

Narrative Crossroads: The Interlopers

A character analysis framework for exploring key decisions and motivations

Overview

This module adapts the *Narrative Crossroads* framework for analyzing Saki's "The Interlopers." Students will roleplay as either Ulrich von Gradwitz or Georg Znaeym at pivotal moments in the story, exploring how generational hatred and unexpected circumstances affect character development.

Setting Context

- **Time Period:** Early 20th century
- **Location:** Forested region in the Carpathian Mountains of Eastern Europe
- **Social Context:** Landed gentry, inherited feuds, territorial disputes
- **Atmosphere:** Hostile, ominous, wild, transitional

Character Options

Roll	Character	Confrontation	Comprehension	Connection
1-3	Ulrich von Gradwitz	65%	60%	55%
4-6	Georg Znaeym	70%	55%	50%

Liminal Spaces

Roll	Threshold Moment	Decision Points (with Required Skills)

1-2	Before the storm – patrolling the forest	1. Deciding whether to pursue the enemy or wait (Comprehension) 2. Confronting the rival when spotted (Confrontation)
3-4	Trapped under the fallen beech tree	1. Initial reaction to shared predicament (Confrontation) 2. Deciding whether to offer reconciliation (Connection)
5-6	After reconciliation, before wolves arrive	1. Planning for rescue (Comprehension) 2. Reflecting on the new alliance (Connection)

Confrontation Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	What weapons do you prefer to carry in the forest?
3	How do you respond when directly challenged?
4	What would you do if you caught your enemy trespassing?
5	How do you assert your authority over this land?
6	What physical advantage do you have over your enemy?
7	How far would you go to protect what's yours?
8	What's your first instinct when threatened?
9	How do you train your men to handle intruders?
10	What risks are worth taking to maintain your claim?
11	How do you handle fear in dangerous situations?
12	What would make you resort to violence?

Comprehension Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	How did this feud begin, in your understanding?
3	What do you think motivates your enemy?
4	How do you view the legal ruling about the forest?
5	What have you learned from this generational conflict?
6	How do you interpret signs of danger in the forest?
7	What do you fear most in this forest?
8	How has this feud affected your worldview?
9	What do you understand now that you didn't before?
10	How do you think this conflict will end?
11	What would your ancestors think of the current situation?
12	What does the forest represent to you?

Connection Questions (Roll 2D6)

Roll	Question
2	What do you consider rightfully yours?
3	How do your men view this ongoing conflict?
4	What does family honor mean to you?
5	How do you feel about your enemy?
6	What would it take for you to forgive your enemy?
7	How has this feud affected your family?
8	What would peace mean for your household?

9	What legacy do you hope to leave?
10	What do you believe about justice?
11	What would you sacrifice for revenge?
12	Who would benefit most from ending this conflict?

Thematic Elements

- The destructive nature of inherited hatred
- Man versus nature
- Irony of fate
- Reconciliation and redemption
- The meaninglessness of human feuds against natural forces

Implementation Guide

Classroom Setup (45-60 minutes)

1. **Introduction (5 min):** Explain the *Narrative Crossroads* system and distribute materials
2. **Character Selection (5 min):** Students roll or choose their character
3. **Liminal Space (5 min):** Students roll or select their threshold moment
4. **Character Interview (15-20 min):** Students roll for and answer their three questions
5. **Decision Resolution (10 min):** Students roll for and describe key decision outcomes
6. **Reflection (10-15 min):** Students document insights and connections to themes

Materials Needed

- D6, D10, and D100 dice (or dice rolling app)
- Character sheets
- Journal sheets for responses
- Copy of "The Interlopers"

Assessment Options

- **Character Journal:** Students submit written responses from the character's perspective
- **Audio Character Study:** Students record their interview responses as the character
- **Comparative Analysis:** Students analyze how the feud shapes each character's worldview
- **Alternate Ending:** Students explore what might have happened without the wolves' arrival

ELA Standards Alignment

- Analysis of how complex characters develop (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3)
- Analysis of theme development (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.2)
- Writing narratives with well-developed events (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3)
- Engaging in collaborative discussions (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)

Sample Play: Georg Znaeym Trapped Under the Tree

Character: Georg Znaeym **Skills:** Confrontation 70%, Comprehension 55%, Connection 50%

Liminal Space: Trapped under the fallen beech tree - The moment when Georg and Ulrich are pinned by the tree, forced into proximity.

Decision Point: Georg must decide whether to accept Ulrich's unexpected offer of wine and potential reconciliation.

Required Skill: Connection 50%

Dice Roll: 63 against Connection 50% = Failure

Outcome: "When Ulrich strains to offer you his wine flask, your immediate reaction is suspicion and resentment. Despite your shared predicament, decades of hatred cannot be so easily set aside. 'So you would like to drink with me, Herr von Gradwitz?' you say with bitter mockery. 'Why don't we toast to the death of my

hunting rights, or to the infamous lawsuit that stole this land from my family?" The words escape your lips before you can consider any opportunity for reconciliation. You see something change in Ulrich's eyes—perhaps disappointment, perhaps a rekindling of his own hatred. The moment of potential connection passes, though you wonder if you've made a tactical error. As the night deepens and the cold intensifies, your stubborn refusal begins to feel hollow in the face of your shared fate."

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