

Originally posted here:

<http://www.story-games.com/forums/discussion/21269/the-loop-a-little-game#latest>

[Sorcerer-Kings](#) = Actual Play of the Loop

Rules

You play it in the normal way: there's a GM who does situation prep, scene framing, and plays the NPCs. Everyone else plays a character. You need a bunch of d10s; the game uses only d10s.

At the beginning, a character is made of a generator and three traits. (You can get more traits at the end of each story the character is in.)

Traits are the normal things that traits are: little descriptions that make the character distinct. I suggest, but it's not a rule, that traits be of the following types, not more than one of each:

- * Style - a visual impression of the character; like the first impression you get when you see the character in the first scene in a movie. (Examples: quick as a cat, scarred, the Mountain that Rides)
- * Skill - something the character is particularly good at doing, either physically, or with knowledge. (Examples: Rituals of Necromancy, swordsman, the Puppet-master)
- * Tool - a special possession associated with the character. (Elric's black sword, the Ring, a BFG)
- * Relationship - a tie of blood or sex. (Brother, Mother, Lover)

Traits can be pretty broad (like Cover in Sorcerer), but are not always available. If it seems useful, you can annotate them PbtA style: "when doing violence; when stealing souls; when hacking computers; when investigating crimes; when acting under pressure; when meeting people for the first time; when negotiating;" etc.

Generators are personal life-affirming things that reveal the character's value system. These express an ideal of some kind and are self-affirming, or self-overcoming.

There are two parts to a good generator: First, it reveals some specific facet of the character's value system. Second, it expresses that the character is (or at least feels) in control of some specific thing or in some specific way.

To activate the generator, the character must take action that affirms or subverts that particular ethical view through sacrifice or risk.

In other words, the generator is powered by choice; specifically, choice that illustrates the ethical proposition articulated by the generator.

Think of it like Keys from TSoY, only run them through a filter of Nietzsche. Beethoven activates his generator whenever he writes a symphony that casts off the shackles of the stuffy rules of classicism, even though it gets him panned by the critics.

Whenever you activate the generator the GM gives you a die to add to your supply.

To make the game hum:

Players, set up your traits and generator to give the character inner tension. Maybe your traits say you're good at violence, but your generator says that every life is precious. Maybe your traits say that your lover is from the rival clan, but your generator says family honor above all else.

GM, set up situations that

(A) tempt the players with dice vs. fictional positioning

(B) create interference between the PCs' generators

(C) use NPCs to put pressure on the PCs' generators

Here's how to play:

You start the game with one die in your supply. You add more dice to your supply, one at a time, by activating your generator.

Roll to overcome adversity. Adversity is when your character has a specific vision (Goals, just like in Trollbabe) and something is stopping him. The dice are the tools you use to impose your character's will on the world. Generally, you get to roll one die (1d10) for free. If you have a trait that applies, you can roll a second die (2d10). You can also spend one die from your supply and roll it too (3d10). No matter how the roll turns out, that die is gone; your supply is reduced by one.

Generally, the GM calls for rolls. But it should be pretty obvious when it's time to roll, so it doesn't really matter who actually says the words. There's no particular advantage for being the person who invokes the mechanics.

Trait use isn't automatic; if it seems like too much of a stretch, the GM can say no.

Roll your dice. If you get any odd numbers, your character succeeds. If you have any dice in your supply, you narrate the results, success or failure as determined by the roll. Limit yourself to local Director Stance only (the "no new information" rule of Trollbabe) - no backstory reveals, no new characters, etc. But you get to describe what happens right here, right now, however you want, within the constraints of the roll (your character did, or did not, get his way). If your supply is empty, the GM narrates, and can be as hostile to your character as he likes, within the bounds of success / failure determined by the roll.

Any time you spend a die from your supply you are putting yourself at risk. If you fail the roll you take hurt. Being hurt has two parts: First, whoever narrates describes exactly what form the injury takes, and that is now a fictional constraint on the character. Second, while hurt you don't get to roll your free die. You have only your traits and your supply to rely on.

As long as you have any dice in your supply when you take hurt, you're safe in the long run. No matter how badly you're hurt, you will heal. Healing is accomplished in game, via scenes. However, if you have no dice in your supply when you take hurt, the GM can narrate the death of your character, if so he chooses. This can only happen when you spend the last die in your supply and fail. So watch out! Spend wisely!

Here are some nuances:

Subverting the generator - subverting the generator means that you choose against the value articulated by the generator. If Beethoven panders to the critics, he subverts his generator. If you have any dice in your supply when you subvert your generator, nothing much happens. However, if

your supply is empty when you subvert your generator, you immediately add 5 dice to your supply. The generator is now disabled. That is, no more dice from it between now and the end of the session. Those 5 are it. At the end of the session you must delete your character's generator and write a new one.

Helping - you can spend a die from your supply on another player's roll. Whoever narrates should include how your character's influence was involved in the situation. It's just fine if your character isn't present in the scene. When this happens, conceivably, a player might be rolling 4d10. That's OK; it's hard not to get an odd number on 4d10, and that's the point. Donating the last die in your supply to another player's roll does not put your character at risk.

Between stories (not sessions) - if you have dice in your supply at the end of a story you can spend them to make new traits. New traits cost 2 dice each. When the next story begins you start over with 1 die in your supply, so dice you don't spend are lost. If you feel like a trait is no longer an important part of your character you can delete it to get one die. That die is only useful for buying new traits, since it will disappear when you start the next story.

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Last update: **2018/09/01 15:55**

