

# Operator, I need an EXIT

v.0.2

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## Before We Start

This is an **action horror** game of being stuck in a hostile simulation, **The Sim** for short, that's out to get you for knowing that it exists.

Your characters are a group desperately trying to find a way back to reality in an environment that looks plain, boring and normal, but that is inherently working against them. A dangerous place, where anyone could be overridden by **an Operative**, a defense program of The Sim, at any point.

And to make it worse, if a character's mask dies in The Sim, they die for real.

## Content Warnings

As a game about simulated reality, the game's themes can easily dance around identity, or the loss of said. The powers the Operatives can wield also touch upon body horror.

Before you start, define lines that should not be crossed. Pause or rewind the game if something uncomfortable happens during a session. Always make sure everyone is comfortable with the direction of the story. Everyone's safety and good time is more important than the game.

## Playing The Game

One person is the Architect, the rest are players.

**Architect:** This is the traditional GM role in an RPG. Guide the story, present challenges to the group. Be a fan of the players. Ask them questions, fill the world with their answers. If it's cool, let them try or split complex challenges into multiple checks.

**Player:** Narrate what your character does. Make checks when things are risky. Give everyone a time to shine. Fill the world with your ideas. Take risks, and rise up from failures.

## Checks

When there's a challenge that needs to be overcome, you make **a check** to see how it plays out. You only need to roll if what you are doing is risky.

The Architect telegraphs the risk of the action. You then pick a skill that best suits your plan, and roll the die that matches its rating. If an ally helps your character, you both make a check, but they share the same risks as your character. Take the highest die and interpret the results:

ROLL	RESULT
1-2	The character fails, and something bad happens
3-4	The character succeeds, but there is a cost
5+	The character succeeds. The higher the result, the better the effect.

Staying capable for extended time without a break is hard. Everyone who rolled **reduces the rating** of the skill they used by one level: **d12 » d10 » d8 » d6 » d4**. Skills cannot go lower than a **d4**.

The Architect can disclaim decision-making by testing for luck. To do so, pick a die rating simply based on the odds of a thing happening, roll, and interpret the results.

## Soft Reset

To get all your skills back to their **original rating**, you can ask for a “soft reset” of your character’s mask in The Sim. The character briefly removes themselves from the action and comes back renewed. A brief break in tension. It can be done at any time, even during combat.

When a character does a soft reset, the Architect looks at the scene and introduces a **new complication** to the group.

## Re-establishing the Connection

When the characters reach a safe spot where the simulation isn’t all that well put together (the less important the place is to the function of The Sim, the less effort is put into it), they can try and re-establish **contact with their Operator**.

The line with these brief calls isn’t strong enough to get the characters out of the Sim, but the Operator can provide you with a small, but useful hack to the simulation or guidance to what is around you. If nothing else, they’ll be giving you access to wonderful toys — guns, blades, or if you’re really lucky even a momentary secure connection to your actual body.

Be careful as this draws attention of the system and the Operatives, and whatever worse lurks in these abandoned parts of The Sim.

When you try and contact the Operator, roll a d12. On a 6+, you make contact and can ask for a guidance or a small adjustment to the situation you are in. In any case, consult the table below:

ROLL	RESULT
1–2	Something really bad happens.
8–9	The Operator provides you with a new d6 gear.
10–11	The Operator provides you with a new d8 gear.
12	the operator provides you a d10 gear —or— get a secure line to one person’s physical body.

## Gear

Cool toys make the world go round, and **gear** is the type of toys that actually come to use. Gear is used the same way as skills — You can use them for a roll, and after the roll, reduce the rating.

The Sim is built on things being used and discarded. This means the characters cannot rely on their equipment being useful for very long. Use the same item for too long and you find it being ineffective. Most of the stuff in the Sim, while working, **doesn’t count** as useful gear, as it’s meant to support the Sim, not break it down.

When a gear is reduced to a d4, the item becomes insignificant from the point of view of The Sim or runs out charge/bullets. In any case it should be removed from the character’s sheet.

Characters can only carry 3 pieces of gear.

## Hacking The Sim

You can use the fact that this is a simulation to your advantage, and have it run **a hack** that temporarily enhances your capabilities immensely. When you do this, use a d12 instead of the regular skill rating to do a check. Reduce the skill from the original number as usual after the roll. Once used, you’ll need to do a Soft Reset to use another hack.

## Cracks

When a character faces a consequence as a result of one of your actions, the Architect can decide that the character's mask takes **a crack**. Cracks are The Sim weighing down on the personally generated mask. If your character reaches 4 cracks, they become "compromised". When compromised, failing a dangerous action can mean being taken out, being re-integrated to The Sim's regular flow or just sudden, violent death.

Characters can recover from cracks two ways: If they have an opportunity to actually **let loose or rest**, they mend 1 crack of their mask. Or if they get a **secure line** to their body, they mend 2 cracks.

## Characters

The characters in the game are persons **aware** of The Sim (unlike most of those inside it). They typically work to **bring down The Sim** or free others trapped in it. But at the moment, you are momentarily without a safe way out, so the most important thing is to **survive**.

## Names

The Sim **assigns names** and identities to everyone trapped in it, ones that are not in any way reflective their true selves. These names are generic such as "Smith", "Thomas" or "Tiffany". Thus all those who have been awakened to the fact that this is a forced-upon simulation have a new **chosen name** for them that is true to who they are. These names often hold mythological or metaphorical importance, such as "Hypnos", "Neuve" or "Dyad".

## Masks

The body the characters are thrust into when they begin in The Sim has nothing to do with who they actually are. It's a generic, bland representation of a human being that is suited for whatever task The Sim needs of them. Upon awakening, a person's form changes to match who they truly are. It is an involuntary hack of The Sim, and the common term for this true shape of a person is **a mask**.

## Skills

Characters have a total of 6 skills:

- **Fight**: wreck, move, force.
- **Parkour**: run, jump, climb.
- **Sneak**: hide, skulk, lurk.
- **Shoot**: track, throw, fire.
- **Wit**: perceive, analyze, repair.
- **Sway**: charm, manipulate, intimidate.

## Creating a Character

- Choose the character's **name**. This should be a single word that describes the character.
- Write down your character's pronouns.
- Describe the character's **mask**.
- Choose your **background**. If you're **a regular human** or **a rogue program**, and proceed accordingly below.

### A Regular Human

By default, the regular human's skills have a d4 rating. On character creation, assign a d10, a d8, and a d6 to three skills you think your character is good at.

Regular humans have one weapon or some other useful d10 item at the start of play.

### Rogue Program

The rogue program doesn't have a physical body on the other side. For them, an Exit is just as important, as it is a way out of The Sim's reach, to a freedom in a smaller system outside of it.

By default, a rogue program's skills have a d6 rating and assign a d8 to one skill your character is good at. When going down the dice chain, they cannot go below d6. When a rogue program hacks The Sim, they only get to roll a d10. Rogue programs cannot mend cracks in their mask. Rogue programs start the game with two d8 items related to what they were meant to do for The Sim before they went rogue.

## The Setting

The world as we know it is a lie. It is a simulation created to harness our energy. A group of people oppose this simulation, trying to break the world free from it. They are opposed by a security net of programs known as The Operatives. The Operatives can look like anyone before they're activated and can spread their essence to any other inhabitant of the simulation if needed. Once activated, they appear as members of some shadowy government agency. An Operative can't be permanently destroyed, only forced out of their current host body through killing the body.

## The Premise

The characters are people who are aware of the simulation and can exit it through certain points of it. The team was on a mission, when their contact on the real world side went silent and when arriving at the exit point, they found the exit missing. Was it a trap? Has there been a major glitch? You are not sure, but as it stands, you are trapped in hostile territory that looks like 2020s America.

## Opposition

The Sim hates you. It knows that you are aware of it and wants to get rid of you. Law Enforcement inside The Sim views you as wanted criminals. Programs who have carved some form of power base within the structures of The Sim find you suspicious and try to use you or get rid of you. And ever since you lost your exit, there has been an Operative after you.

## Law Enforcement

The Police, but also other people working in security in other forms (bouncers, security guards, crossing guards) have an innate sense that you are a criminal and must be stopped. They do not pose a massive threat on their own, but if not dealt with quickly, their agitation can call down The Operative.

## Programs

More dangerous than mere mortals, programs can alter The Sim in their own, limited ways. Not necessarily hacking it, but twisting their original purpose to something strange. Depending how old they are, they can resemble anything from regular people to something clearly supernatural-looking such as a werewolf.

## The Operatives

"The Faceless Operatives" is a phrase that brings dread to the hearts of the characters. An Operative is a force to be reconed with. They cannot be destroyed, and the best the characters can wish to accomplish with their rolls is to divert or delay one long enough for them to get to safety. They have much greater leeway in altering The Sim. They can warp flesh, slow down time, reverse gravity, and other far worse things, if not dealt with rapidly.

## Running scenarios

These are chase scenarios where there is a nemesis catching up on the characters. The scenario should start with the knowledge that the The Sim has been altered and that this is a trap. The Architect then rolls a d6. That's how many scenes away the nearest Operative is from the characters. The characters should have an idea where there is a possible exit. This can be pre-planned by the Architect or rolled from the tables below. The number of scenes it takes the characters to get to the exit should be kept secret, but the general distance should be known.

D6	DISTANCE TO NEXT POSSIBLE EXIT (SCENES)
1	You want us to go where? (d12)
2	This is going to be awful (d10)
3	There's going to be trouble (d8)
4	Expect minor obstacles (d6)
5	Easy peasy (d4)
6	Should be a cakewalk (d4)

D8	LOCATION OF NEXT POSSIBLE EXIT
1	Transportation (highways, subways)
2	Rooftops
3	Alleyways
4	Music (nightclub, concert, rave)
5	Park
6	Castle or manor
7	Place of business (offices, mall, bazaar)
8	Restaurant

When the characters have had enough scenes, the Operative will catch up on them. As said, Operatives cannot be killed, and they have mastery over some aspect of The Sim. The Architect can use these powers when the characters fail or suffer a consequence in a scene with the Operative present. Or to color the scene if the Operative doesn't use the power directly against the characters. The Architect can roll on the Operative Power table to see what power the Operative has or come up with a better one.

Any effect the Operative has had on the characters dissipates when the scene following the encounter with the Operative ends. Many of the powers target the characters' gear or skills. If an Operative ruins one of these, the roll the character makes with it is with a d3 (d6 divided by 2).

If the characters deal with the Operative, causing it to be left behind in the chase, they earn a short pause from when it can return. Roll a 2d6. This is how many scenes it will take for the Operative to catch up again. Failing rolls can reduce to number if the Architect feels like they want to up the pressure.

D6	OPERATIVE POWER
1	Destroy — touch instantly evaporate things like gear, walls, doors, floors, arms, legs, etc.
2	Nullify — can counter the most effective measures thrown at them with ease. Disable the characters' gear as they attempt to use it. Seal the mouth of the leader barking orders shut. Break an arm. Fuse the legs of a person together.
3	Multiplicity — Can duplicate themselves as needed.
4	Time Manipulation — Can speed up or slow down time. Bullets are dodged easily, characters caught up without problems etc.
5	Gravity Manipulation — Up is down. Left is down. Forward is up?
6	Possession — Can take temporary control of a character. Maybe for an action. Maybe for a scene.

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# Operator, I need an EXIT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Type: Human / Program \_\_\_\_\_

Pronouns: \_\_\_\_\_

When you roll with skill, cross off the dice,  
clear crossed dice with a Soft Reset

Skills:

Fight

Parkour

Sneak

Shoot

Wit

Sway

10

8

6

4

Hack

12

regain with Soft Reset

When you roll with gear, cross off the dice.  
Remove gear when all are crossed off.

Gear:

10

8

6

Stress: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐