

HEEL-FACE TURN

Someone switches sides to the good guys. An enemy of the players betrays their cause and helps them. Maybe the enemy can't stand their employers. Maybe they fell in love with a player's character.

This twist works great if it follows from a player's moves in the game. Show that characters can change the story through more than just domination and violence.



Being: Rytak Anzar, space pirate, who needs one of our heroes alive to unlock the Vault of Calufrax.



Goal: Attend the funeral of an old and dear friend who passed recently.



Item: Shizuma Power Plant, which could be turned into a weapon in the wrong hands



Snag: Former friendly civilization is now under a new regime.



SOMETHING MISSING

A person could disappear. A ship could disappear from the scopes. A whole planet could just disappear. Nothing like a cosmic anomaly that needs to be solved, especially if someone on that missing planet still owes me a beer.

This twist is good for opening an adventure. You can use this as a long-term hook, too, when a player discovers that the planet disappeared at the exact same time they pushed a button on that alien device last week.



Being: Apollonia of Tiresia, jaded immortal who craves adventure.



Goal: Find out what happened to the missing colonists of Liberty March.



Item: Sentialite Memory-Crystal, rumored to have memories of the lost Sentialites.



Snag: Frequent bad dreams or hallucinations about your friends dying.



MISGUIDED LOVE

An NPC falls madly in love with one of our heroes (or a follower) and will not leave them alone. To be interesting, that NPC should be far too grand to be dismissed with a single roll. This story can take a dark turn if the NPC kidnaps someone to lock away in a gilded cage.

Use the debriefings as your guide for this kind of twist. A few players enjoy this sort of gothic bondage... but many more do not like it at all.



Being: Professor Ulius Elkac-Ghale, who has spent all their research grant money to satisfy their dark and horrible fetish.



Goal: Liberate the Master Core from the space pirates who stole it.



Item: Irmisian UltraVaria Suit, powerful armor with its own personal agenda.



Snag: Skinless duplicates who keep trying to siphon off bodily fluids.



STRANGE behavior

A friend is behaving oddly. Maybe their cybernetic brain is malfunctioning? Or perhaps they're having some sort of mental breakdown.

For added drama, it could be a player's character having problems! Use the debriefing as your guide. Rarely, you can have a player who thinks it would be neat to have their character depowered, or insane, or unreliable. (Most players don't like it, so don't push this on anyone who doesn't like it.)



Being: Captain Enzig Shulfreer, fearless leader of the 32,767th Cavalry.



Goal: Convince Iagton Iahatar to stop calling you... but without hurting their feelings.



Item: Ysm seed, designed to grow into a 30-story skyscraper when planted.



Snag: Bizarre allergic reaction to food additive/ common substance.



UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL

Any situation that's going easy enough can be ruined by the appearance of someone who has no business being there. Don't go for the obvious "villain crashes party" —it's far more interesting when it's an old friend or embarrassing ally.

This twist can turn any story that's going too easy into one that's suddenly dramatic, when the arrival accidentally gets caught or put into danger.



Being: Ambassador Aryoprid Uquid, who has a fetish for the color turquoise.



Goal: Find the perfect gift for Smaora Khika-Flyeth to give to their romantic partner.



Item: Vulpecula's Secret lingerie, made from sentient nanofibers.



Snag: Extinction-level asteroid will collide with us in 48 hours.



accidental crime

The players do something they didn't even know was breaking a local law of custom. Speaking out against the choco-gram rationing, sexual relations with a virgin prince, or wearing white after Labor Day could all be punishable by all kinds of local laws. Do our players risk becoming fugitives over a trifle like this? And what is the penalty anyway? A fine? Trial by combat?

This twist allows for all kinds of social conflicts, and even for a courtroom scene.



Being: CONVAC, the moon-sized computer and war strategist (retired).



Goal: Acquire 19 flawless Stones of Barenziah.



Item: Eau de Cavorite, the antigravity perfume.



Snag: Glowing blob is artificially aging everything that it touches.



bizarre coincidence

Two old enemies (or friends) just happen to run into each other. The day of the Triplanetary Accord Signing is apparently on the one day every 32,000 years when the planet's phase-cicadas all hatch at once. That lump of jethryk rock in the back of the hold turns out to be a piece of a temporal-control device that holds the fate of the universe, etc.

Part of the fun of high-concept sci-fi are these extremes of chance. Use them to add humor and excitement.



Being: *Neisseria sapiens*, a colony of self-aware bacteria.



Goal: Acquire enough proto-blood to assume your final form.



Item: A dank meme on social media, with your image in it.



Snag: Crystalline growths are granting strange and wondrous powers.

body swap

Ah, the hallowed tradition of science-fiction, where two or more people's minds get put into other people's bodies. See what it's like to take moves out of someone else's playbook! Try to blend in when you lack the psi-control that takes a lifetime to develop! Come to terms with someone else's genitalia! And I worked too hard to get this date with Lady Gallumbits this Friday night, so you will go the opera with her and you will not embarrass me!



Being: Oblyon Steel, private investigator who is convinced you did it.



Goal: Brew a perfect cup of tea.



Item: X-Camo One X, the holographic disguise that's so good, people keep losing it.



Snag: Millions of refugees need a new home since their planet was destroyed.



bundle of joy

Science-fiction stories are rife with unexpected pregnancies. Weird aliens might procreate by budding, by laying eggs, or cloning.

This twist is one for the debriefing. Some players enjoy this kind of challenge; others won't care for it all. If the brood ages quickly, it can be fun to see a new pet, follower, or rival emerge.



Being: Aquapriam the Third, who needs your spinal fluid to cure what ails them.



Goal: Destroy or disable the Robo-Revenant that's coming after you.



Item: Ice-Ten, a cube that never stops melting. Or dripping.



Snag: Invaders from another timeline are messing up our continuity.



CATASTROPHIC MISTAKE

Someone goofed, and it's not for the best. A scientist accidentally invented a linguistic virus that is turning people into non-volitional vectors. A tachyon decelerator has started a temporal cascade, unraveling time and space with increasing frequency. A bug in a piece of software has robots building endless copies of themselves, devouring the galaxy's resources at an exponential rate. Those people who made the mistake come to our heroes for help. Or maybe someone got a hold of one of our player's past projects, research, etc. and tampered with something they shouldn't have.



Being: Ajax-7, the janitor robot that vacuumed up the evidence.



Goal: Discover the secret of the lost civilization of Blayse-Coltin.



Item: An unlabeled key card.



Snag: Net service is down.



green-eyed monster

One of the players has something that another character wants: the last Christian Dior dress, the Phoenix Force, or the rights of inheritance to the Ordos Throne. The character is willing to go to great lengths to get the player to give this up.

This twist benefits from a lighter touch. Consider having this character repeatedly show up, willing to bail our heroes out in return for taking things from them.



Being: M'r'eien Issak, who would kill you as soon as look at you.



Goal: Liquidate your holdings with Trans-Chemical Bank before the authorities can investigate.



Item: Curamore, an injected drug that causes paralysis and amnesia.



Snag: Narrow-minded bureaucrats are making progress impossible.



framed!

Someone is pretending to be one of heroes, ruining their reputation. This twist often uses some sort of duplicate, getting caught on video doing all sorts of bad things. Is it a disguise? A clone? The other version from a mirror universe?

This twist works best after a few sessions have been played. It's also an excuse for a violent showdown that's evenly matched.



Being: Gлика Smixx, who claims to see the future, but no one believes them.



Goal: Do something because you want to, not because your programming told you to.



Item: Aeon Orchid, that only blooms once every billion years.



Snag: Something you took for granted is considered an unspeakable crime, here.



GRIM PORTENTS

An encoded signal from deep space... a strange energy field that won't leave... a psychic signal of four drum beats. What could it mean?

You can leave a twist like this as a hook for something later. Don't build it up too much, just leave it out there. And by all means, let a player investigate it. It's not "ruining the surprise" if they figure it out, it's showing genuine interest in the game.



Being: Erjod the Just, who has an offer that you cannot refuse.



Goal: Finally know what true love is.



Item: Radiation burns along embarrassing tan lines.



Snag: Device refuses to work until you agree to its updated terms of service.



groundhog day

Our heroes are stuck in a loop. The same 24 hours keeps repeating itself over and over again. They must find out what's causing this and stop it. Or just enjoy the same things again and again.

This twist can be a good one-shot episode, for its humor value as players do outlandish things because they can expect a rewind with no consequences. There's a reason your favorite sci-fi show had an episode just like this.



Being: Vautik A-A, celebrity that must have you as their arm candy for the next gala.



Goal: Find a suitable breeding partner.



Item: A sculpture made from bones of unidentified hominids.



Snag: Cult is convinced you're an important religious figure.



LOOT a burning house

Our players are sent on some great battle or violent conflict with the bad guys... and a third party tries to sneak in and sweep up the debris as their own reward.

Use this twist sparingly. Players hate being played for chumps. But it does make the world feel like it's a real place.



Being: Sut Aulora, deposed regent who needs escrow money.



Goal: Destroy all evidence that you were involved in the Cosmic-String Incident.



Item: Maxwell Memory Core, with infinite contents but finite indexing.



Snag: Advertising campaign uses your image without your consent or compensation.



THAT'S PECULIAR

Things look a little ... off, today. There's an odd smell. Or people are suddenly talking about "the great overmind" and are glowing orange. Or all records of our existence have been deleted and no one knows who we are. For some reason, only our heroes notice this anomaly.

This twist will involve a lot of "spot the differences". Anything that stayed the same or is greatly different will attract the players' attention. This story can be a great callback to old characters, as the players interview them to see what's different.



Being: Gor of Ihim, who has no sense of fear or self-perseveration.



Goal: Find the other half of this locket.



Item: The rare 2997 Pinup Calendar from the Frahm Nebula.



Snag: Holiday celebration has everyone drunk and no one at work.



rising hostility

One non-player character does something that makes another NPC crave revenge. Or two civilizations go to war.

Use this twist when the players have a stake in one of the sides winning. They can't just beat everyone up, they'll have to find a way to work through these problems.



Being: Embaynthine, who emits chemicals both aphrodisiac and toxic.



Goal: Get someone to accept you, even after they've seen your true nature.



Item: Iridescent cloud that follows you around in clear violation of physics.



Snag: Market destabilization makes prices wildly swing up or down.



SECRETS REVEALED!

Strike a dramatic chord when someone's true identity becomes known. Disclose the mystery of what really destroyed the lost civilization. Witness the firepower of the fully-armed and operational battle station!

This twist only works if you had a hook earlier that hinted that it would happen. It's not a dramatic reveal unless after it comes out, the players realize they should have known this, earlier.



Being: Arfi Beltz, avant-garde artist always one step ahead of trends.



Goal: Give Dirty Frank the bullet that he so richly deserves.



Item: Floating eyeball that silently observes all.



Snag: Contentious election has everyone screaming at each other.



SINS OF OUR FATHERS

Nothing like a few millennia of neglect to leave trouble brewing. An old computer could be switched on and decide it's overdue to activate mutually-assured destruction. Or the ringworld arcology could be wobblingly unstable, its guy-wires in dire need of overhaul. Maybe one of our players was the inventor who started this whole thing in the first place.



Being: Egel Tonzap, resurrected in a robot body and craving vengeance.



Goal: Liberate the Master Core from the pirates who stole it.



Item: Trino-Ban, sentient glasses that protect the wearer's good looks at all costs.



Snag: Social-media hoax makes your life difficult.



ULTERIOR MOTIVES

Just because someone has their own agenda doesn't mean they're out to get you. Some things are need to know. The players could be sent on some errand without knowing that they're part of a bigger scheme.

Use this twist very sparingly. Many players resent the idea that NPCs are “using them”. Be sure to have a debriefing to ask how this story went. We cannot stress enough that the ulterior motive should not be, “betray the players”. Not only is that cliché, but you're just asking for trouble.



Being: Zeed Inji, an ex-lover that delights in inconveniencing you.



Goal: Prove the existence of the anti-chronoton particle.



Item: Codex-wood end-table, whose DNA records the lore of ten thousand generations.



Snag: The words you're using mean something completely different to these people.



VICTIMS OF OUR SUCCESS

That miner that you rescued from Chiron Beta Prime won't leave you alone. You killed the baddies and saved the entire planet... and now the people want to elect you emperor! The sentient mass from the center of the universe keeps shifting reality in ways that should make you happy, but don't.

Use this twist after players solve a problem a little too well. This hook can shake the players up a bit, because how do you let someone down easily?



Being: Qis Raycax, radioactive diva that must always be the center of attention.



Goal: Solve the mystery of the ring-world station before the Cosmarchy does.



Item: An angry scorpion made of tungsten carbide.



Snag: Clumsiness makes you slip, fall, or embarrass yourself.



The mistakes of your past have come back to haunt you. You have a problem that can solved only by appealing to those who you wronged. Or a machine, chemical reaction, or computer program that you started ages ago is now making things worse.

This twist can be a fun call-back to something terrible, but don't use it too much or players may get a persecution complex.



Being: Irtassy Gak, who likes to seal pretty people in glass for “preservation”.



Goal: Finish the Kessel run in record time.



Item: Ur-aibo, the artificial pet whose cuteness is a war crime.



Snag: Prejudice against your kind.



THREE-FOLD RETURN

From out of the blue, someone that you helped before is back now, to help you. That helpless victim from before is now in a unique position to help you.

This twist boosts the fiction, making players feel like they make a difference in the story.



Being: Danx-5, desperately searching for lost memories.



Goal: Win the Kobayashi Maru game, at any cost.



Item: Xin Jingu Bang, a variable stasis rod that can be extended to near-infinite length.



Snag: Mistaken identity, wrong target, or other mixup.



Flashback

After something happens, choose a player and ask them why this new thing that happens is so relevant to their backstory. Make something up. Be dramatic about it. It could add new plot points, or maybe it's just a moment to build character. But now, it's canon.

Really, players are free to invent new details, but use this plot twist to make something really important or to push the plot along.



Being: Seana Qari-Tah, time traveler from the future who read about one of heroes and is here to win their love.



Goal: Accept that you are not that person anymore, that you will only do right from now on.



Item: A bag of animal feed that's laced with ultra-recombinant growth hormone.



Snag: Your fans keep white-knighting for you, taking credit and passing blame.

