result of player actions in other scenarios](#)
- [Fixing](#)
- [Modifying scenarios for other games](#)
- [Source](#)

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# Fixing Doctor Who Episodes

There are some good and not so good episodes produced for TV. A great use of the Faction is to improve bad episodes by adding a layer of player character interference and ineffable plot machinations of the [participants](#) to help cover those glaring plot holes and character inconsistencies. This is especially relevant for those stories where the Doctor is ineffectual or fails to resolve much.

## In The Forest of the Night

- [Wikipedia entry](#)

One morning in London, and every city and town in the world, the human race wakes up to the most surprising invasion yet: the trees have moved back in. Everywhere, in every land, a forest has grown and taken back the Earth.

## The War in Heaven

The Great Houses are making yet another attempt to rid themselves of Earth as their prime suspect for who The Enemy actually is. Being the universe leading experts in solar engineering means it's easily done by spiking their sun to produce lethal solar flares.

### How the PCs fit in

Earth is prime recruitment ground for the Faction. Not least because the Doctor keeps visiting it and that makes it a nexus of many important timelines but also because it almost guarantees their actions have caused biodata corruption of humans and the creation of [collatorals](#), [witchbloods](#) and [ex-companions](#).

While Godfather Sabbath has organised some Cousins to stop the planting of the device to trigger Sol's flare, which is sadly doomed to fail - Godfather Morlock has a far more convoluted idea that just might work:

- Break into a [House Military](#) weapon depot where they've got a confiscated [Anarchitect](#) from [Celestis](#)
- Modify it to be a one-use but world-wide weapon of mass forrestation
- Infect the Earth and get out before anyone notices

## Kill the Moon

- [Wikipedia entry](#)

In the near future, the Doctor and Clara find themselves on a space shuttle making a suicide mission to the Moon. Crash-landing on the lunar surface they find the most terrible things.

## The War in Heaven

Fallout from the War<sup>1)</sup> and the misuse of Godfather Morlock's biodata virus has resulted in an alternate timeline in which the moon of earth is infected by the Great Houses as a method to create more frontline troops.

As it's an alternate timeline, it's very disgusting to non-Faction Homeworlders as they aren't accustomed to it (like the Doctor) to spend any amount of time there.

### How the PCs fit in

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<sup>1)</sup>

The Great House Military attempted to use unstable Dark Time regenerations such as those of [I. M. Foreman](#) to create planet sized living weapons that could have their biodata effected with a modified virus

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# Source Material

Many of the Faction Paradox novels, short stories and audios can be adapted into scenarios playable with a coterie of PCs.

## Initiation

Several stories are about joining the Faction or include origin stories about how someone did. Usually there are test or requirements needed to be filled in order for a prospective member to be inducted. These kinds of scenarios are best suited if you have at least one [recruit](#) or [little sibling](#)

## Collateral

The collateral scenario is where a war-time power ([participants](#)) wanders through a character's life and does something devastating that causes them to want to join the Faction for reasons. It's more open on how they go about doing this.

- Justine McManus has her cousin murdered in front of her because Godfather Sabbath mistimes his arrival in [the wild hunt](#) and because her future self caused a temporal disturbance to attract the hunt's attention to them- [Movers - BBV audio story](#)
- Kelsey Hooper was stalked by a clingy ex-boyfriend that was not human and likely some kind of side-effect or creature from the War. She joins the Faction because they provide the training and equipment to stop him. [Now or Thereabouts - A Romance in Twelve Parts](#)

## The Fall of the Eleven-Day Empire

## The Fall of Dronid

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# Playing with Time

## How do you keep track of changes in timelines?

You don't. It's similar to how GMs in Blades in the Dark don't track every faction at all times. We only care about the PCs, the big picture looks after itself. They're working on one event that will effect things for someone other than themselves (either another Faction Paradox group or more likely the greater powers)

In general missions that PCs are sent on are not linked, but with discreet goals. Much like how 99% of Doctor Who is not about time travel, it's just a plot device to have a different location for the story they wish to tell. But then like giant robot anime - its not about the giant robots. Science fiction isn't what the story is about, that's just the stage.

So a few things to make it easier for the Grandfather (GM):

- don't have missions on the same planet, you don't even have to have them in the same galaxy.
- if you do, don't have them on the same continent
- have them occur generations apart
- assume the larger powers fix otherwise unsolvable problems caused
- alternate multiverses, dimensions and universes are a thing, as are alternate timelines and time loops. Time sometimes naturally fixes itself, sometimes artificially.
- egregious paradox eats itself. Which is to say too many problems and the cause is removed. The completion mechanic and the group playbook paradox flag (usually caused by untethered flashbacks aka time travel) help with this.
- all that being said, this is never our universe. We haven't had dalek invasions or a UN sponsored anti-alien task force. Let them kill Hitler, then discuss what the new timeline is. Or just make it splinter off into an alternate timeline.

## Time Versus Place

Much like it's spawning franchise - Doctor Who - you should treat time as a place. Time travel is merely a device to start a scenario in a new and interesting setting. If you have players in multiple times, treat them as being in multiple locations instead. If they happen to effect each other's circumstances, use Metatime Lag as a form of slowly tracking the repercussions between places.

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