Aurora Punk

Narrative Roleplay Game

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Fateless Legacies LLC

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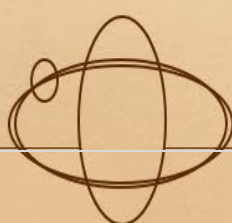
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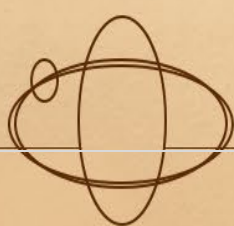
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Narrative TTRPG

The premise

For some players of tabletop roleplay games, rules and numbers and dice are everything. For others it's the stories, worlds, and characters that make games like these so precious. If you find yourself in the latter category, this game might be for you. If you are a min-maxer who finds no greater joy in life than making the most devastating combination of skills and abilities to torment your Game Master with, then we have another game you might enjoy. Fateless; Legacies name sake game. Aurora Punk is a simple, rules light game that allows players to focus on building the narrative. The guiding structure of this game exists to facilitate the narrative, not distract from it. Keep that in mind as you make your protagonist, run the game, and build a story together. This game forgoes the use of dice rolling and exchanges them out for a deck of cards. A single deck split between all the players.

The Players

Can't have a game without players. Aurora Punk has mostly two kinds of players. A Narrators who guide the flow and layout the plot of the story and 2-6 Protagonists who take on the roll of the main cast of characters within the narrative.

Narrator: The one running the game. They play as the world, the setting itself, and every non-player character (NPC) in the world. This is a rather daunting role and comes with some work. So protagonists, do respect the time and dedication of your narrator. There is a greater section in this document regarding Narrators later on.

Protagonists: The players who create a character within the story. The "main characters" of the narrative everyone is building together. Work together with your Narrator and other players to build a protagonist within the story that will fit the world and grow along with the story. Character progression is a fun and important aspect of this narrative roleplay game.

Roleplay

Games like these require an ample application of ones imagination. As a player, you are taking on a role of a protagonist within the ever expanding narrative your narrator weaves. The Expectation is to do as you imagine your character would do in any given scenario. Interacting with the world that the Narrator describes is crucial to making the most out of the game. The NPCs and environment exist to make the world feel real and lived in and give the protagonists options to interact with. When presented with a scenario or confrontation, think about what your protagonist would do based on their history, goals, and personality.

Character Creation

Backstory: Each protagonist and NPC within the story needs a history. Where they came from, what they have done before the story begins. This backstory should tie your protagonist to the world. Use the backstory to decide what Scenario Bonus' makes sense for your protagonist. Keep in mind when making your backstory, your protagonists might not be proficient experts. As the story starts, they are novices and they will progress and grow as the plot unfolds. Make sure that is reflected in the backstory. That said, even novices have the bindings of skills that will blossom into strengths that will pull them through an encounter.

Origin: Where is your protagonist from and what type of upbringing they had.

Training: What education or skill set does your protagonist begin learning? How did they come to learn their skills?

Goals: What hopes and aspirations does your protagonist aspire to accomplish?

Relationships: What connections does your protagonist have? It is most helpful to have these connections relate to the setting and story you are all telling together.

Backstory based character creation. Focus on key elements in a character's backstory so as to reflect the points slotted into their focus fields. After completing their backstory, a protagonist gets 3 points to spend on their focus fields (Mental, Physical, Social). As they make their backstory, they should use the key points in their backstory to slot points into one or more of their focus fields. They Should base their Scenario Categories off their relationships and upbringing as well as training.

Focus Fields

The core representation of a protagonist's base ability are their focus fields. There are three Focus Fields for a protagonist to increase, Mental, Physical, and Social. A protagonist will slot points into one or more of these focus fields depending on what they should be better at. At the start of the story a protagonist will be given 3 points to slot into one or more of their Focus Fields and will be rewarded with more as the story progresses.

Scenario Categories and Bonus'

Think of Scenario Bonus as a skill set that might help a protagonist thrive in a particular type of scene. A protagonist who has a Scenario Bonus: Burglary might be able to use that bonus to sneak around, pick a pocket, or charm a lock.

Based on their backstory, A protagonist will start with 3 scenario categories in which their bonus for that scenario will apply. They will work together with their Narrator to decide what these scenario categories are. They will start with only 1 point in each scenario category they make. When making attempts that involve one of the scenarios that they have chosen, they may apply their Scenario bonus to their attempt along with the points they have in the related focus field. Their chosen scenarios can be as broad as the Narrator allows, representing a particular field that is relevant to the setting. For example, a protagonist might make a scenario bonus category called Fighting. This can represent any

combative situation. But the narrator might require that you narrow the field and specify melee or close-range weapon fighting or shooting with long ranged weapons.

A few more examples of a scenario bonus a protagonist might choose things like:

Athletics: Skills regarding strength, endurance, and acrobatic capabilities or a character.

Awareness: Ones ability to search and see that which is trying not to be seen.

Crafting: How well one works with forging a material into something. (Specify the type of crafting like Leather or Metal).

Performing: A protagonist's ability to put on a theatrical or musical performance.

Spell Casting: The arcane ability to manipulate the world around you within a specific arcane field. The arcane fields can vary based on the setting but here are a few examples. Elemental, Warding, Botanic, Necromancy, Life.

Academic study (or somewhat more narrowed fields of study like history, religion, science etc.),

Medicine: Ones surgical knowledge and capabilities.

Communication: Ones ability to properly handle themselves in various social situations. (The narrator can now narrow this down to tighter categories like courtly Etiquette, manipulations, or charm.)

Burglary: A protagonist's skill in scenarios regarding stealth, theft, and sleight of hand.

Wilderness: The understanding of how to navigate and survive in outdoor and environments.

Technology: A protagonist's capabilities regarding the use of machines and technological devices.

Piloting: Ones skill in controlling and maneuvering a vehicle or ship.

These are only a few examples of what a Scenario Category could include. The possibilities of potential scenarios are nearly endless.

Health and Morale:
Protagonists have Health that represents their physical heartiness and Morale that represents their mental resilience. They start their story with a 1 in each of these. Health can be lost when a protagonist experiences physical harm. A point of Morale can be lost when a protagonist experiences some sort of mental stress. A protagonist may also spend their Morale and add the morale spent to increase their bonus' to an attempt they are trying. They may do this before the narrator decides if the attempt succeeds or fails. Health and Morale recover by 1 point per in-game day after the protagonists rest for a day. Healing and resting in very good conditions as well as eating healthy and hearty food can increase this by 1 or 2 points of recovery.
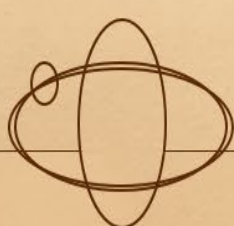
Alternative Protagonist Creation

Rather than have the protagonist player write the backstory and full in the Protagonists details themselves, the narrator may fill in the protagonist's focus fields and create their scenario bonuses. The narrator would due this based on the backstory the protagonist player provided. The narrator would then keep the protagonists sheet and not give it to the player. The player would only have their backstory. They would have no numbers or math, only the story, the setting, and the world. They can keep a sheet to know their unique abilities and to track their equipment if necessary. This could allow for more immersive play on the players part. This play style does not work for every group, so decide with each other if this play method is right for your group.

Scenarios & Attempts

A scenario is any given scene within the story. Each scenario has a theme or many themes that fit it. Themes like Espionage, or wilderness survival, or heated debate. The potential for Scenario themes are endless. Certain protagonists might excel in a certain scene based on their Scenario Bonus'. An attempt is any situation when a protagonist wants to try to do something with some level of difficulty. The narrator will decide how difficult something might be and apply an Attempt Goal (AG) and choose what kind of Focus Field or Scenario Category applies to the situation (we will get to Focus Fields and Scenario Bonus' in a second). The Protagonists will use their Focus Field and add any relevant Scenario Bonus(s). If their total is lower than the AG, they fail. If it is close or meets the AG, they might succeed at a cost. If it beats the AG they succeed.

Deck of Cards

Incorporating a deck of cards. The deck of cards represents a sense of chance, fate, or divine intervention. At the start of the in-game day, a player draws 5 cards from a deck of standard player cards. The group all share one deck. Once the player has drawn their cards, they will hold them in their hand and keep them hidden from one another. This hand represents the protagonists fate and how it may be altered. Cards can be played at any time to offer a slight boon to a Protagonist or NPC in a scenario. Once played the effect of the card is resolved and the card is then placed in a separate discard pile. Players discard any remaining cards at the end of the in-game day and draw 5 more.

One may play a <u>number card</u> and add the number on the card to their attempt. One may play a <u>face card</u> and receive the benefit based on what that face does. Once the benefit is resolved, the card will go into a discard pile.

Ace: Cause an attempt that you, an NPC, or another player makes to succeed automatically. Regardless of the AG.

Joker: Make a target fail at something they would have succeeded at.

Jack: By chance, a nearby ally of yours or a surprise enemy of your opponent comes to aid you in an encounter or scenario.

King: Some sudden change in circumstance to the scenario causes all your attempt goal difficulties to be lowered by 1. (If you play a #1 card of the same suit in addition, the attempts are lowered by the number)

Queen: Draw two cards from the deck or one from the discard pile. You must play at least one of them for this attempt.

Only one card can be played per attempt unless they are of the same suit. A new card is drawn when the protagonists rest and a new hand is drawn when you start a new in-game day. At this time, the cards in the discard pile will be shuffled back and players will each draw their new cards. Once an attempt is concluded, the card(s) played will go into a discard pile.

Card Suits: The suites of the cards (Clubs, Diamonds, Hearts, Spades) allow the opportunity to stack cards in an attempt to build a pile. Protagonists may play cards of the same suit on top of one card already played for an attempt, adding their bonus to the attempt. One may play cards of the same suit on top od anothers pile.

Redrawing. After protagonists complete a rest, they will reshuffle their hand and the discard pile into the deck and draw 5 more cards. They may choose to forgo regaining 1 morale to keep the cards in their hand and draw up to 5.

Narrator's use of Cards: As noted before, the narrator also draws cards. They can use these cards for NPCs to help give them advantages in scenarios. They function the same, however the narrator may draw 3 new cards whenever a new scenario is introduced rather than only once at the start of the day and during rests. They play the cards for specific NPCs and discard them just the same.

Narrator Specifics

NPCs

The various non-player characters in the world each have their own goals, desires, and skillsets. Each NPC has an appropriate amount of <u>health</u> and <u>morale</u>. They should also have a Mental, Physical, or Social attempt goal for the protagonists to beat when interacting with them. When an NPC's AG is beaten by the protagonist, they should lose morale if it was a social or mental challenge or lose health if it was a physical challenge. The morale or health loss should be the difference between the Protagonist's attempt and the NPC's attempt goal. Some NPCs might have strengths and weaknesses making their AG a few points higher or lower in a specific scenario. For example, a certain NPC might be noted as weak in social encounters and strong in physical ones. In this case, engaging them in an argument or trying to manipulate them would be a few points easier in regard to the AG the protagonist needs to beat in order to succeed. A particularly formidable NPC might have resistance to morale and damage loss in certain scenarios like physical damage or lightning damage etc.

Running a Scenario

Each scenario is different from another. A scenario should be built like a scene in a story. Some scenarios might present a challenge for the protagonists. Some sort of obstacle to overcome or some bit of the world to interact with. Making sure every scene is engaging for the protagonists with plenty of elements to interact with won't be easy.

Attempt Goal Difficulty reference:

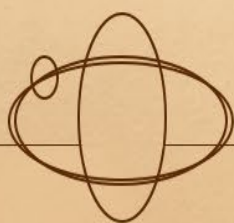| Easy: 1-4	Moderate difficulty: 5-9	Rather hard: 10-14	Extremely Hard: 15-20

Combat: For you lovers of violence, engaging in combat

is more of a narrative experience. No initiatives are made. Each protagonist engaged in combat will describe how they want to handle the encounter by way of a single course of action ("I want to attack someone", "I want to protect someone", "I want to sneak behind"). The narrator will ask them what their total bonuses are and calculate the level of success for each protagonist participating in the encounter based on the AG of their opponents. Then the same will occur with the NPCs. They will have a "round" of attempts. If multiple people target the same individual, the target may play different cards for each person targeting them.

Total failure, results in the loss of health equal to the difference between the AG and the protagonist's total bonus

Success at a cost, results in the loss of 1 or 2 health as well the encounter going somewhat wrong (the hostages were harmed or the tavern was caught on fire)

Total Success, results in everything going well and the opponents being damaged or losing the encounter. A given combat scenario may involve multiple encounters rather than just one single attempt to resolve the whole fight

Injuries: Some results of failures or success at a cost might be lasting injuries. These injuries could cause minus to attempts made in certain scenarios. Like a hurt arm might be a -1 to attempts made that use the arm. Where a broken arm might be a -3 or even -5 to attempts made with that arm.

Story Progression and Milestones: At the end of every session each protagonist present should receive a story point. They can use this to increase their health, morale, or one of their Scenario Category Bonuses. After the completion of an arch within the story (a milestone), protagonists are given another point to put into one of their Focus Fields and can create a new Scenario Category to add to the three they start with. This new Scenario Category starts with only 1 point in it.
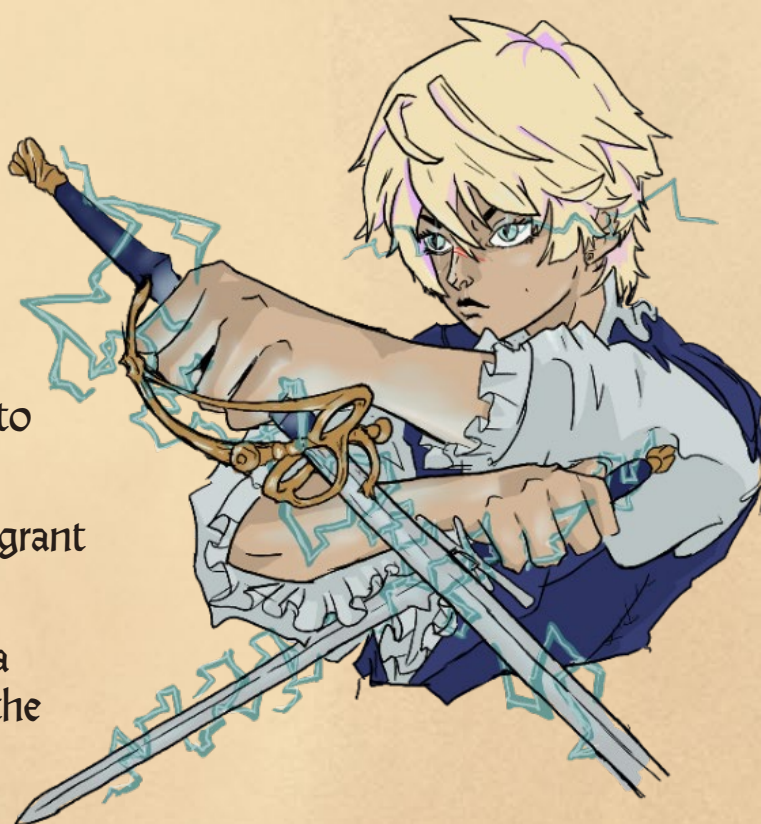
Unique Abilities: While a protagonist does not start their story with a unique ability, unless the narrator so graciously bestows one upon them, protagonists can obtain them throughout the story. Things they learn as the story and game progresses. Unique abilities can be any number of things from spells that might aid a protagonist in various scenarios. They could also be roleplay advantages that might grant them things like flight, cybernetic augmentations, dark vision, or telepathic powers. Other unique abilities might be more mechanical benefits that allow them to redraw cards, Pull cards from the discard pile, make opponents suffer debuffs or take health or morale loss. The options for these are endless. As the narrator, keep in mind to temper these unique abilities to keep the story balanced and well-paced. Being dramatically overpowered can be fun for a while, but failure and consequences are necessary elements to good story telling.

Example: a protagonist with spellcasting in their backstory might be able to wield magic and gave themselves a scenario category of spellcasting (gravity magic). This means they could make an attempt to try and magically manipulate gravity to say… hold a person down. Narrator says they pass or fail based on how hard that is. But if they learned the unique ability spell "Crushing Gravity". They may not need to make the attempt. They just do it. Or the attempt is made much easier.

Equipment: Yes, loot goblins, we have some things for you too. Some special equipment might present a bonus to protagonists in the game. Like a special weapon might give a protagonist a +1 to attempts made to fight with it. Armor or a certain level of grade or coverage might reduce health loss by 1, 2 or 3. A magic wand or staff might give an extra point of scenario bonus to casting spells.

Consumable equipment might recover health or morale or grant some roleplay advantages but are spent upon use.

Once Per Day or Once Per Rest Equipment can be used in a moment of desperation, but it cannot be used again until the protagonists end a day and rest.

Resting: A good rest is often the best cure for what might burden folk. Resting, within the confines of this game is both a narrative device and a mechanical one. Resting is any instance where a protagonist spends an extended period of time in a relaxed state. A few examples are sitting down for a meal, relaxing in a hot spring, or going to sleep. Whenever a protagonist does this, they recover uses of their unique abilities (if applicable), draw another card from the deck, and recover one point of health and one point of morale.
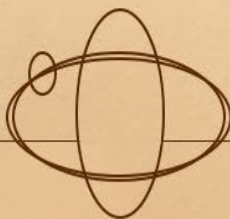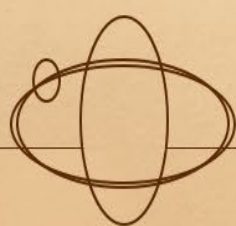
Conclusion

Now with that, you have everything you should need to create a protagonist or run a game within a setting of your own making. We also offer some settings including the Aurora Punk starter campaign to try your hands at navigating your protagonists through a world or guiding the protagonists through the maze of plots, character development, and drama. The most important take away here is that everyone enjoys themselves and creates a story together.

Below is a protagonist sheet for protagonists or narrators to fill out and reference as they make attempts and navigate the story.

Name:

Health: **Morale:**

Focus Fields

Mental	Physical	Social

Scenario Bonuses

Unique Abilities

Equipment

Notes

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Narrative Roleplay Game

"...how you get there is the worthier part."

– Shepard Book, Firefly

I created Aurora Punk after spending years creating a system with layers and levels of complexity. This was my FLCL so to speak. I wanted something beginner friendly, easy to comprehend, and enjoyable. Play this game if you want a system to helps guide the narrative without bogging yourself down to much with complex rules. Guide the story together with your group of 2-6 players and embark on a rich journey through the endless expanse of your collective imaginations. I truly hope you all enjoy the journey.

Carey Lehrte

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