RANDOM CAMPAIGN START-UP GENERATOR

Using Tom Pigeon's Mythic Variations *and* The Creature Crafter *to establish the beginnings of a viable campaign world with no preparation.*

INTRODUCTION

For solo players or seat-of-the-pants groups, truly exploring a new world requires first finding that world and getting just enough information about it to make meaningful connections to your new PC up-front. But how can you generate that information without ruining the priceless experience of discovery?

Mythic does a terrific job of "evolving" a setting during play, even with little starting information. In the "World Creation" section of the original *Mythic*, Tom Pigeon wrote, "Players could begin with their characters in a very generalized concept of a game world and, by the end of their first adventure, have a much more concrete picture of where it is their characters live."

I agree completely with that notion, and I have found that adding a few random interesting flourishes and textures to that "very generalized concept" can make character creation and the first adventure even more rich and satisfying!

So, what follows is a very simple way to use what you probably already have - *Mythic Variations* and *The Creature Crafter* - to learn a little more about a world that isn't in a sourcebook or even in your head...

...yet.

STEP ONE: Genre

First, choose the genre, or, if you really want to be surprised, roll up the genre randomly! Make lists like the ones below, roll a d10 *for each one*, and combine the results:

TIME
1. Medieval
2. Victorian
3. Retro
4. Modern
5. Alternate Modern
6. Alternate History
7. Futuristic
8. Post-apocalyptic
9. Multi-dimensional
10. Time-travelling

Theme
1. Gritty
2. Military
3. Espionage
4. Martial Arts
5. Swashbuckling
6. Gothic
7. Superhero
8. Science Fiction
9. Supernatural
10. Magical

Tone
1. Adventure
2. Thriller
3. Mystery
4. Fantasy
5. Horror
6. Noir
7. Crime Drama
8. Western
9. Fable
10. Farce

STEP TWO: Theme
Use the rules for Complex Questions found in *Mythic Variations* to ask "What is the overall theme of my campaign world in this genre?" Thus, the context/focus of that question is the previously selected genre itself.

What you want from this question is a broad stroke that conveys through the answer the flavor and attitude of the campaign world. Think of it as the stand-out blurb on the back of a game box or sourcebook.

Example
GENRE: Alternate Modern Gritty Fantasy
  a) Ask: "What is the overall theme of my campaign world in this genre?"
  b) Consult: *Event Meaning: Action* and *Event Meaning: Subject* charts.
  c) Interpret: Consider the sample results *Harm* and *Fame*.
THEME: Broken hearts and shattered dreams line the magical streets of a pitiless town that offers fame and fortune to the hopeful, but makes being careful what you wish for a life-or-death proposition.

STEP THREE: Starting Location
Use the rules for Complex Questions to ask, "What is the (general or specific) starting location(s) for my PC?" The genre and theme together now become the context/focus of this next question, and the answer need not be a concrete place; a region or conceptual area could be sufficient.

Admittedly, you might not need this step; the genre and context on their own may so strongly suggest a starting point for adventuring that asking such a question becomes unnecessary. Nevertheless, it could be worthwhile to try it out - a surprise may be waiting for you!

Example
GENRE: Futuristic Science Fiction Farce
THEME: In a galaxy teeming with wildly different alien life-forms, it isn't easy getting everybody to stop shooting lasers at each other and start being friends.
  a) Ask: "What is the (general or specific) starting location(s) for my PC?"
  b) Consult: *Event Meaning: Action* and *Event Meaning: Subject* charts.
  c) Interpret: Consider the sample results *Haggle* and *Wounds.*
STARTING LOCATION: The Intergalactic Mediatory Planning Station - the headquarters of a well-trained multi-species staff of social and anti-social workers, discreet misinformation operatives, and humane assassins dedicated to solving the solar system's messy and undignified strife and healing the wounds between races.

STEP FOUR: PC Races (or Classes)

Give yourself character creation options out of thin air by using *The Creature Crafter* to develop two or more non-human races to use as potential PCs and NPCs. Humans become the baseline, unless the world generated thus far has insinuated otherwise (as in a fey land where fairies could be the baseline).

Example

GENRE: Medieval Martial Arts Fantasy

THEME: In a lawless and exotic land of martial arts and mysticism, the most renowned warriors risk their very souls by augmenting their inner energies with the ancestral might of the Ghost Planes.

STARTING LOCATION: As clans and tribes constantly feud with one another, cunning adventurers, chivalrous loners, and ruthless rogues wait patiently to choose sides...to fight for what is right or what is profitable

a) Determine: Number of races beyond human.
b) Roll: Size, Classification, Two Descriptions; One or more Abilities.
c) Identify: List the races and give them names. Leave the specific details for later.

RACES: Human - Baseline

Mantids - Human-sized; Humanoid; Beautiful, Insect-like; Natural weaponry

Tiangou - Human-sized; Humanoid; Odd skin color, Crude clothing; Climber

If no other races are needed, skip this step, or use it to generate PC classes via Complex Questions.

Example

Using the above genre, theme, and starting location:

a) Ask: "What is a possible class for my PC?"
b) Consult: *Event Meaning: Action* and *Event Meaning: Subject* charts.
c) Interpret: Consider the sample results *Move* and *Dispute*, and associate attributes/abilities with it.

CLASS: Wandering Warrior - agile martial artist, concerned with justice

STEP FIVE: Background
All worlds have some amount of history to them, even the most primitive ones. They also have secrets. This step is your chance to see the important moments of your world's past and to hear whispers of its future!

Use the Backstory Event Generator from *Mythic Variations* to learn about the campaign world's history, culture, or politics. To do this, just replace the designation "PC" with "Campaign World."

Thus, on the Backstory Focus table, "New Campaign World character" could refer to a race that is, for whatever reason, not allowed for PC use, or it could be a significantly powerful individual whose actions have been instrumental in making society what it is when your PC begins.

"New Campaign World thread" could describe an important event or development in the past, a cultural or geological renaissance or upheaval, or anything else that adds more flavor to the landscape, given the already defined genre, theme, starting location, and races/classes.

An example of this is provided on the next page.

STEP SIX: Mythic RPG Stuff
If you are using the *Mythic* RPG, now is the time to choose the appropriate point-based character creation allotment (or Freeform version), the starting Chaos Factor, the Focus Table(s) to be used, and custom Chaos Factor rules.

That's it!
Now, when you create a PC for your unknown world and are ready to play, the information generated will give you more to work with without revealing that much in the process!

I hope this works for you!
Let me know!

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On the next page is a completed sample - totally randomly generated, I swear!

DEAD ELF ROW

GENRE: Alternate Modern Gritty Fantasy

THEME [Harm/Fame]: Broken hearts and shattered dreams line the magical streets of a pitiless town that offers fame and fortune to the hopeful, but makes being careful what you wish for a life-or-death proposition.

STARTING LOCATION [Failure/Joy]: Tinsel City's Dead Elf Row is where the hopeless eventually find themselves, whether wasted bard or washed up illusionist or actress out of youth potions – the cheapest part of town and the most desperate place in all the Bitter Kingdoms.

RACES: Humans - Baseline
            Arthrops - Humanoid; Horned, Insect-like; Telepathy
            Elves - Humanoid; Pointed ears, Fine features; Immunity (rare effect)
            The (Contractually) Obligated - Undead (intelligent); Claws, Glowing eyes

BACKGROUND: [Number of Backstory Events - 3]

[Campaign World negative/Release/Good] Though Tinsel City was originally founded to be a place where well-intentioned entertainers could hone their craft and bring joy to the Bitter Kingdoms, it eventually came under the influence of greedy dragons (that used their exceptional hoards to fund massive theatrical productions) and unscrupulous enchanters (who promised to make aspiring stars famous for a price).

[New Campaign World character/Communicate/War] From the Out Lands came a message from [Creature Crafter; Elemental; composed of small items, Flowing shape; ???] the Collectivites – cease the "hostilities" or they will attack! Unfortunately, no one in Tinsel City knows exactly which production, act, or show the Collectivites consider an act of aggression.

[New Campaign World thread/Carelessness/Pleasures] The wealthy and successful in Tinsel City have taken their personal indulgences to absurd levels, and the consequences of a city swollen with both debauchery and despair loom ominously on the horizon.

MYTHIC DETAILS:
Point-Based Character Creation
High Fantasy – Attributes: 65 points; Abilities 40; Max. Rank: Superhuman 5
Starting Chaos Factor: 5; No matter the Chaos Factor, double rolls always get a random event.
Focus Tables: Adventure/Personal