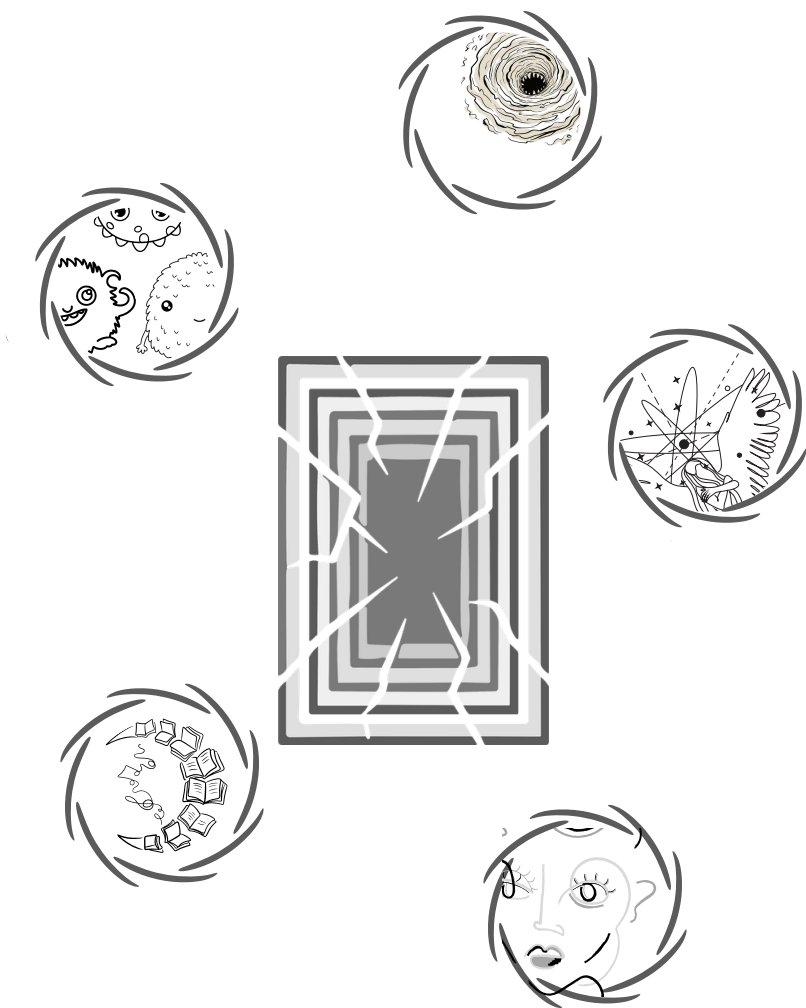




The Playground

a solo writing game
by K. Tempest Bradford

“In the universe, there are things that are known, and things that are unknown, and in between, there are doors.” — William Blake

The Setup

Newborn deities, like human toddlers, need time to learn how to work and control their powers and develop good judgment on how to use them. To keep them from destroying the multiverse as they grow and learn, the Elder Deities created The Playground—a creche of pocket dimensions connected to a central hub located in the emptiest corner of creation.

Each pocket dimension is a closed system. Nothing can go in or out of it unless a Playground Supervisor or Elder Deity opens a hidden portal back to the central hub. In this way the young deities are kept safe from each other and the multiverse safe from them.

You are a **Playground Supervisor** in charge of one of these pocket dimensions. Your job is to observe and only interfere if the young deity gets into something that might harm them (a rare occurrence since they are super powerful, after all).

To Play You'll Need

- Writing implements. Digital or analog, whatever your preference.
- A 6-sided die, physical or virtual.
- A timer.

Part 1: Create A Young Deity

Roll a 1d6 twice to determine the young deity's purview and/or powers.

First Roll

1. Deity of medicine and health
2. Deity of performers and performances
3. Deity of the roads between places
4. Deity of written language
5. Deity of crafting & fiber arts
6. Deity of mechanics and engineering

Second Roll

1. Deity of artificial intelligence
2. Deity of body modification & decoration
3. Deity of ironic outcomes
4. Deity of spaceship engines
5. Deity inside of hallucinogenic plants
6. Deity of sentient trees

Whatever way you interpret selections from these lists and how you combine them is valid.

Example: If you roll a 4 and then a 2 your deity can be the Deity of written language AND body modification & decoration, or they can be the Deity of language written on the body, or some other melding of the ideas.

What goes on in their dimension?

Set a timer for 20 - 30 minutes and write about what goes on in this pocket dimension. This can take any form; from a narrative or exposition to poetry to a report to the Elder Deities to a chronicle or any other kind of writing you're inspired to do. If you need some time to work things out before writing, take five of your allotted minutes to brainstorm.

Part 2: Create Another Young Deity

You're put in charge of a different pocket dimension. Roll a 1d6 twice to determine the new young deity's purview and/or powers.

First Roll

1. Deity of spoken language
2. Deity of computing machines
3. Deity of forges & volcanoes
4. Deity of caverns and caves
5. Deity of storms
6. Deity of the harvest

Second Roll

1. Deity of interstellar travel
2. Deity of complicated relationships
3. Deity of minor disasters
4. Deity of very tall structures
5. Deity of unattractive animals
6. Deity of moons and other satellites

Again, you have full discretion in determining what each purview or power means and how you combine them.

What goes on in their dimension?

Set a timer for 20 - 30 minutes and write about what goes on in this pocket dimension. This can take any form; from a narrative or exposition to poetry to a report to the Elder Deities to a chronicle or any other kind of writing you're inspired to do. If you need some time to work things out before writing, take five of your allotted minutes to brainstorm.

Part 3: Where It All Goes Wrong

The Playground is supposed to be the most secure facility in the multiverse with multiple fail-safes so nothing can go wrong. Inevitably.....

Roll a 1d6 to determine what, exactly, has happened.

1. Your two pocket dimensions collide into each other, creating a chaotic mix of both. Do the young deities work together or do they fight for control?
2. An Elder Deity peeks into one of your pocket dimensions and does not like what they see. What will they do about it?

3. An entity (deity or mortal) from one of your pocket dimensions finds the hidden portal that takes them to The Playground's hub. Before anyone notices, they jump into a portal that takes them to your other pocket dimension.
4. You become trapped in one of the pocket dimensions you're supervising. How do you escape? *Do* you escape?
5. You discover that an Elder Deity has been in one of your pocket dimensions corrupting the young deity there for nefarious purposes. What is it they want and how will you stop them?
6. Harried and fed up with these overpowered children, the other Playground Supervisors quit en masse over poor working conditions and low pay. You're the only one who stays out of concern for the young deities, determined to wait until the Elder Deities arrive and deal with things. It takes them a very, very, very long time to do so. What happens in the meantime?

Set a timer for 30 minutes (or just keep going until you're done) and write what happens.

The End

Modifications & Extras

You can modify this game by switching up the deity powers and purviews or the scenarios for what goes wrong. Here are some suggestions. I encourage you to come up with your own!

More Powers & Purviews

Deity of nature	Deity of dander
Deity of oceans	Deity of mean-spirited pranks
Deity of travel	Deity of dark matter
Deity of romantic love	Deity of thresholds
Deity of crossroads	Deity of impossible tasks
Deity of raptor birds	Deity of music
Deity of insects	Deity of things lost

Another fun way to pick powers and purviews is to use the Major Arcana from a deck of tarot cards or a set of oracle cards.

More Things Gone Wrong

- You open the portal back to the hub for a fully mature deity. What emerges from the pocket dimension is *not* what you expected at all.

- The multiverse is in chaos due to the machinations of an Elder Deity and their very powerful followers. The only place untouched is The Playground, and only because the chaos-makers don't see it or its inhabitants as a threat... yet. You ponder releasing your charges from their dimensions to take on the Elder Deity or hiding them someplace even safer until they're strong enough. What will you do?
- A young deity is in serious danger inside of their pocket dimension. What's going on and how will you help them? If you *can* help them...
- Someone hits the wrong button and all the portals back to the hub open at once. All the young deities take this opportunity to escape. Except one. One of yours. Why haven't they left?

About

I created this game for the Fun & (Writing) Games Salon, a monthly gathering where my co-conspirator Alethea Kontis and I lead a group of authors in playing writing-based games. It started because we needed a way to deal with the soul and creativity-sucking reality of 2021. It evolved into a core part of my writing practice. When we reconceptualized our writing as playtime, it became easier to let the words flow.

Please do share this game with others! Play it alone or in groups. If you share the result publicly, let me know!