

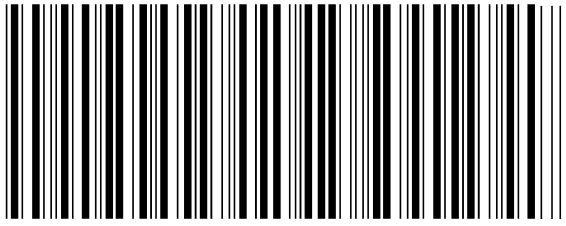
LEFT COAST

A game
by
Steve Hickey.

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This game was built for the Ronnies between 12 & 13 October 2005.

It uses keywords 'fight' and 'Cosmos', which I've interpreted as 'the struggle to live your life' and 'the multiple realities authors live in'.



INTRODUCTION

It's California ... and time is slippery here.

Endless summer evenings in verging-on-seedy suburbs and cities. Your neighbours are off-kilter; some wild, some loose, some going quietly crazy in their own private ways; all living in the vapour trails of Beatnik, Hippy & Me generation revolutions (you can take for granted there are a lot of drugs around).

This is the California of idealised memory - a time that combines the best creative influences of the 1950s, 60s & 70s.

What is Left Coast?

It's a game about semi-famous science fiction (SF) authors, all scrabbling for their big break, and their everyday lives and problems.¹ They are seeking financial independence - while dealing with the pressures of their extremely creative minds.

¹ With some bug fuck crazy stuff thrown in there, too.

Left Coast is inspired by reading about Philip K. Dick, Robert A. Heinlein and L. Ron Hubbard.

What do the players do?

One person will be the GM while the others adopt the role of SF authors living on the Left Coast of the United States.

Each player selects a goal for their character to achieve during the session. They determine aspects of the scene they're about to play and roll dice to accomplish tasks.

Succeed or fail, those rolls generate victories. If they succeed, players spread those victories between their character's ratings and their Goal score. They also have the option of generating new facts about the Left Coast.

At the end of the session, the players have a Goal score that measure how successful they've been. They can distribute that score through their ratings, fine-tuning their character's effectiveness.

If, at any time, one of their ratings reaches 7 their character leaves a game and can only return as an NPC. The player is required to make up a new character. On the other hand, if one of the PC's ratings reaches zero, then the player can't do anything with that score until the next session.

That's what the players do.

The GM nominates players to start, frames scenes & determines the Ratings used to accomplish tasks. She also plays every other character the authors meet on the Left Coast.

When a player fails to accomplish a task, the GM assigns the ensuing victories either between the player's various ratings or converts them into bonus dice. She controls the pacing of the game by deciding when to call for a dice roll

The GM's principal job is to provide adversity. She should be ruthless in trying to drive the characters' ratings down to zero, setting up evil situations and rewarding other players for doing the same. The GM represents the world - and this is not a nice world. Her job is to destabilise the characters and make them fight for what they want.

What do the characters do?

Authors living on the Left Coast struggle to maintain equilibrium in their unstable lives while aiming for their big break.

They write short stories (and the occasional novel) to earn money ... but shitty book deals and peasant-level pay rates mean that's not working out too effectively.

Things have a tendency to get crazy. The authors may participate in government think tanks, be abducted by UFOs, join a cult, be exposed in sleazy tabloids or revel in sleazy nightlife. These things may be real but they may also be the result of the authors' severe drug and alcohol abuses.

How does one person get to be the hero of the New Right, Women's lib, and the hippie culture all in the same breath? We must all be schizophrenic!

-- Virginia Heinlein

I see these characters as creative young turks with the reflexes and insights into everyday life of doddering old farts. Their lives are in a state of permanent crisis, triggered by the smallest

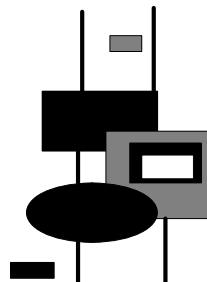
things, because they're
trying to juggle so much -
family, finances, their
creative lives

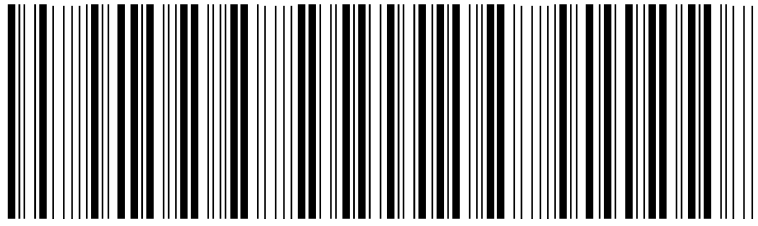
And all the time, their
success is being held back
by mundane domestic
existence - marriage,
children, rent. So they
feud with each other,
struggle not to go nuts
and try to determine which
of them is really a
disguised extra
terrestrial.

The Universe is what it
is, and it never forgives
mistakes - not even
ignorant ones ...

-- **Robert A. Heinlein**

Characters in the Left
Coast exist in a highly
precarious, unstable
situation. The chances
are they will be
eliminated from play. The
trick is to manage that
balancing act for as long
as possible while
developing a rich life for
your character. But
sooner or later one of the
writers will be revealed
as an alien, go mad, start
their own religion, be
yelled at by God and/or
have group sex. They may
even become involved in
politics.





A LEFT COAST LIFE

6 am. Can't sleep.
6.07 am. Baby wakes up
screaming.
6.30 am. Wash baby poo off
hands.

7.34 am. Score.

8.40am. Sit down to write.
8.43am. Breakfast.
9.04am. Sit down to write.
9.11am. Tidy room.
9.15 am. Blink.

Sometime. Sit down to
write.
Afternoon. Blank.

2.14pm. Realise I've been
staring at a wall for a
long time.
2.15pm. Wash unidentified
brown substance off own
hands.
2.something. Blank.

4pm. Driving north.

4.23pm. Coffee with the
gang.

5.05pm. Steal TV back from
Eddie.

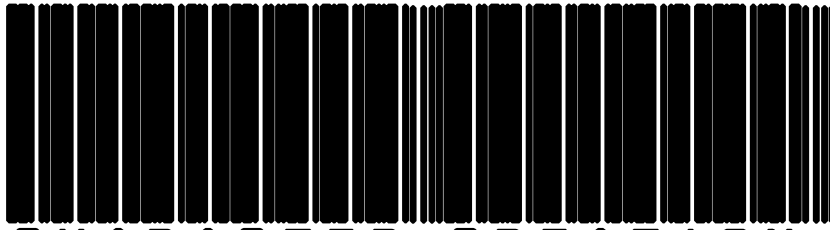
6.10pm. Pick up more
nappies. For baby.
6.11pm. Score.
6.13pm. Phone dealer.
6.15pm. Phone dealer.
6.16pm. Phone dealer.

7.48pm. Party with dealer
& the gang.

8.09pm. Replace smashed
painted with vase of
flowers picked from front
lawn.

1am. Where am I?
1.02am. Call wife.
2am. Walk 5 miles back to
home.
2.50am. Scribble short
story idea on borrowed
napkin from diner.

4am. Write on front porch
while drinking beer and
ignoring screams of baby.



CHARACTER CREATION

Character creation in Left Coast is simple. There are 3 stages:

Answer two questions about the author, choose a name for them and then assign points to four ratings.

After that, you engage in a group design of the setting with the other players to figure out the people your characters know.

Finally you nominate a goal for your character to achieve this session - and a compelling reason why you, the player, cares about your character achieving that goal.

Self image check

Characters in Left Coast have no business sense. No matter how much of a creative genius you imagine your character to be, they will automatically get the shittiest contracts and pay rates on the market.

The following two questions allow you to get a sense of your character's flavour.

What type of author are you?

Hack - you're in it for the money; just grinding out the words.

Visionary - you're standing on the shoulders of giants and seeing further than anyone ever has before.

True Believer - it's all real, man. It's. All. Real.

Objectivist - Ayn Rand is your ideal. You're doing your best to create a society where people can finally live up to their potential. 98% of people hate you because you're better than them

Radical - your middle name is X. You're going to bring it all down

Danger to Society - if you're not writing then you're in lock-up. If you are writing then you're repaying bail money.

Self-destructive - the writing keeps you alive.

Real Man - Yeah, you're a jerk. And you're also late for a date with your next ex-girlfriend

Woman Pretending to be a Man - the fans think you're twice as good as any other writer, as long as they don't find out.

Feel free to make up your own descriptions as long as they imply people and situations about your character's life.

Characters in Left Coast have connections to other people. At the very least they need to be in a relationship. A typical character will be married with kids and many other dependents, hangers-on and people that they owe. So the following question is just to kick-start your thoughts in this area:

Which ONE of these is the most significant element of your domestic life?

A crazy foreign wife, unwanted kids, a string of inappropriate girlfriends, criminal record, crippling mortgage, a child who's disabled, ex-wives with their alimony demands, living in a commune, engaged to a fiancé who's worried about money, your status driven significant other maxing out your cards, a wife who doesn't like your friends, a child in trouble with the law, someone is blackmailing you, you live with your dealer, the person you're dating is bad news, you're having an illicit affair, someone's stalking you, you're living with another author, there's a lawsuit, there's a relative with a terminal illness, and / or you're hosting a sibling or parent who won't leave your house

Again, feel free to make up your own descriptions as long as they imply people and situations about your character's life.

Next, your character can have any name you want but it **must contain a single letter** as either their first or middle initial. Example: Samuel R. Delaney.

Finally (in this section), you have 15 points to split between four ratings.

Family. This leads to scenes where you make choices between being an authorial genius and the living up to your responsibilities to your family.

Money. When you try to achieve something that costs anything, you will have to write a story.

Nuttiness. This rating determines how close you are to waking up in an insane asylum. This can happen multiple times in the game.

Alien. Are you one? Do others think you are one?

Ratings go from one to seven.

The higher the score, the more facts about your character you have to provide BUT the more effective you are in that area.

The lower the score, the more effective less you are in that area BUT the fewer facts you have to provide about your character.

A rating is simply a meta-game indication of how strong your character is in that area.

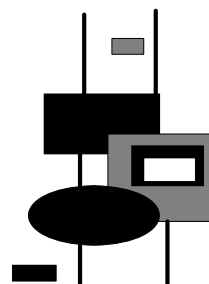
The idea with ratings is that using them generates further story developments for your character. Each rating has its own eccentricities and idiosyncrasies - they produce very different effects (in line with the idea that authors' lives straddle multiple worlds).

However each rating operates on exactly the same principle. They move up and down rapidly throughout the game as a result of rolling against them. This will all be explained in the Ratings and Mechanics sections, to follow.

There's a sample character sheet on the next page.

The numbers for each rating are supposed to be on the edge of the page, so they can easily be marked and adjusted during play using paper-clips.

Due to formatting problems, it didn't work out quite like I'd hoped.



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Money

7

7

6

6

5

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5

4

Family

Goal

Alien

4

3

3

2

2

1

1

0

0

Name _____

Author Type _____

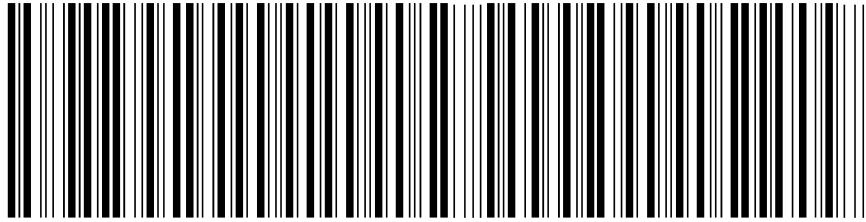
Domestic Life _____



LEFT COAST

Nuttiness

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7



EXPLAINING RATINGS .

Your rating's score is the number of dice you will roll to support the outcome you want. To oppose you, the GM will roll an amount of dice equal to 7 minus that number (or, if you prefer, you can count out you can count up how many numbers there are to the right of your ratings current score).

Example:

If your rating is one, you'll roll one d6 while your opposition will roll 6d6.

If your rating is 5, you'll roll 5d6 while your opposition will roll two d6.

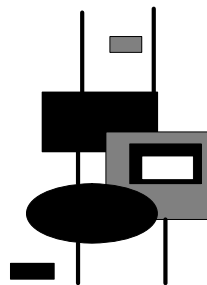
You get a chance to narrate an epilogue. Your character's next scene is their final scene. They don't roll any dice, simply describe what happens to them in a way that's consistent with the rating you just topped out in. Suggestions for the circumstances under which you leave are at the end of each rating's description.

What happens when a rating hits 0?

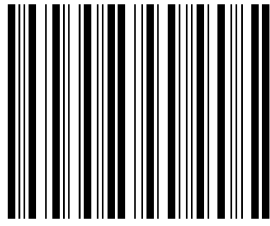
You can no longer do anything with that score until someone reaches their goal (and therefore the end of the session). At that point, you can replenish your rating - kinda like healing.

What happens when a rating hits 7?

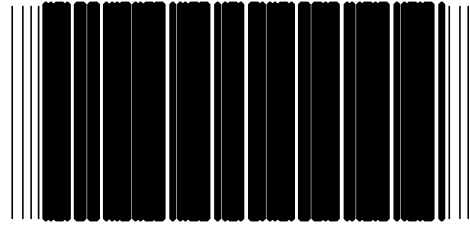
As soon as a rating is adjusted so it reaches 7, your character leaves the game.² That particular author will only ever be able to return as an NPC.



² There is an one exception to this - the Nuttiness rating.



RATING



NUTTINESS

Nuttiness is the only rating that can reach 7 without you being forced to leave the game.

The nuttiness rating can only ever go up.

Characters in Left Coast are almost certain to go mad. SF authors do things like start their own religion, run for office, listen to God and have alcohol fuelled blackouts coupled with Las Vegas weddings.

When do you roll against your nuttiness?

When you do something that defies common sense. When to get away with something society would deem insane. To do something that jeopardises your life. Or do something against your character.

Once your nuttiness reaches 7, your character has a psychotic break. Your next scene will start with you regaining yourself in an asylum being looked at by a team of psychiatrists (played by the other players). Or in your living room

surrounded by the other PCs. It's the current player's choice.

What happened to you?

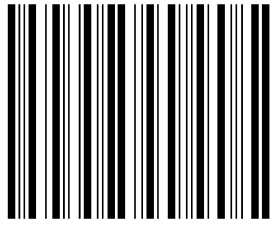
You role-play the discussion with them as to what happened.

Send the current player out of the room and decide amongst the what happened. The current player can ask 20 questions - and receive Yes no answers.

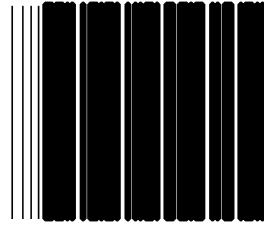
With most ratings, if you hit 7 your character leaves the game. However, because going insane doesn't trigger an end-game, nuttiness can be a good rating to sink excess successes into.

As soon as you've found out what happened to you, your nuttiness rating resets to one.

The next scene should start as a Family scene, dealing with the consequences of what happened. At least half of the victory points rolled in that scene should go into one direction of the family rating.



RATING



MONEY

The life of a Left Coast author is not a lavish one. Your best option is to write short stories for various magazines at a rate of three cents per word. Novels are even less rewarding - with hellishly binding contracts to publishing houses and a financial return that works out to a 'wage' of three cents an hour.

Because you have to find the time to write, any Money scene must be preceded by a Family scene.

When do you roll against your money?

If you want to do anything that requires money, your character has to tell (and sell) a story.

The player becomes the GM for this story, and the scene takes place inside this fictional world. The procedure's pretty simple:

Set genre and tone: Hard SF, Psychodrama, Allegory, Comedy, Satire, Thriller, Horror

Set up a situation: choose an aspect on current

society. Imagine a development that could happen in that area within the next 20-100 years. Start describing that situation.

When you need to introduce a character, ask for a volunteer to play it. Anyone, even the GM can join in.

Define what this new character Wants.

Then set up a conflict - something that'll obstruct that character from achieving that Want. Again, if that obstruction is a character you ask for a volunteer & define what this new character Wants.

Every new character that's introduced should have a Want that's in conflict with a character who's already been introduced.

The player determine when to make the Money Roll. Usually this will happen at a climactic point or after a moment that everyone has appreciated. Go out on a high.

The number of successes you rolled describes the quantity of your work.

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

If you succeed and put even a single point into increasing your money rating, then you have achieved whatever it was that required money that you wanted to do.

2 quirks about the Money rating

1) In addition to the normal adjustments made for succeeding (see the 'Mechanics' section), succeeding on a Money roll gives you a specific fact to add to the group design page.

You are now known as the "author of the [type of story], [its title]".

Connect that to your name on the Group Design Sheet (with the number of successes in brackets after it).

EXAMPLE

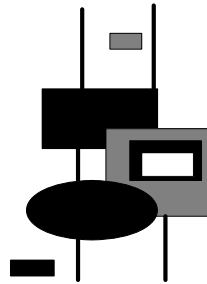
"author of the short story, Ceres Renewed" (3)

You can draw on this fact a number of times equal to your successes to get a bonus to any roll. You can draw more than one

dice from it on a single roll.

2) If the player fails, the GM must spend one victory point introducing one of the fictional characters from its story into the real-world setting and increase the failing player's nuttiness rating by one.

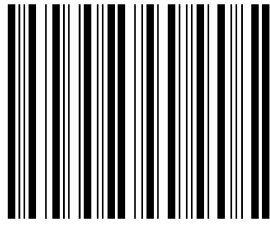
After that, the GM is free to distribute the remaining points however she wishes.



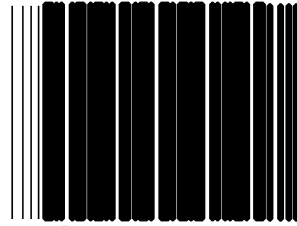
Sample success facts & connections: "The author of ...", paid off debt, pawn-broker, bank manager, convenience-store owner ...

Sample failure facts: in debt to, goon, demanding best friend

Endgame: If you reached 7 then you published a novel that gave you your big break. Or you moved to a nicer place, away from this life anyway, and took up a 9-5 job.



RATING



ALIEN

Odd behaviour, strange conversations, waking up the nude on a beach with no memory of the previous 48 hours. These are all signs.

Clearly, if something ... not-human wanted to infiltrate our planet they would come disguised as someone who didn't think like us, someone with an unusual knowledge of advanced technologies. They could even be someone you know.

They could even be you.

And sooner or later people are going to find out.

When do you roll against your alien?

If you're doing something 'odd' or that would generate suspicion from other people.

If you have rolled against your alien then the next scene must be framed in such a way that it generates the emotion of paranoia or suspicion.

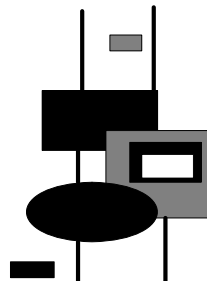
What happens after you've rolled?

In addition to the normal expenditure of victory points ...

If the player succeeds, they get to select a number of words equal to the number of their victories from the following list. The implication of these words must play a part in the follow-up scene.

If the player fails, the GM gets to Move the character's Money rating by one point in either direction. The GM then select words from the following list. Again, a number of words equal to the number of victories - And the implication of these words must play a part in the follow-up scene.

The list is on the next page.



The List of Alien Words

Mother Ship
Underground Base
Government think tank's
Probe
Deep space
Moon
Black Unmarked Limosine.
Govt raids.
Interrogated.
Changed.
Framed.
Replaced.
FBI.
Sabotage
Amnesia.
Telepathic communication.
Abnormal medical result.
Conspiracy.
Tabloid Journalist.
UFO cult.
Inexplicable destruction.
A fact man was not meant
to know.
Air force.
Infiltrated.
Prototype.
MIB.
Interfering with radio, TV
and phones.
Widely regarded as a
crank.
Satellite.
Tin foil hat.
Unauthorised transmission.
Abduction.
Strange technology.
Under Surveillance.
Invasion.

The follow-up scene

The next scene must place the character in a situation that involves those words and aims to generate a mood of suspicion, fear and/or paranoia.

The follow-up scene to an Alien roll can be set on Earth, being interrogated by 2 federal officers or it could be set travelling through deep space.

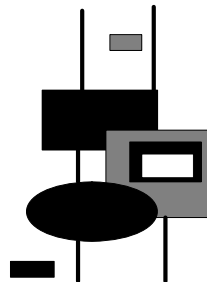
There is no requirement to be consistent between alien scenes - even for the same player.

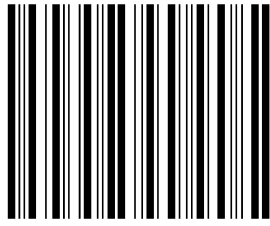
Sample success facts:

VALIS, Alien Overlord, Family doctor, witnessed my birth.

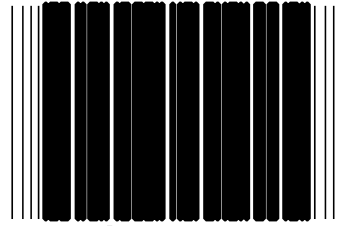
Sample failure facts: my torturer, the guy spreading rumours about me.

Endgame: You're abducted. Or you realise you actually were an alien all along. Or you're lynched by close-minded neighbours.





RATING



FAMILY

The intrusion of family life is a fact of writing. Left Coast writers are constantly torn between the needs of the domestic life and the demands of their unconventional genius.

When do you roll against family?

If you try to live up to and to fill familial responsibilities. If you try to live the life of an author (for example, attending conventions, a win awards, deal with fans, and sit down and write).

Also, any Money scene must be preceded by a Family scene.

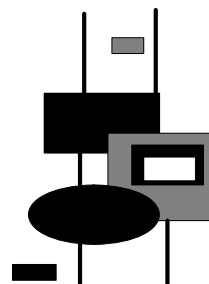
What is a family scene like?

A Family scene sets up a Bang. A tough moral choice for the author-character that doesn't have a clear outcome. It is a choice between tending to your family and being a genius, between following your dream and looking after your responsibilities.

What could it involve? Well, this is where the type of domestic life you

chose during character generation comes into play. It should serve as a central inspiration. Also, drugs could play a big part in this, as could an open marriage or any other issue that could affect both your domestic and writing lives.

The GM creates this Bang - but she can call on the other players to provide suggestions (and reward the suggestions she likes with Bonus Dice).



Sample success facts: a new son, a therapist, a babysitter.

Sample failure facts: a stalker, a critical aunt.

Endgame: You are a world-acclaimed genius, living on your own. Or you become devoted to your family, giving up on your writing



This is Stage 2 of character creation.

The goal is to design the world of the Left Coast; the people your authors will run into all the time.

Get a **big** sheet of paper and fold it into quarters. Label each quadrant with a different rating (family, alien, etc). This is the Group Design Sheet. Make sure you have a different coloured pen for each player.

Each point you've put into a rating equals one **fact** about how that rating manifests in your character's life. Your character's rating scores equal the number of facts you can put onto the group design sheet. **You also halve the score (round down) to get the number of 'connections' you can add.**

Facts can equal people or organisations (e.g. religions or cops). Connections are a physical line drawn between any two people (not necessarily your own) on the Group Design Sheet. Connections describe a relationship.

They can be anything from blood, business or sex to dirty secrets these 2 people share from back in their distant past.

Facts are rating specific. They go in their related quadrant. For example, if you have an alien rating of three you can put three facts in the alien quadrant about your character and one connection. Connections only have to go from one element in that quadrant to anywhere else on the Group Design Sheet.

EXAMPLE

If you have an Alien rating of 3, you have 3 facts and 1 connection to enter into the Alien quadrant of the Group Design Sheet. The facts (people) could be Beverly the Space Cadet, the guy who sells you weird electronic goods, and a government think-tank that's watching you. Your connection could be that Beverly found you naked on a beach covered in strangely shaped burns. Or the connection could be that Beverley is related to someone in the nuttiness quadrant.

The criteria for facts are that they generate stories, they make your life more complicated, and that they introduce more NPCs.

Take turns placing facts down. Your characters all know each other. So the people the characters know should relate to each other - and the players should use each other's peoples and connections to inspire their own ideas.

One of your facts or connections can be drawn in a scene on as an extra dice in your favour for rolls.

The people that you'll meet

Here are some examples of the sorts of people and organisations that would become facts on the Group Design Sheet.

In the nuttiness quadrant:

Drug dealers, friends who influence you to do 'bad' things and therapists. Also fictional characters.

In the family quadrant:

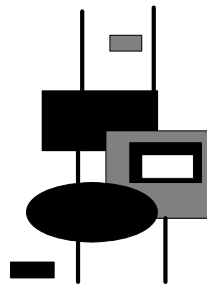
Groupies & family members.

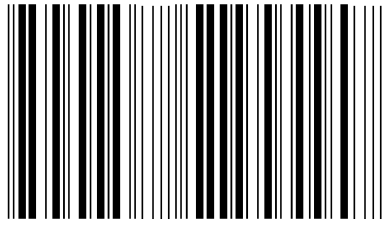
In the money quadrant:

Publishers, agents, editors, and artists.

In the alien quadrant:

Feds, aliens, believers & sceptics.





THE GOAL

This is the 3rd & final stage of character creation.

Your characters are looking for their big break. They'll achieve that by entering the appropriate endgame. Meantime, they will take intermediate steps towards that goal.

Feel free to set any objective for your author character that seems consistent with their background, aspirations and abilities. For the first session, you may want to start with a minor goal (for example, buying a TV or finishing a chapter of your novel).

The final step in character generation is to answer the following question: Why do you - as a player - care about this character achieving this goal?

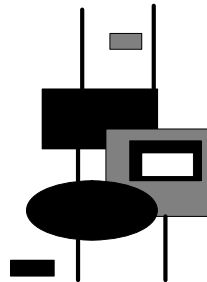
How do you reach your Goal?

Whenever you succeed in a task, you get the option to contribute successes from that dice roll to your goal score.

The session ends when the first player reaches a goal score of 7

Once that happens, players get a number of points equal to their current goal score to distribute between their ratings and the Group Design Sheet.

Ratings can be adjusted as the player wishes (even moving one rating up and then down - in two different directions), at a one-to-one cost. Alternatively, you can spend a Goal point to add one facts and connection.





MECHANICS

The following method of reading the dice results has been ripped from the game Sorcerer by Ron Edwards. Because Left Coast uses d6s, this should result in lower margins of success and failure for the characters. That seems reasonable because these SF authors are fuck-ups - but not too much so.

If you ever want to do something, you roll 7 six-sided dice. The dice are split as described in the first paragraph of the "Explaining Ratings" section (above)

EXAMPLE

Say your Alien rating is 3. You roll one pool of 3 dice and you get a result of (5,2,2)

Vs.

The GM rolls another pool of 4 dice and she gets a result of (6,6,3,1)

The highest individual die face rolled by each (pool) is compared. The pool with the highest face wins.

EXAMPLE

So in this case, the GM wins because her highest die is a 6 compared to your 5.

Tied faces cancel out completely. In the case of a tie, compare the next highest pair of individual dice.

In play this is pretty simple to determine. The GM asks "What's your highest die?" If the number matches, she asks "What's your next highest die?" and continues until either the GM or the player is the clear winner.

The GM then asks "How many dice do you have that are higher than [the number on my highest die]?"

EXAMPLE

Say your Alien rating is 3. You roll one pool of 3 dice and you get a result of (6,5,2)

Vs.

The GM rolls another pool of 4 dice and she gets a result of (6,6,3,1)

The two sixes tie, so they cancel out, then the GM's next 6 beats the player's 5. The GM only has one die that beats the 5. This is important because it means the GM gets one victory.

The number of individual die faces in the winner's pool that are higher than the highest individual die

face in the loser's pool are considered "victory points".

These descriptions of the **Sorcerer** mechanics have been adopted from the **Sorcerer Quick Reference PDF** compiled by Dave aka Nev the Deranged.

If one player's pool consists of only one die, and their result is equal to the high result of the opponent's pool, then the player succeeds with one victory.

If every individual die face in the winner's pool is higher than the highest die showing in the loser's pool, that's a Critical Success. In Left Coast, this means the winner gets an extra victory point to put **wherever** they want.

How does this work?

Although the player can suggest both the rating to be rolled against and the time to roll, the GM has final say.

The roll is made when you need to decide something **significant** to that rating.

The player and GM jointly establish stakes. The player says what they want their character to do. The player and GM jointly decide what happens if the character succeeds and what happens if they fail.

Once you've rolled, you will have a number of dice in one pool that are higher than the other. If the higher pool was for the outcome of the player wanted, then this number is their **Successes**. If the higher pool was for the outcome of the player didn't want, then this number is their **Failures**.

The number of dice in the winner's pool that are higher than the highest die from the loser's pool are called '**victory points**'

What happens when you succeed?

If the player succeeds, they get that amount of victory points to distribute between any of the following options:

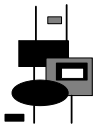
- adjust this specific rating by one;
- increase your Goal score by one,
- adjust any other rating by one; or
- add a fact to the group design sheet (as well as draw a connection between two facts) ... remember to write it in your coloured pen

They have to choose another option from the list before they can choose that first option again.

When you adjust the score of your rating, you can only do so in one direction.

EXAMPLE

If you use a success to increase your Life rating from five to six, you can't use another success to decrease it back from six to five.



What happens when the player fails?

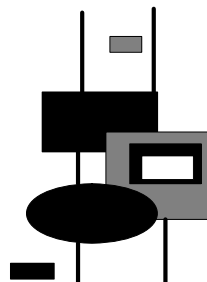
The GM assigns all their victory points from the following options:

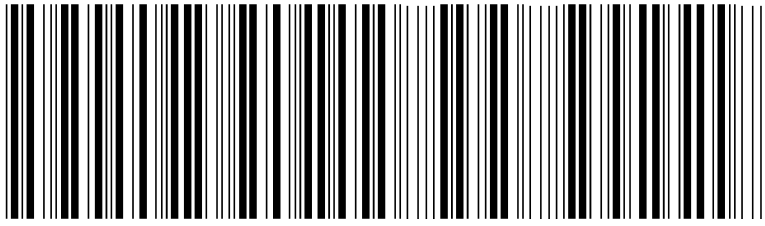
- adjust any rating she wants by one;
- add one fact and connection to the group design sheet;
- convert a victory point into a bonus die to hand out players.

They are bound by the same restrictions as players.

They have to choose another option from the list before they can choose that first option again.

When they adjust a player's rating, they can only do so in one direction.





STRUCTURE OF PLAY

The aim of the game

For the players: it's to earn Goal points by rolling on their ratings.

For the GM: it's to drive all 4 of all the players' ratings down to zero.

A game of Left Coast is divided into scenes. In a scene, a roll on a rating usually has to be made. After that, the player and GM draw the scene to a close as soon as they feel it is appropriate & the turn passes to the next player. That's the game in microcosm.

How does the game start?

The GM nominates a player to start. The first thing a player does is say what they intend to do in this scene. They can either decide this themselves or ask for a suggestion from the GM (or other players). After that, the player decides whether they want any number of other players to star in the scene with them or if they want to be the sole player in the scene.

The second thing a player decides is what type of

scene to play. They have many options:

A rating scene: they can call for a scene centring on any one of the 4 ratings. The GM negotiates with the player to finalise a rating to be rolled against during the scene.

In all cases, as the scene unfurls, the GM reserves the right to change this.

Some rating scenes have certain requirements before and after them. For instance a nuttiness scene must be followed by a family scene, while a money scene must be preceded by a family scene.

Forego: Players can forego their own turn and instead call for a rating scene on another player.

They frame a scene centring on the other person's character, with themselves as a sidekick or bit-part. The player also specifically says which of the four ratings (nuttiness, alien, money and family) this other

player will be rolling against.

Half the successes or fails rolled by that other player can be assigned to any of the current player's ratings (except to Goal).

Ensemble: The player can also call for a 'just-hanging-out' type ensemble scene. This ensemble scene has absolutely no plot function at all; it's just an opportunity for the players to chill out together in character.

The initiating player determines when the scene finishes, by announcing that their character is leaving.

How does the scene play out?

The GM provides adversity and plays NPCs, as described earlier. The player responds to the situation.³

At any point in the scene, other players can call out suggestions and What If's. If the GM likes the idea, she can reward them with a bonus die (usually for an idea that makes the current PC's life worse).

When the scene has reached a conflict or suitably

³ The only exception to this is a money scene, in which the player takes on these GM responsibilities for a scene.

dramatic moment, the GM calls for a dice roll.

Special Case - Teamwork:

In Left Coast, teamwork between 2 authors is only available via Colour only. Examples of this include suggestions, dialogue, pity, pats on the back, etc.

Teamwork has no mechanical effect on a dice roll.

Special Case - PvP:

If there's ever a player versus player conflict, each player rolls their current score for the rating that is most appropriate to the situation.

The GM is the arbiter of what is appropriate. Only the person who succeeds in this contest gets to allocate points.

An important concept

You can draw on one fact or connection (of your colour) in a scene to give you a bonus dice to your roll. This is simply a matter of introducing the NPC or relationship into the scene.

This option is for the player, not the GM.

The player and GM collaborate to establish what the player is trying to do & what is at stake if the character succeeds or fails.

Ending the scene

The dice are rolled, victory points are distributed between ratings, your Goal score, the Group Design Sheet & bonus dice.

The player and GM then wrap up the scene.

Once the player has finished her scene, she picks the next player to go. No player can have a second scene until all players have had their turn.

The turn passes to the next player, who selects the type of scene and whose participating in it, follows all procedures above, makes a roll and then passes the turn on.

Once all players have had their turn the GM has their go. However, on the GM's second and following turns, they nominate any player and deliver a complication to them. The easiest way to do is to call for ideas from the other players. If the GM likes their suggestion, she can reward them with a bonus die (usually for an idea that makes the current PC's life worse).

If any of a character's ratings reach 7, that triggers the endgame for that character.⁴

You get a chance to narrate an epilogue.

Your character's next scene is their final scene. They don't roll any dice, simply describe what happens to them in a way that's consistent with the rating you just topped out in. Suggestions for the circumstances under which you leave are at the end of each rating's description.

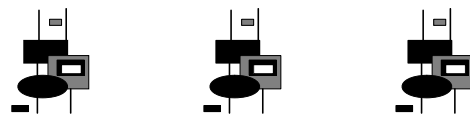
The character then leaves the game. That particular author will only ever be able to return as an NPC.

Ending the session

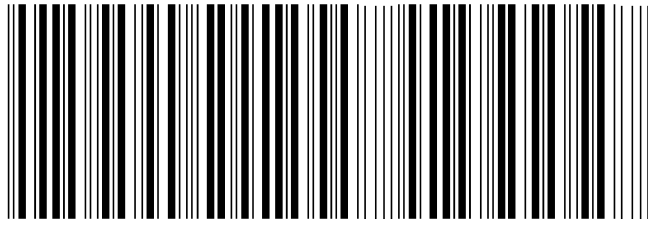
The session ends when the first player reaches a Goal Score of 7.

Other players get one final wrap up scene (during which they earn half the normal number of successes & fails from their rolls). The GM does not get a scene to wrap up.

A number of points equal to your Goal score are then distributed, between ratings and facts, as discussed in the 'The Goal' section.



⁴ There is an one exception to this – the Nuttiness rating.



DESIGNER NOTES

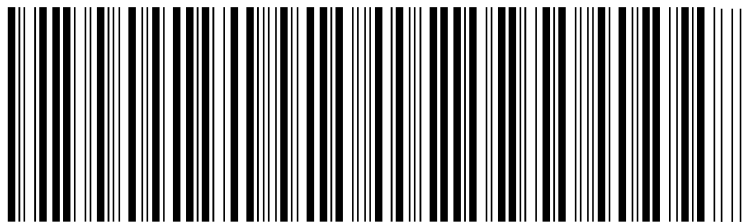
Boy, this game turned out to be two orders of magnitude bigger than I expected.

I brainstormed up 120 ideas for this month's Ronnies. This was a come-from-behind setting that I've wanted to do it ever since consecutively reading two histories of science fiction and a massive amount of interviews with Philip K. Dick earlier this year.

Is what's happening in Left Coast real? Is it mental illness or drug hallucinations? That determination should specifically be left up to each player for each of their individual characters in the group.

I wanted each rating to have a completely different feel to it – almost a different reality in terms of the type of situation it creates. They're unified by the way successes or failures are re-allocated back into your character. I will probably not do this in a 24 RPG again because individualising them is a hell of a lot of work.

Originally with nuttiness, I wanted 'what had happened to the author' to be determined purely through the 20 questions (with no prior consultation by the other players). The alien rating may seem like it will become the centre of attention, but I really only want it to be an incidental facet of the characters' lives.

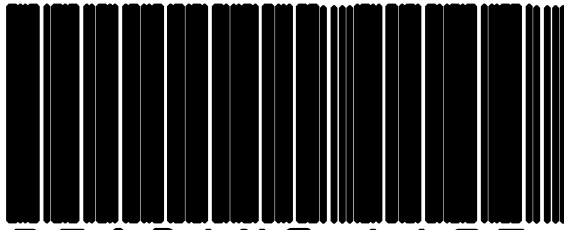


ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I stole the dice system from [Sorcerer](#), by Ron Edwards. [Astral](#) (my unfinished game) is where I ripped the idea of ratings from. Using ratings to oppose actions is an unholy combination of the two systems. The description of Sorcerer's dice system was taken from the quick reference PDF painstakingly compiled by Dave (aka Nev the Deranged).

The method of distributing successes through your ratings was inspired by [The Shadow of Yesterday](#) by Clinton R. Nixon.

The whole structure of play owes a debt to [My Life with Master](#) by Paul Czege.



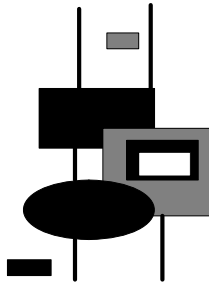
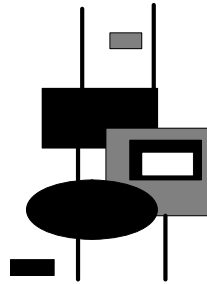
READING LIST

The **THREE** must-read books are:

A Scanner Darkly, by Philip K. Dick

VALIS, by Philip K. Dick

The Dreams our Stuff is made of, by Thomas M. Disch



Others include

Dianetics, by L. Ron Hubbard

Stranger in a Strange Land, by Robert A. Heinlein

Grumbles from the Grave, by Robert A. Heinlein

The Crying of Lot 49, by Thomas Pynchon

Nova, by Samuel R. Delaney

The Trillion Year Spree, by Brian Aldiss

Harlen Ellison & Richard Matheson are also appropriate authors to be reading.

The films **A Beautiful Mind** and **Adaptation** give the feel of the multiple worlds of the authors in Left Coast.