

# Character Generation

Play of Byzantine begins by generating one player denizen (PD) for each player, and the parts of the city that give those characters context.

## City Strata

When thinking about the character's social status and the places they may visit, consider the various [City Strata](#). This can help a great deal with coming up with a character concept, and with designing their connections to the city.

## Connections

The character is primarily defined by their connections to the Great City. If the character concept you have doesn't have enough connections to the city, then rethink the concept and come up with one that does. This is not a game about lone wolves who wander in out of the cold and change the world, but about the people caught up in the city's web.

## Typical Character Connection Creation Method

Play each PD through a day in their life by answering something like the following questionnaire:

Your character...

1. ...wakes up at home; is there anyone with the character? Who are they to him? (Family Bonds)
2. ...prepares for a typical day; does anybody help the character? (Other Family or Servant Bonds)
3. ...goes out into the city; on what street does the character emerge? (Home street)
4. ...travels to where they typically go each day; how does the character get there? What important streets are taken, with what important places upon them? (Important Streets and Places)
5. ...reaches a place of work; what street is that on? (Work Street)
6. ...enters the work area; what is this place? (Work Area)
7. ...is greeted by somebody in the same or related profession; who are they, and what do they do? (Works With)
8. ...meets with an employer or superior; who are they, and how do they keep the character busy? (Superior or Employer)
9. ...goes to eat a mid-day meal; where do they eat? (Eating Place)
10. ...eats a favorite dish; who provides it? (Food Service)
11. ...returns to work; do they go to a different location? If so, where? (Other Workplace)
12. ...meets with some sort of customer; who is the customer? (Customer)
13. ...gets done with work and goes to meet a friend; how do they get there? (Side Street)
14. ...reaches the meeting place; what is this place? (Meeting Place)
15. ...approaches their friend; who is this person? (Friend)
16. ...and the friend discuss old times; where do they talk about? (Old Place)
17. ...thinks about somebody from the old place; who is it? (Past Contact)
18. ...goes to get something to bring home from a place they visit often; where do they go?

(Service)

19. ...talks to somebody at the place where they make their purchase; who do they talk to? (Service Person)
20. ...heads home again; what main street do they take? (Main Street)
21. ...gets home and checks their correspondence; who delivers their correspondence? (Correspondence Delivery)
22. ...has a nice dinner; who makes it? (Family or Servant)
23. ...has a visitor after dinner; who is it? (Visitor)
24. ...enjoys a vice to relax after the visitor leaves; from who does the character get this relaxing vice? (Vice)
25. ...retires to bed, and thinks about the day; who did the character miss not seeing? (Missing)

Note that this would only really fit one sort of character, and so the players should work together to ask the player whatever leading questions about their character's lives that fully flesh the character out.

When complete, the character should have at least 20 connections, mostly people, with some places and things thrown in as well. The more connections the player defines, the better a picture of the PC will evolve. This picture will likely never be 100% complete, as people have a lot of minor connections that the player will simply not bother with enumerating. These may well be developed in play, and connections will be created and lost in the course of play as well. Think of the character at the end of generation is just a snapshot in time.

## Assigning Energy Inputs/Outputs

For every person, place, or thing that the character has that's important and listed on the character sheet, that thing has an energy input and energy output. The energy input is how much energy the character spends on maintaining the relationship, or making it work in whatever way. The energy output is the energy the character gets in return. Energy input is rated from 0 to -5, and Energy Output is rated from 0 to +5. The sum of these two figures is the connection's "Net Energy" which is pretty important in terms of a character's survival. Net energy can be anything for any connection, but all connections summed up must equal +5 (or less if the player is feeling like a challenge).

Note, too, that the total of all negative net energies must not be lower than -20, as these have to be accounted for by passions or subservience (see below). The total of the negatives may be greater than -20, however, if the player likes.

It is assumed that all of the Denizen's unstated connections, taken as a whole, provide a net energy of zero; they don't affect the overall net energy. The player should note their denizen's net energy at this point, and keep track of it as it fluctuates.

## Passions

The player should create a number of things that the character is passionate about, at least 3, rating these from 1 to 5. The sum of all passions should add up to 10. For any connection for which the character has a negative net energy the player must take an associated passion that relates to that connection (such that if the connection were lost, the character would not have access to the passion), or an obligation (see Below). The passion or obligation explains why the character has this

net negative energy connection, and hasn't just been rid of it at some point in the past. A passion offsetting a negative net energy connection must be rated so that the sum of the two figures is zero or greater. For instance, if a denizen has a connection with a -3 net energy, then the passion must be 3 or higher.

## Obligations

Another explanation for a negative net energy connection is that the character is somehow subservient to the connection. Such a relationship provides no upside (other than providing a sink for negative energy in character generation), and is characterized by the fact that getting out of the relationship is a very difficult affair in one of many possible ways. Obligations of this sort are rated equal to the net negative of the connection in question, or lower if the player prefers it to be even more difficult to be rid of the obligation to make the character more challenging.

## Capabilities

### Character Profession

At this point the character's profession is probably clear, but should be decided upon clearly, as this has mechanical effects. Note that some characters have a cover profession and a real one underneath. The mechanical effect applies only to the profession that the character really knows well.

### Assigning Abilities

All nine of the below Ability Ratings start at 1. You have 21 points to distribute, no ability rating can go higher than 6.

(Alternate Explanation: Assign Ratings to the following nine abilities, with none less than 1 or greater than 6, and the sum of all of the abilities being 30.)

### Ability Ratings

- Pinnacles - etiquette, diplomacy
- Heights - entertaining, education
- Rooftop - business, projects
- Roof - arts, crafts
- Chasms - service, swordplay
- Warrens - persistence, endurance, brawling
- Underneath - stealth, navigation
- Depths - secrets, searching
- Deeps - magic

### Magic

A character may use their Deeps score to do just about anything, but magic actions tend to take extra-ordinary amounts of energy. And there are often repercussions for using magic in social terms if one is not careful.

## Specialties

A player may also specify three specialties. These are relatively narrow, compared to the ability ratings, but they can span more than one area.

## GMing Connections

Once the player has created their connections these are all handed over to the GM to control. The GM may ask the player to refine their concept if he likes, often a good technique to create further investment. But the final decisions on what the character is like rest on the GM. This is often important as many connections may have secrets or facets of their personalities of which the player's denizen is unaware.

The GM will, as a result of the mechanics, have to create other connections as well.

## Net Energy and Passions

Note that the notion is that exchanges of energy between a denizen and their connections are potentially mutually beneficial (though many are not). The amounts of energy being transferred includes surplus energy that cannot be used by the side trading it. So if PC A has a -3, +4 Net +1 relationship with NPC B, for NPC B it may be a -2, +3 net +1 relationship as well. For those relationships that are seen as net negative for the connection, there is a presumed passion or subservience in existence that explain why the connection still exists. The GM doesn't have to come up with these figures for NPCs in many cases, but when a PC wants to alter a connection in certain ways, it may become necessary. In these cases the GM simply chooses a likely figure (often having similarities or even being equal to the PCs stats for the connection).

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