

“X-card” at Phantasm

This is an optional tool for the table, at the GM’s discretion. It is meant as a way to make players feel safe to play in an unfamiliar setting. If the card is tapped the GM may flip to the next scene, fade to black, or call a short break to be able to discuss things with the player, etc. Whatever they deem most appropriate for the moment. The GM is not expected to change the plot of their story, but consider incorporating cosmetic alterations that do not effect plot, but lead to player comfort. This is not a democratic process.

It gives everyone an easy out. An exit strategy. An easy way to say no without (or with less) peer pressure. The X-card creates a specific mood at the table. It says “We’re here together. If you need to stop, we’ll stop. The people playing are more important than the game we are playing.”

This is by no means intended as a means of censorship nor to limit creativity at the table. With the combination of all our gamers and stories, there are literally limitless situations that will occur. Some of those situations may trigger a memory or moment that is sensitive to the player.

Examples

“Rob reads over the character background of his character for Cyberpunk 2020, and finds that his character is about to break up with their partner. Rob taps the card, and asks if he can disregard that part of the character. It doesn’t effect the story beyond that character, so the GM is fine with that. They also offer alternative characters.”


“Sally is playing in a D&D game, her character has been captured by the big bad, and is about to be sexually assaulted by his henchmen. She taps the card, it’s a obvious situation, so the GM changes the scene so she is captured and imprisoned and gives her a description of her room, to allow the opportunity of escape.”

“John is playing Call of Cthulhu. The GM describes the grisly discovery of a body killed by cultists to cover their tracks, made to look like suicide. John taps the card, takes the GM aside and tells them that the way the person died is very upsetting to him. It doesn’t effect the plot in any significant way so the GM redresses the scene, changing the way the person was killed, maybe making it more obviously a killing.”

“Bill in character is romantically pursuing Jill’s character, Jill taps the card, Bill stops trying to romantically pursue the character and the game moves on. Similarly Bob’s character hits on Doug’s character, Doug taps the card that interaction is halted.”

“A player uses a derogatory/ sexist/ racist term in game. The players and GM in unison taps the card.”

Rob is maybe going through a painful divorce, Sally found the scene distasteful, and didn’t want that happening to her character. John may have had a friend commit suicide in a similar manor. Neither Jill nor Doug were comfortable role playing romantic love interests with people they had just met. Regardless of the historical context, derogatory terms are not OK to use at the table. If it’s a term that is not appropriate to use in conversation today, it’s not ok to use in game. These are all examples where a small change to the game makes it much more welcoming and safer for the players.



If something at the table happens that makes you uncomfortable, tap this card. You don't need to explain why.