

Drama du Jour

A ttRPG System for Randomizing the
Conflicts In Hierarchies

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This is a system for determining conflict in a hierarchy based society. Some such scenarios for this include the petty squabbling of nobles vying for the throne, the ruthless underworld fighting of crime syndicates, or even something more tame like highschool cliques and their adolescent drama.

What You Need

Standard Deck of 52 Playing Cards,
Rules to your favorite RPG (and what
supplies they recommend)

This booklet

A little bit of imagination

How It Works

Each suit in the deck represents a different **Faction**.

Each suit is further divided into four **Strata** within that **Faction**.

Factions have some method of hierarchy, and a common allegiance; if not to a person, then to an ideal. As suggested earlier, examples of these could be Nobility, Crime Syndicates, or Highschool Cliques.

Strata are recognizable ranks within the **Faction**, and may or may not be explicit.

The head of the highest house of a noble family is clearly the top of that hierarchy. Meanwhile, the star player of a sports team would likely be deferred to by the rest of the team, even though he's officially the same rank as all the other members.

The Strata

A – The Highest

Head of a noble family. Leader of a crime syndicate. Star of the school sports team.

K, Q, J – Inner Circle

Direct relatives of the noble. The syndicate's trust advisors. Senior members of the sports team.

10, 9, 8, 7 – Outer Circle

Vassals and branch families of the head noble family. The people who run syndicate business. Junior members of the sports team.

6, 5, 4, 3, 2 – Rank and File

Towns and villagers under the protection of the nobles. Goons and thugs that do the syndicate's dirty work. Flunkies that sometimes hang out with the sports team.

Using the Deck

Draw two cards; this represents who is in conflict. The cards don't necessarily represent any specific person, just somebody from that **Faction** and **Strata** being involved.

Each **Strata** will typically have access in some way to the **Strata** beneath them in their **Faction**, but not the other way around.

A noble can demand help from their vassals, but a villager is going to have a harder time petitioning their lord.

If cards from the same **Strata** are drawn, that means it's a fairly even playing field. When cards of different **Strata** are drawn, it's typically the higher **Strata** beating down on the lower one.

Rank and File fighting rank and file is just business as usual. Goons beating each other up is to be expected. Any goon that wants to live to see another day knows better than to throw hands at a member of the syndicate, though.

It's possible that the same suit is drawn twice. This outcome suggests that there's infighting in the **Faction**.

The junior members of the sport team might feel like they're not getting their share of recognition, and resenting the senior members for it.

The appearance of a Joker signifies a problem that affects ALL **Factions**.

War with another nation erupts; law enforcement begins cracking down on organized crime; or a natural disaster strikes the school.

The only time you consider the other card that gets drawn with a Joker, is if the other card is a joker; if both jokers are drawn, then the situation is right and truly dire.

Getting Creative

You can shift the balance of certain outcomes by adding or removing cards, or deciding that perhaps TWO suits represent one faction, with the other two suits representing one faction each. (Representing a scenario with one faction with twice the influence of the others!)

Sports are a big part of Podunk USA High; so for that reason, Spades and Clubs represent the many sports teams, such as Soccer, American Football, and Basketball.

The United States Army has also established the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp as a part of the school's curriculum, and many of the Cadets take a lot of pride in their membership of the program. They are represented by Diamonds.

Last is the students whose passion lie in the Arts and Humanities, despite not getting much support from the school faculty. (There's no official art club or the like.) These misfits are represented by Hearts.

If one Faction is somewhat less prevalent, you can remove a few cards from every tier.

Given their lack of official support by the faculty for the Arts and Humanities Students, we can remove the K, 10, and 6 of Hearts. It's harder for them to form a cohesive clique since they don't see each other as often.

Three or more cards can be drawn if you want to add more depth to the conflict, with repeats of a certain faction meaning that faction has more purchase in the conflict

Drawing 8 of Diamonds, 7 of Spades, and 2 of Clubs. A freshman on the basketball team, along with his skaterboy friend, decide they want to harass a second year Cadet, and get him to drop his "good ol soldier-boy" act. Their goal: get him to do something that'll not only get him in trouble with the school, but also kicked out of the Corp.

If you're willing to engage in a little bit of extra paper-work, you could also make every card represent a specific member of a faction. Included is a chart to print out for your convenience.

	Spades	Hearts	Diamonds	Clubs
A				
K				
Q				
J				
10				
9				
8				
7				
6				
5				
4				
3				
2				

Contact

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