

Left Coast: summary of rules

CHARACTER CREATION

1. What type of author are you?
 - **Hack** • **Visionary** • **True Believer** • **Objectivist** • **Radical** • **Danger to Society** • **Self-destructive** • **Real Man** • **Woman Pretending to be a Man** [Choose another type for your public persona.]
 - ... or Create Your Own Type.
2. What is the most significant element in your Author's domestic life?
3. What's your Author's name? Choose a single letter as your first or middle initial.
4. Set scores for your four ratings [Family, Nutty, Weird, and Money]. Set these scores as follows:
 - Choose two ratings to set at '2'.
 - Choose one rating to set at '4'.
 - Choose one rating to set at '6'.
5. On the Group Setting Chart, take turns creating facts and connections specific to each rating:
 - With a rating of 2, you get 3 facts and 1 connection to put into that rating's quadrant
 - With a rating of 4, you put 2 facts into that quadrant
 - With a rating of 6, you put 1 fact into that quadrant.
6. What does your Author want to achieve? Divide this into three sub-goals and choose the first one.
7. Set the group's Story rating to '1'.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Money

7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

Family

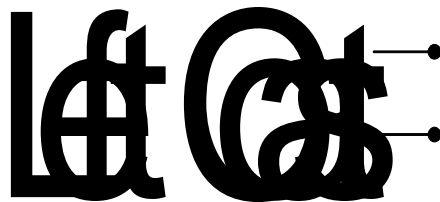
7
6
5
4
3
2
1
0

Weird

Name _____

Author Type _____

Domestic Life _____



Nuttiness

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

FIRST ROUND OF SCENES

Wide-screen: Every player gets 1 of these (see below).

SECOND (AND SUBSEQUENT) ROUND OF SCENES

Check the following list to determine what scene to play:

- Does the current player need a rating reset scene?
- Does the current player want a Family or Money scene?
- Does the current player's Author have a Designated Scene?
- Does the current player want a Forgo or Ensemble scene?

If none of the above, the GM starts a wide-screen scene.

RATING RESET SCENES

Nutty reset: Group secretly decides what happened; the current player can ask 20 questions. Then play a Family scene, dealing with the consequences. If there's a conflict, assign at least half of the victory points to the Family rating.

Weird reset: GM adjusts Setting Chart by either (a) adding a new NPC, (b) changing an aspect of an NPC, or (c) adding a Weird connection between 2 NPCs.

The GM then gets a short scene: she sets the location and the characters involved (which must include any NPCs selected in the previous step, and must not involve the Author). The GM describes the tiniest hint of the Weird taking action to achieve its goals: this can be a powerful image or simply three details about how it affects the NPCs. Other players can ask questions to clarify what's going on; the GM is free to not answer.

Add a Designated Scene with the NPC(s) to the Next Scene list. The current player then gets her normal turn.

Money reset: The current player selects one:

- Shift a fictional character into the real world
- Shift a character from the money quadrant into another quadrant
- Introduce a new NPC enemy for the Author
- Ask the other players to reveal an existing enemy
- Introduce and connect an organisation affected by you going bust to your Author
- Publish a book (improve one problem; introduce two more)

The GM and other players collaboratively change the nature of one of the Author-NPC connections. Use an item from the following list as inspiration for this redefinition:

- Debt
- Sex
- Resentment
- Favour
- Dominance/Subservience
- Bully
- Employment

The current player introduces a fact about how difficult her Author's life is now. The other players each build on this fact, using "and". Play out this scene.

Family reset: The owners of NPCs in the Author's family quadrant secretly decide how to implement the following:

- Write on the Group Setting Chart how one of the Author's connections in the Family quadrant has changed
- Decide how one NPC has taken a step to destroy the Author's life
- Swap a NPC from being Supportive to Destructive.

The current player draws a connection from one of the NPCs in her Family quadrant to another player's Author. Add this NPC to the bottom of the Next Scenes List.

Then play a Family scene to establish the new status quo.

After a Reset scene, 0-ratings go to 4, 7-ratings go to 3.

FAMILY OR MONEY SCENES

Family scenes: The GM creates a crisis in the Author's life and chooses the NPC she would most like to see trigger that crisis. Start the scene in the middle of the crisis, escalate the situation, and don't give the current player time to think. If the Author resists, roll for a conflict using the Family rating.

Money scenes (pre-requisite: play a Family scene): The current player sets the genre and tone, and : Hard SF • Psycho-drama • Allegory/Satire • Comedy • Thriller • Horror

The current player sets up a situation:

- Choose an aspect on current society
- Imagine a radical change to that aspect
- Start describing that situation.

Volunteers play characters: the current player defines what a new character Wants; the volunteer narrates taking actions to achieve this Want. Every new character should have a Want that's in conflict with a character who's already been introduced

The current player then sets up a conflict obstructing that character from achieving that Want.

The current player narrates the outcome of disagreements.

The current player decides when to make the Money Roll. Her victory points describe the **quantity** of her Author's work:

1 = Novel • 2 = Novella • 3 = Short story • 4 = TV script
• 5 = Film Novelisation • 6 = Cult short story.

Write "author of the [type of story], [its title] (# of victory points)". You can get a number of bonuses in conflicts equal to your successes. You can draw more than one die in a single roll.

If you succeed and put a victory point into increasing your Money rating, then you have achieved whatever needed money.

If you fail, the GM spends one victory point introducing a characters from the story into the real-world setting.

The GM then increases the Author's nuttiness rating by one, and is then free to distribute the remaining points however she wishes.

DESIGNATED SCENES

GM asks the current player what their Author is doing. The GM interrupts at any point with the NPC arriving.

The NPC owner describes the NPC taking action to achieve what they want. The NPC owner pushes harder and more directly than normal to achieve this.

FORGO OR ENSEMBLE SCENES

Forgo scenes: The current player gives up their turn. The GM frames the scene as a wide-screen scene. The current player chooses two NPCs belonging to the other player from the Next Scene list, and an NPC from anywhere on either players' four quadrants.

The other player chooses which NPC to have a scene with. The GM frames that scene centring on the other player's Author, with the current player's Author as a side-kick.

If there's a conflict, half the victory points are assigned to ratings belonging to the current player's Author.

Ensemble scenes show all the Authors hanging out together. The current player ends the scene by saying their character leaves the location where the conversation is occurring.

WIDE-SCREEN SCENES

The GM briefly describes the city and the weather.

In the first round of scenes, the GM chooses 3 NPCs and describes what she thinks they might be doing; the player selects which NPC to focus on.

In the second (and subsequent) round of scenes, check if there are NPCs on the Next Scenes List associated with the current player's Author.

The GM chooses one NPC from the list. The current player chooses another NPC. The GM then nominates a third NPC (one that's necessarily on the list) that the GM is interested in finding out more about right at that moment.

CREATE NPCs

GM initially owns NPCs (unless others strongly want them).

The current player gives a short monologue about the NPC.

Give them a secret that the NPC wants to keep from the Author

Select a temperament (Up or Down)

Support or Oppose? Decide if the NPC supports the Author's goals or opposes them. Keep this a complete secret. Be subtle about how you express your choice.

Each NPC should have a 'Thing' going on; a core problem or issue that can be commented on.

Decide what they're thinking about. For Up NPCs select something they're currently obsessed about - the more [micro] the better. For Down NPCs, select a problem they're currently worried about.

PLAY OUT SCENES

The Goal of scene-play is to discover stuff about the NPC and about the NPC-Author relationship.

One scene contains one conversation.

Start the scene. Imagine what the NPC is up to before the PC arrives. Interrupt a life in progress.

Three Mandatory Elements: In every scene, do the following:

1. Introduce backstory. If it's the first time we've met an NPC, the NPC owner introduces backstory that (a) the Author's player doesn't already know about, and (b) the Author's player can't veto.
2. Mention an NPC who isn't in this scene, who you'd like to know more about.
3. Show the tip of the Weird iceberg. Describe only the first things you'd notice if the Weird was starting to slightly intrude into the world.

Principles

- Let the setting simmer
- Just talk - You don't need to force conflict into the scene
- Look for insights
- Circle around the answer
- It's okay for the player to circle around their goal
- Look for where the Authors don't have control
- Describe things as your author would
- Follow the current player's lead.

Moves

- Ask questions to deepen your understanding of the setting.
- Describe the ramifications of the NPC's secret
- Demonstrate the NPC's Thing
- Follow what your NPCs want.

Not every scene needs a conflict. If you get a sense of something the NPC wants to have a conflict over, push gently.

When the scene has reached a conflict or suitably dramatic moment, the GM calls for a dice roll.

HOW TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS

1. Monologue about why this is a conflict for you.
2. The other participant describes what you want.
3. Once you agree that you've been understood, you listen to the other player monologue, then you describe what they really want. **Don't resolve the conflict prematurely here.**

4. Once you both agree you've been understood, select the appropriate rating. If it's unclear, go with 'Story'.

Roll nutty when: the conflict comes from the Author's drug use, delusions, or mental or emotionally flaws.

Roll Money when: ... Wait! If you're in a scene and you find you need to do something that requires money, your character has to tell (and sell) a story. You'll need to finish this scene with the conflict unresolved, and play a Family scene next (any Money conflict must be preceded by a Family scene). Alternatively, you could engineer a conflict on your Family rating in this scene.

Roll Weird when: the Author confronts the unnatural forces created by the person writing the novel about them.

Roll Family when: the Author juggles writing with social obligations.

5. The player (not the GM) can get a bonus die for involving a fact or connection that belongs to them. This includes bonuses from stories they've written (see Money scenes).
6. Roll dice. The current player rolls dice equal to her character's rating. The opposing player rolls dice equal to 7 **minus** the rating.
7. Find out who has the highest die (discard ties). Loser asks "How many dice do you have that are higher than [the number on my highest die]?" This determines the winner's victory points).

If all of the winner's dice are higher than the loser's highest die, that's a Critical Success. The winner creates another Goal for her Author, complete with 3 sub-goals

8. The winner puts her victory points to one side, to spend after the scene ends.
9. Continue the in-character conversation. The loser decides how her character will give the winner what they want.
10. Try to wrap the scene up as soon as you can, but continue until it's clear what's happening (and have another conflict, if necessary).

ENDING SCENES

You can't retry the same conflict in the same way. The situation or your methods need to significantly change.

Continue playing if the outcome of the conflict leads immediately to another crisis that cannot be ignored, AND it is a crisis that needs to be resolved in order to see where your Author will start the next scene.

Otherwise, cut away and let things simmer.

Scenes can end when:

- you've introduced the backstory to an NPC's introductory scene
- you've gained an insight into the NPC or relationship
- the NPC wants something from the PC (or vice versa) ... but can't act on it right away
- there's been a conflict
- someone ends it (using a 'key phrase'?)
- the scene is dull.

REVIEW WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SCENE

If there was a conflict, and the current player won, she distributes her victory points between the following:

- adjust this specific rating by one
- increase Story rating by one
- adjust any other rating by one
- adjust a rating on your GM's character by one
- add a fact to the group design sheet (as well as draw a connection between two facts) ... remember to write it in your coloured pen (this includes with characters in other people's novels) **You cannot add facts to (or draw connections involving) the Weird quadrant.**

Choose another option before re-choosing an option.

Only adjust your rating in one direction (per conflict).

If the GM won the conflict, she distributes points between the following:

- adjust any rating she wants by one
- add one fact and connection to the group design sheet
- convert a victory point into a bonus die and give it to yourself to use in a future conflict involving your Author
- add a fact to the player's Weird quadrant or a connection from that Weird quadrant (these can be new or reveal existing relationships). By selecting this option you get to advance your Weird agenda
- Add a character to the 'Next Scenes' list and enclose it in brackets (like this) to show that it's a Designated scene. You should choose this option when you or the NPC owner have a firm idea of what you want an NPC or element of the Weird to do next. Designated scenes are used when the NPC or the Weird have developed 'agency', and you want to focus on them, giving them an opportunity to progress their plans.

The group should question what they learned from the scene.

- What did you learn about the NPCs?
- Do we want to see this NPC again?
- Is there something deeper to explore here?
- If you thought it was dull, suggest ideas to make it better / more interesting [DEFINE 'INTERESTING']
- What do you [the PC] want to do next?

The current player can ID an area/character/relationship to explore further. The GM and Audience collectively can also ID something to explore further. Write this down on the 'Next Scenes' list.

The group can agree to add 1 fact to the Setting Chart.

This is a chance to swap ownership of NPCs, if desired.

The current player picks the next player to go. No player has a second scene until all players have had their turn.

ENDING THE SESSION

The session ends when someone pushes the Story rating to 7. That person chooses one of the following:

- Their Author's goal is advanced by one sub-goal
- A problem that emerged for them in this session is removed
- Select an NPC and have their owner reveal the NPC's secret
- Ask the group what her Author should be paying attention to. The group consults and states (in the most factual terms possible) what they think is the biggest threat or so-far unnoticed plot element that will affect the Author's life
- Choose an NPC and ask either: (a) what are they really feeling? Or (b) what does the NPC wish the Author would do?

Every GM (except for the GM of the current player) gets to advance one thing to do with the Weird. State it plainly, as one fact or bullet-point.

Every player create a new goal for their Author, and breaks it into 3 sub-goals.

End the session with a brief discussion about what happened and what might happen next.