

JAMES

Similar to Noah, I find the “What **could** happen next” to be almost painfully paralyzing, particularly in games with large casts.

Unlike Noah, I don’t find choosing among those options to be effortless in actual play—more like, “Okay, I would love to squeeze these six other things in too, but... uh.... let’s just go with this.” (Where “this” happens to be the easiest of the options to implement based on whatever the player just said.)

In other words, I can make a decision once play begins, but it’s always with some regret at foregone opportunities.

To say something productive: I think play is at its most exciting when the situation changes drastically, which is another way of saying we just learned (or are about to learn) something important about the protagonists.

Case from actual play: a Sorcerer game about 10 years ago, when a demon (the wife of a 1950’s evangelical preacher PC) went to a radio station and dropped a brain-melting Hint across the entire town.

We all watched as each named NPC had to cope with this madness-inducing revelation, and what it prompted them to do.

The whole town ended up in ruins, and the PC’s suddenly had to put aside their considerable differences.

But. Those sessions where the situation tilts into hell only matter in a context where the situation has been fairly stable for a while - where we’ve gotten to invest in the PC’s and their crew as people, so that those big changes resonate.

NOAH

I love the example from your Sorcerer game, James. I might have oversold the ease somewhat...particularly when 'playing cool,' there's always an anxiety-demon in the back of my mind saying "This is boring! Make something happen quick!"

To reference a game we've both been drawing on (and just to hear more about your stunning game of it), I think the notion of The Now from Champions Now is helpful with this. In a seasonal, community-driven Glorantha game characters might have lots of space to pursue various goals and watch consequences unfold. In a high-tension game set in 2021, the characters might not even know about a development until it's bushwhacked them, and the experience of having **too much** to deal with might be essential.

Either way, The Now is always active. Even if a character can't pursue a particular thread, it's unfolding independently, and at some point it's going to rear its ugly head in Situations.