

IT'S ALWAYS SUNNY



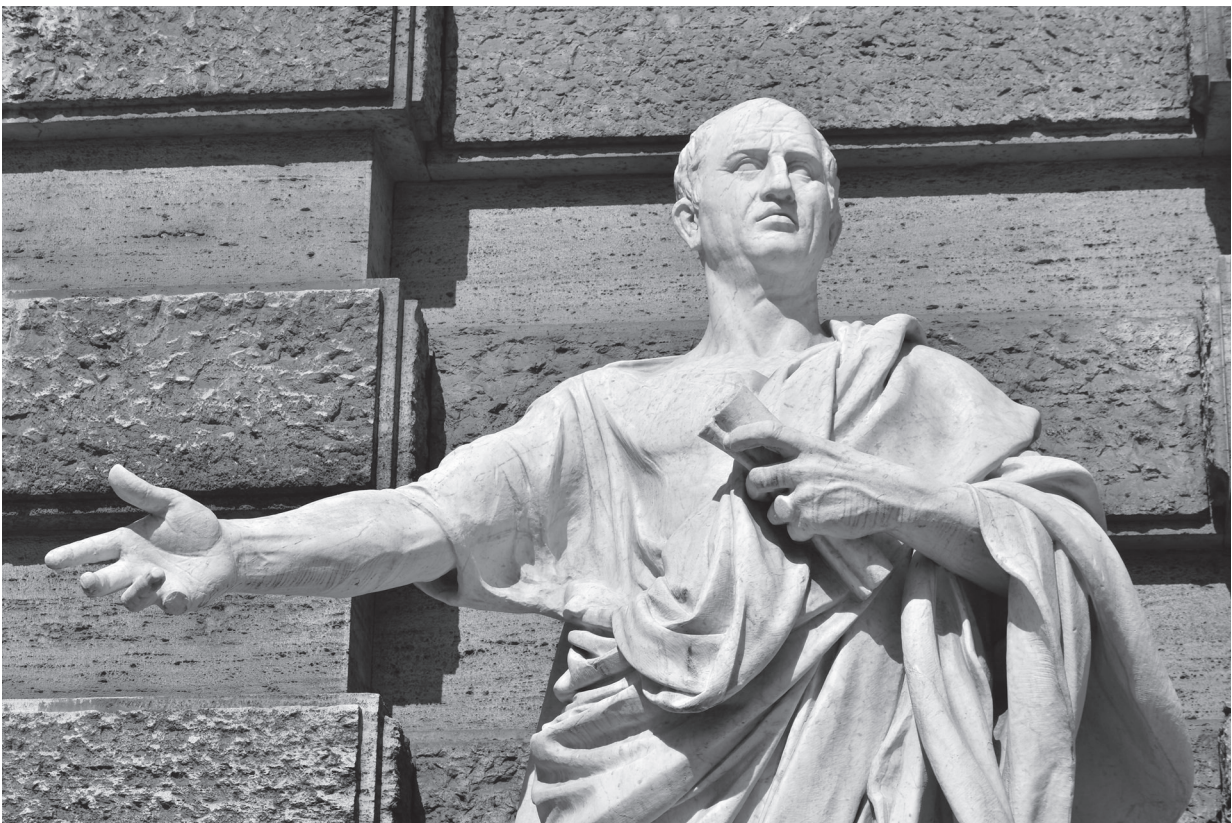
IN ROME

"It's always sunny in Rome" is a sitcom set in ancient Rome. In short, this means that it is a comedy focused on a couple of characters, creating humour based on the situation they find themselves in. It focuses on the popular senator Publius Clodius Pulcher and his "companions", and the hopeless plans they set in motion.

You are a facilitating GM – this means that you participate in the scenario like the other players, but it is your job to present the rules which the scenario is based on. You prepare for this by reading this entire document and quickly parse through the extra handouts. Scenes and characters are the most important elements to get a grasp of, while the cards are less important.

The scenario has a conflict system which uses cards, the purpose of which is to have fun going gaga in Ancient Rome. The other focus is that the characters become more intense throughout the scenario, growing increasingly loud and one-dimensional.

How you present the scenario is explained throughout this document; a lot of it lies in the workshop which you use to introduce the conflict mechanics, and once you have played through the first scene the players *technically* know all the details. The scenario is short-form, and is supposed to be conducted in a couple of hours, but expect that you have about an hour of actual playing time after the workshop.



This is Cicero. He has a good posture when he explains a scenario. Be like Cicero when a player looks confused.

The scenario consists of 12 scenes, built around some of Rome's greatest scandals. Each scene has two characters talking and using their character traits, and always end in a conflict. The conflicts are solved using a card-based system, where each card is a type of rhetorical argument, and the worst argument wins. Winning a conflict is cool, because you get to insult Clodius – through Cicero – before Clodius' burning body. Oh yeah, Clodius dies at the end, but it's not particularly sad.

Genre and Setting

The scenario takes place in Ancient Rome, right when the Republic is breaking down. We're talking decadence, moral decay and ego-driven politicians. Even though you do not need expert-level knowledge on the Late Republic, it is still necessary to know the difference between a plebeian and a patrician. The plebeians are a group of people who have their own political power through the tribunes of the plebs, who act as a counterweight to the senators. The senators come from the old families, and are what you call patricians, part of the aristocratic class who control legislation. The period is roughly before the Civil Wars, where Caesar takes power as Dictator for Life.

It is a sitcom. This is short for situational comedy, and is a comedy which focuses on the wacky situations which the characters find themselves in. Apart from this they can be quite different. This scenario is inspired by "It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia", which can be a little bit different from more traditional sitcoms; there is a lot of shouting, and the main characters are all horrible, horrible people, who solve problems entirely the wrong way.

Important: The people who have made this tv show are as bad at history as you are. If you fuck something up horribly, it doesn't matter whatsoever. For instance, during a playtest I had a player who constantly referred to Caesar as Emperor, even though Caesar wasn't Emperor yet. **It doesn't matter**, but you are welcome to save your historical points until **after the scenario**.

Roles

There are four roles, and you play one of them. There's Clodius, the populist politician; Flavia, the arrogant aristocrat; Solpicius, the artsy plebeian; and Virginia, the apocalyptic priestess. Each character also *represents* an aspect of Roman society; for instance, it might say in a scene that the *People* are present. Clodius represents the *People*, and this player participates in the scene where he plays groups of people, of the more plebeian kind. It is the player whose *representation* is present, who is responsible for the scene's *conflict question*, and can intervene to keep the other players on track. For instance, if the question is "Are you allowed to beat political opponents to death with a bench?", the People can intervene by shouting "BUT WHAT ABOUT THE BENCH?" to the other characters in the scene, if they're going off-track. There is always a player who doesn't participate in a given scene; this player has Imperium, which means they have permission to cut a scene which is taking too long to reach a conflict.

Another special thing about the roles is that they start out with three character traits each. Whenever a conflict is over, the victor gets to pick another character; this player decides which trait to erase, and intensifies the other two (by marking a cross). When you intensify a trait you have to use that trait more (and more intensely) in order to move into the conflict. Look at it like a pacing mechanism rather than a rigid demand. The second time you use a trait in a scene you *must* speak with a raised voice, and the third time you have to yell at the other character.

A note on time:

The game should last no more than 2 hours, all-inclusive. 12 scenes of 5 minutes means about an

hour of playing time, and gives you a little bit of a buffer. Don't worry about getting through all the scenes; if you need more time per scene, you just play fewer of them. You, as a facilitating GM, have an ending mechanism: Clodius can at any time get stabbed to death in the streets (it is never really unrealistic), you may simply declare this and can move on to Cicero's funeral speech, which ends the game.

History and conflict system test.

Begin the workshop by asking people who their favourite Romans are, and why. It's fine if you don't have one, this is mostly to get a feeling of how intimate the players are with the period.

There are certain elements that are good to establish: Ancient Rome is divided by class, and the ones you need to know are the patricians (prestigious and old families) and the plebeians (or plebs) (which is the mob of Rome). Each class have their own rights and privileges, and this period is characterised by conflict between the classes. For instance, we have the tribunes of the plebs, elected by the plebeians to safeguard their interests, and they tended to get killed by the senators if they were too seditious. The divisions are soft, and characters like Clodius moved from one class to the other for political purposes.

Remember to emphasise that the makers of this show **are as bad at history as you are**. This is important in order to remove some of the intimidation which the setting can have on the uninitiated.

The next part of preparations is a test of the conflict system.

Pick another player with whom to have a conflict. Ask one of the players to mention a contemporary political discussion which you think is silly, and ask them to pick a side in this debate. Give 4 cards to you and another player; one of you start by playing a card, and make up an argument which fits the debate and the text on the card.

Then the other player plays a card, which is the counter-argument; this card has to be *either* of a higher points value, *or* it has to be of an argument type which trumps the opposing player's argument:

Fear always trumps the People
The People always trumps Logic
Logic always trump The Gods
and
The Gods always trump Fear (so there is a circular system)

If you cannot play a counter-argument, you lose the conflict. Some times a conflict lasts several plays, other times you lose immediately – both are fine. If something is very Rome-specific, try to make it fit as well as you can.

Once you have tested the first conflict, introduce a fundamental rule: If at any time you feel that an argument would be funnier if you had had better timing, you can slap yourself on the forehead; this is a signal to the other player to repeat their previous argument, after which you can then drop your punchline.

Then the two other players try the system, with a new political debate. After this you introduce another rule: The cards are supposed to be a kind of creative obstructions for your discussions, in

order to make them at least a little nonsensical, but if a card which gives tactical meaning does not make sense at all for the debate, you are allowed to make up something else, as long as it is equally stupid.

After this you move on to the casting.

Shortly introduce the four roles, as well as the fact that they each *represent* an aspect of Roman culture:

Clodius (whose name is actually Claudius at the beginning of the scenario) is in some ways the main character of the scenario. He hails from a patrician family, but is a man of the people who always get himself involved in various shenanigans. He is also incredibly sexy, and totally corrupt. He represents *the People*.

Sulpicius is a tremendously artsy plebeian. He wants to become something bigger, but he doesn't quite know what he wants to be known for. He represents *Culture*.

Flavia is an Aristocrat, with a capital A. She is an angry woman, 100% certain that she know what is best for the republic. She represents *the Aristocrats*.

Virginia is a sacred virgin, with apocalyptic leanings: Rome is headed for the precipice, and only a moral revolution can save the city. She is the voice of the gods, and NEVER does anything wrong. She represents *Nature*.

Virginia is probably the most challenging role to play, because she has to play natural phenomena in certain scenes, while Clodius is the one who is most often the subject of the scenes, even when he is not present. **You do not have to play a particular role.** Many players will assume that you will play Clodius, but this is not necessarily the case.

Each character has 3 character traits, which you lose and intensify, respectively, during the scenario. They also each have a catchphrase, which is a shitty card that you always get in each conflict.

Scenes and effects

Finally you explain the structure of the scenario, starting with the first scene. It is important that you explain that each scene has:

1. A text which explains where we are, who is present and participating in the conflict, who represents groups of people in a scene, and what the conflict question is. It is the primary job of the *representations* to make the characters talk about the question. Note that the question has nothing to do with the plot; it is often a moral question which is to be debated, with plenty of liberty to bullshit.
2. There is always a player who has **Imperium** during a scene, which means they can cut the scene if it drags on for too long, and move directly to the conflict.
3. Otherwise, in order to start a conflict you need to use your traits three times; when they're at one "level" (one checkmark) of intensification (like at the start), you can use each trait 1

time. With 2 levels of intensification you can use a trait twice, and when you have only 1 trait left at three, you have to use that trait three times during any scene in which you are present. Look at it like a pacing mechanism rather than a rigid demand. The second time you use a trait you have to raise your voice, and the third time you use a trait you have to shout.

4.

You decide yourself whether you've acted according to your traits. When you think you've used them three times, put your hand flat on the table, palm down.

5.

When a conflict begins, the *representing* player picks the player who said the single stupidest thing during the scene. This player gets 4 cards, the other gets 3. The player with 4 cards is the first to play a card. When the first character declares his or her standpoint (if it wasn't apparent before), the other character automatically disagrees.

6.

If you win a conflict you get a line in Clodius' funeral speech, and you get to pick a character who has to erase one trait, and intensify the others. Your final trait can never be erased. Also, you do not erase a trait after the first scene.

Then you move on to the next scene.

Cicero's speech

Once you've gone through all the scenes you get to Cicero's funeral speech at Clodius' cremation in the senate house. Here the bag with "lines" come into play. You pull a line one at a time, and the person whose line it is gets to say a couple of sentences as Cicero, about Clodius' life and works.

Each character has a brief text at the bottom of their sheet which tells them how to act when they are playing Cicero. Remember that Cicero absolutely HATES Clodius, and will use any occasion to engage in mudslinging.

When the final line is drawn, and the final player finishes the speech, the senate house catches on fire and the scenario is over.

The first Publius Claudius Pulcher threw his sacred chickens overboard. Then he died. If your sacred chickens refuse to eat the sacred cakes, please do not hand them over to the dirtbusters.

THE LIST OF TRUE ROMANS

ERROR: stackunderflow
OFFENDING COMMAND: exch

STACK:

/_ct_na