




Fixing Campaign Mismatch



Gamemaster's Guidepost

Ravens 'N Pennies

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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE SERIES

I've been playing role-playing games for a long time (I gamed for the first time with my brother when I was seven) and I've been running games for almost as long (I ran my first game when I was 11). I made a lot of mistakes in the beginning, mistakes I'd like to prevent newbie GMs from making. Most of the advice is just general "know-how" and are systemless, but a good chunk of them have to do with *GURPS* (my preferred system engine) specifically.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice has run numerous games in *GURPS*. He's also authored, co-authored, or contributed to ten *GURPS* supplements (and counting!) on a range of subjects and many articles from old Pyramid and new. Of course, if he's not writing about *GURPS*, he's blogging about it. Visit his site, "Ravens N' Pennies" (www.ravensnpennies.com), for more *GURPS* goodies.

He wishes to thank L.A., for being the wonderful, amazing, inspiring woman that she is—not every man gets his muse personified in the flesh! He also wishes to thank his gaming group—the Headhunters—for alpha testing these rules, his family (especially his mother), and Elizabeth "Archangel Beth" McCoy, his Sith Editrix mentor.

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FIXING CAMPAIGN MISMATCH

Finally. You have found a game. The GM is a good match. The players are all equally awesome and you get along. Oh, yeah. It's all coming together and then . . . then you read what the new campaign is about. It's...not for you. At all. You may have thought you were playing something else or merely misunderstood the campaign prospectus. Whatever it was you are trapped with a group of people you like a campaign you don't. So how do you fix it? I have a few ideas.

FIXING CAMPAIGN MISMATCH TIPS

Here are a couple of things you can do to bear with the mismatch or make it better.

Be. Up. Front. About. The. Mismatch

The first thing you can do is put it out in the open. Tell the GM and your fellow players how you feel. This includes how you feel about them—and don't just be negative. There is something we can like in everything in most cases. Tell them what you like as much as what you don't like so you don't come off as some jerk. Try to keep your emotions out of it because once that starts you won't be able to stop it. Be upfront. Tell them why the campaign is not good for you in as much detail as you can. If you found a good group, they will be understanding. This might not change anything at all. You might have to quit the group because

they are unwilling to change things. And you know what? That's okay. You'll find something else.

GM Can We...? Players Can We...? Self Can I...?

This one only really works if you can find a reasonable number of things you like about the campaign. That is, you like a good chunk or even most of it except a handful of things. That's when you start asking the Can We's—"GM can we change [X]?" "My fellow players could we change [X] so I am more comfortable?" "Self, can I deal with [X] for the sake of the game?" If you come to your fellow players and GMs in good faith and ask if they can make some changes for you the only thing they can do is say "yes" or "no" (or sometimes "maybe" or "yes, but"). It's worth a try and being upfront will send out the right note.

FIXING CAMPAIGN MISMATCH TRICKS

Here are a few tricks you can do fix your mismatch.

Grin and Bear It

I'm not one for this one, I'll be honest. But sometimes the caliber of the GM or group you are with makes it worth it. Campaigns don't last forever. Play and then make sure the next one is more to your taste. Do note



that this is about halfway into the axiom of “No Gaming is Better Than Bad Gaming.” If you find yourself really disliking what’s going on and with no outlet, just leave. Most of us play games to enjoy ourselves and have a good time. No one plays games to have a bad time. Well, maybe masochists.

FIXING CAMPAIGN MISMATCH PITFALLS

Here are a few pitfalls to avoid during a mismatch.

Do Not Sabotage

Resist the urge to sabotage the campaign. That way lays the Dark Side. Do not be actively hostile to your GM or fellow players. Do not create a character for a campaign that you are not alright with with the intent to break the GM’s vision. That is epic level douchery and come on, you are better than that. Be an adult and either play the game or don’t play the game, but don’t try to kill the game. That’s just wrong and doing that sort of thing often will give you a reputation that eventually ensures you don’t get to play in any games.

Bad Gaming is Better Than No Gaming

No it’s not. It’s just *not*. People seem to think it is and I can tell you from experience on both sides of the screen that it is not. Worse, you can damage relationships this way because eventually the animosity that builds up is going to come out as white-hot nerd rage and it’s going to do it in the worst way possible at the worst time possible. Cleanse your gaming chakras and get out before it happens. It’s the only ethical thing to do that won’t also ruin other people’s fan as yours has been ruined.

