

— FREE RPG DAY EDITION —

KIDS ON BIKES

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Acknowledgements

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- OVERVIEW -

In order to play, you'll need three to six players (one to serve as the GM and the rest to be players), these rules, and a set of polyhedral dice (d4, d6, d8, d10, d12, and d20) or an app to simulate dice. Ideally, a set of dice for each player would be best!

Unlike many role-playing games where the GM calls almost all of the shots, the players and the GM will work together to craft the story of the game. Think of this as a collaborative effort where you all work together to tell an awesome 80s story where strange things happen.

- SETTING BOUNDARIES -

In RPGs, it's important to make sure that everyone has a good time. To that end, have a quick conversation about what content in the game everyone is okay with seeing and what content they'd like to avoid. Be honest with your friends - and if something comes up later in the game that you didn't think of, you can always add to the subjects you'd like to avoid. Generally, there are four levels of content:

What we want to see: What are players excited to experience in the game? As a group, you should try to make those things happen. (For example, "I want there to be some mystery in the game - like a case we have to solve!")

What we're okay with: What are players neutral about? That is to say, what doesn't matter to them if it's there or not? Most of the content will fall into this level, and anything the players don't discuss will fall into this level. (For example, if no one at the table mentions spiders, it's safe to assume that there can be spiders in the story.)

What we want to gloss over: What don't players want to experience in the game - but are okay with having as subtext? Sometimes, we're okay with things being alluded to at the table - just not described. These are things that no one will be describing but that might serve as backstory. (For example, "I don't want to have to describe or hear any descriptions of bullying. That can happen in the story - just let's not describe it.")

What we want to avoid: What don't players want to happen in the world of the game? These are things that shouldn't occur anywhere in the game - on or off camera. (For example, "I'm terrified of spiders. Like, not in a fun way. Nothing about spiders!")

Be sure to respect your friends' boundaries while playing to make sure everyone enjoys their experience.

- YOUR TOWN -

In the full version of *Kids on Bikes*, there is a collaborative process for creating the town - but for this version, we've gone ahead and done most of that for you! You and your friends are in a town called Undecided. No, that's not a misprint or missed fill-in-the-blank. Undecided is literally the name of the town. It appears our founding fathers were pushed into promptly filling out the proper paperwork for establishing the town and the name of the town was up for debate, so under ame they put "Undecided". Bureaucracy being what it is, they shortly got back documents declaring the town of Undecided legally established. Even now, in 1988, nobody got around to actually changing the town's name.

Undecided is surrounded by forest for miles with a medium size lake deep in it. Reported sightings of all kinds come from both the forest and lake all year long. On the edge of the forest road into town, an old AMC Gremlin is wrecked. Rumor says that the driver was found dead with an empty child car seat in it. Getting further in to town there is an old mine bookended by a pet cemetery and a human cemetery. Many wonder if digging so close to these is what stopped the mine from being established, but no one wants to find out. But the town itself is pretty cool! With the Space Lanes Bowling Alley and Flying Robot Arcade, it's every kids dream. And now with spring coming the fair is back! As always, with it comes the Fabulous Freak Show bringing the strangest characters ever seen. It's like the town fits the name: all you know for sure is that where your adventure begins is Undecided.

To finish creating Undecided, starting with the player to the left of the GM and going clockwise, each player at the table should say one rumor that they've heard about the town. It can be serious, silly, likely, or tremendously outlandish. These rumors might be true - or they might not be. It all depends where the game takes you.

- CHARACTER CREATION -

The core of any RPG is the character you'll be embodying. In this streamlined process, you'll pick a character from the pregenerated characters we've provided, flesh them out a bit, answer some questions at the table, and get the game started!

Selecting a Character

In the Free RPG Day version of *Kids on Bikes*, we've created a few characters for you to choose from rather than having you make a character from scratch. That way, you can get playing faster! Take a look at each description and see which character speaks to you the most, then print out that character sheet.

EMILIO "BREAKFAST CLUB" GASTRO

Emilio lives with his parents and his grandparents on his mom's side. He hates his name because of being teased about Emilio Estevez, the actor. The other kids started calling him "Breakfast Club" several years ago when the movie came out, mostly because the character is a polar opposite of how Emilio is. Not good at sports, not good with girls, and not confident in himself. Emilio struggles dealing with all of his emotions, and is prone to sequestering himself in his room, away from everyone else whenever possible.

Age	d20	d12+1	d10	d8+1	d6	d4
11	Brains	Flight	Grit	Charm	Fight	Brawn
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
<p>Unassuming (<i>You can spend 2 Adversity Tokens to not be seen, within reason</i>)</p> <p>Loyal (<i>Each of the Adversity Tokens you spend to help your friends gives them a +2 instead of a +1</i>)</p>			<p>What is the best part about living with so many family members in one house?</p>		<p>What trait about Emilio Estevez do you wish you had?</p>	

THEODORE "DON'T CALL ME TEDDY" GILMAN

Theo needs glasses but doesn't have any so he is always squinting. He has 3 sisters, 1 older than he is (Theresa) and 2 younger, (Tania and Tami, or "the twins"). This is why Theodore doesn't have glasses: they always get them first. They always get everything. But Theodore doesn't let anything get him down, so he has to be the funny guy. Problem is no one EVER takes him seriously. They're gonna wish they did some day, cause one day he's gonna make something of himself!

Age	d20+1	d12	d10+1	d8	d6	d4
12	Charm	Brawn	Flight	Brains	Grit	Fight
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
<p>Easy Going (<i>Gain 2 Adversity Tokens when you fail instead of 1</i>)</p> <p>Gross (<i>You have some kind of gross bodily trick - loud, quiet, smelly...up to you - that you can do on command</i>)</p>			<p>What do your sisters do that makes you immediately lose your temper?</p>		<p>What are two of your go-to jokes?</p>	

LUCY HOWELLS

Lucy lives with her mother, Beth, a welder who works odd hours. Since her father died six years ago, her mom's schedule leaves Lucy alone more than she would like, so she spends her time mostly outside hiking and, when she can get her mom to take her, camping. As she gets older, she's getting more adventurous and trekking deeper into the forests.

Age	d20	d12	d10+1	d8	d6+1	d4
12	Brains	Grit	Charm	Brawn	Flight	Fight
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
Lucky (<i>You may spend 2 Adversity Tokens to reroll a stat check</i>) Treasure Hunter (<i>Spend 1 Adversity Token to find a useful item in your surroundings</i>)			What do you remember most about your father?		What inside joke do you and your mom have?	

CHRISTINE INMAN

Christine emulates Lucy and likes to imagine she's her little sister. As far as Christine's parents are concerned they're like best friends since Christine is always going hiking with Lucy. At least that's what Christine tells them. It's sorta true...since she is always following her. It's not like she isn't prepared: what she hasn't learned from Lucy she's read in an old Boy Scout manual she found in her dad's old stuff in the garage.

Age	d20	d12	d10+1	d8	d6	d4+1
10	Brains	Grit	Charm	Brawn	Fight	Flight
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
Prepared (<i>Spend 2 Adversity Tokens to just happen to have one commonplace item with you</i>) Treasure Hunter (<i>Spend 1 Adversity Token to find a useful item in your surroundings</i>)			What do you like most about Lucy?		What do children your age think about how much time you spend following Lucy around?	

ASHLEY GLEASON

Ashley is the richest kid in town. Her father, Dave, owns the new Glowstone Strip Mall. She loves the benefits of being the richest kid in town, but deep down, something about it doesn't sit right. It's like her father is always hiding something. I mean she doesn't even know what to do with that gaudy glowing stone necklace he gave her. She has all the boys at school wrapped around her finger, except that Harris freak. But who cares about him anyway.

Age	d20	d12	d10	d8	d6+1	d4+1
16	Charm	Flight	Brains	Grit	Brawn	Fight
Strengths			Question 1	Question 2		
<p>Lucky (You may spend 2 Adversity Tokens to reroll a stat check)</p> <p>Wealthy (May spend money as though you were in a higher Age Bracket. For example even a wealthy child would be considered to have the disposable income that a typical teenager would have. A wealthy teen, that a typical adult would have.)</p>			Though being rich is great, what's the biggest downside?	How does it feel to have such power over your peers?		

SCOTT HARRIS

Scott lives with his dad, which is cool with him since he's hardly around. His dad is very supportive and gives Scott his undivided attention in the rare event that he's actually around. He doesn't really know much about his dad's work and knows zip about his mom. Often wandering the streets in town, he's most comfortable by himself, just him his copy of Animal Farm and his can of mace. Scott often finds himself on the conspiracy theorist side of the fence, so long as nobody else is...

Age	d20	d12+1	d10+1	d8	d6+1	d4+1
16	Grit	Fight	Brawn	Brains	Flight	Charm
Strengths			Question 1	Question 2		
<p>Cool Under Pressure (You may spend an Adversity Token to take half of your die's value instead of rolling on a Snap Decision)</p> <p>Prepared (Spend 2 Adversity Tokens to just happen to have one commonplace item with you)</p>			Why do you carry mace with you?	What do you think about the popular kids?		

TEX JOHNSON

He will never go back in those woods again. His momma loves him. He will never go back in those woods again. His pa tolerates him. He will never go back in those woods again. And no one will know it, cuz he'll knock their block off. He will never go back in those woods again. Only his friends know why, and he doesn't have any of those. He will never go back in those woods again. At least not alone...

Age	d20+1	d12+1	d10	d8	d6	d4
14	Fight	Brawn	Flight	Grit	Brains	Charm
Strengths			Question 1	Question 2		
Protective (You get a +3 bonus when defending one of your friends) Tough (If you lose a combat roll, add +3 to the negative number. You will still lose the roll no matter what but could reduce your loss to -1)			What did you see in the woods?	What fight are you currently having with your pa?		

JANE "MISTY" MITCHELL

Jane wishes her name was Misty and that she could be picked up by Doctor Who and taken anywhere but here. It's tough being a geek and a girl in a time before that was "in". Often seen in an array of sci-fi related t-shirts and her trademark rainbow scarf, she longs to be in the stars. She would watch them more if she weren't afraid of the dark. Misty can usually be found at the arcade with a pocket full of quarters a comic book in her back pocket and some hair ties to keep that unruly mop out of her eyes while beating Q*Bert.

Age	d20	d12	d10+1	d8	d6	d4+1
16	Brains	Flight	Brawn	Charm	Grit	Fight
Strengths			Question 1	Question 2		
Intuitive (You can spend an Adversity Token to ask the GM about your surroundings, an NPC, or the like. The GM must answer honestly) Prepared (Spend 2 Adversity Tokens to just happen to have one commonplace item with you)			Who got you into your sci-fi obsession?	Other than Doctor Who, what are your other favorite sci-fi shows?		

DEVANSH "DEV" JINDAL

Born and raised in Undecided by his moms, Jess and Diana, Dev left for a few years to join the army. Now that his enlistment is over, he's back and is a rookie on the police force. He's honest and hard working, and he tends to trust people, even when they tell him outlandish stories about glowing rocks or monsters in the woods. Maybe that's because of all the comics he read when he was a kid, maybe it's because he's just got such a good heart - even if he is quick to throw a punch when someone is threatened.

Age	d20	d12+1	d10	d8	d6+1	d4
29	Fight	Grit	Brawn	Charm	Brains	Flight
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
<p>Cool Under Pressure <i>(You may spend an Adversity Token to take half of your die's value instead of rolling on a Snap Decision)</i></p> <p>Skilled at Policing <i>(You may automatically succeed at any check with a difficulty of 12 or lower related to being a police officer. If the GM determines that you must roll a check related to policing, add +3 to your roll on top of any other bonuses)</i></p>			<p>What does being a police officer mean to you?</p>		<p>What is Diana doing that concerns you?</p>	

LILANNE OKAFOR

Lilianne, or "Lily" for short, is the local veterinarian in town. Her specialty is farm animals, but she has learned to care for all manner of creatures in town since she's the only vet around. She's a serious woman and completely rejects the myths in the town about the creatures who live in the forest, either the "Bigfoots" or the "mutated animals".

Age	d20+1	d12	d10+1	d8	d6	d4
34	Brains	Charm	Grit	Flight	Brawn	Fight
Strengths			Question 1		Question 2	
<p>Cool Under Pressure <i>(You may spend an Adversity Token to take half of your die's value instead of rolling on a Snap Decision)</i></p> <p>Skilled at Veterinary Medicine <i>(You may automatically succeed at any check with a difficulty of 12 or lower related to veterinary medicine. If the GM determines that you must roll a check related to veterinary medicine, add +3 to your roll on top of any other bonuses.)</i></p>			<p>When did you know you wanted to be a veterinarian?</p>		<p>Which of your cases still haunts you?</p>	

SAMMY WEST

An outsider in every sense of the word. Sammy isn't from around here, and she doesn't really live in town either. She moved here about 6 months ago to replace the previous National Forest Park Ranger (who died under very mysterious circumstances). She lives in the Ranger Station, deep in the woods. But that is how Sammy likes it. She enjoys the sounds of nature, and the lack of other people. She's never been able to figure out people, but animals, they make sense to her.

Age	d20+1	d12+1	d10	d8	d6	d4
26	Brains	Grit	Brawn	Flight	Fight	Charm
Strengths				Question 1	Question 2	
Prepared (<i>Spend 2 Adversity Tokens to just happen to have one commonplace item with you</i>) Skilled Ranger (<i>You may automatically succeed at any check with a difficulty of 12 or lower related to being a Park Ranger. If the GM determines that you must roll a check related to being a ranger, add +3 to your roll on top of any other bonuses</i>)						

MARK ZHOU

In his younger years, Mark was a bit of a daredevil, but as he got older, he settled down and started a family, whom he loves dearly. He and his husband, Rick, decided to settle in Undecided after they adopted their two daughters, Rebecca (or "Becky", age 8) and Jessica (or "Jess", age 10). Mark and Rick own and operate the town's diner, which serves the best cherry pie in the state and the second best chicken soup. In the diner, Rick cooks and Mark works the register. When they're not in school, the girls occupy the booth closest to the register. Mark really likes to have them close to him.

Age	d20	d12	d10+1	d8+1	d6	d4
31	Brawn	Charm	Grit	Brains	Fight	Flight
Strengths				Question 1	Question 2	
Protective (<i>You get a +3 bonus when defending one of your friends</i>) Skilled at Parenting (<i>You may automatically succeed at any check with a difficulty of 12 or lower related to parenting. If the GM determines that you must roll a check related to parenting, add +3 to your roll on top of any other bonuses</i>)				What's your favorite part of running the diner?	What would it mean to you to lose one of your girls?	

Selecting a Character

Your sheet will already have stats assigned to it in the six boxes, representing the dice that you'll use for stat checks involving those stats. The higher the possible value on a die, the better your character is with that stat. The six stats are:

Brains: This stat determines how book smart a character is. It will determine how well they understand problems, how well they did or are doing in school, and how quickly they're able to solve academic problems.

Brawn: This stat determines how much brute strength a character has. It does not determine how well they can fight - just how well they can lift things and how much physical damage they can take. It also determines how physically intimidating a character is.

Fight: This stat determines how good a combatant a character is with whatever weapons or fighting skills you decide your character knows. While a character with a high Fight stat won't be able to pick up a gun and use one effectively having never fired one before, it will make them good with weapons that they have experience with. Also, they'll be able to learn how to use new weapons and fighting skills more easily if given proper training.

Flight: This stat determines how fast a character is - as well as how adept they are at evading their problems (both literally and figuratively). Characters with a high Flight will be fast and tough to trap both physically and verbally.

Charm: This stat determines how socially adept a character is and how good they are at reading the emotions of another person or group of people. Characters with a high Charm will be able to talk themselves out of tough situations and into good ones with relative ease - but within reason.

Grit: This stat determines how hard it is to break a character emotionally or physically. Characters with a high Grit will be better able to keep a level head in the worst of situations and will be able to keep their cool even when pushed hard. Finally, Grit also determines how street smart a character is.

The higher a stat is, the better a character is at skills involving that stat - and the more likely they are to succeed when using that stat. While there's no guarantee that you'll roll your maximum, generally, characters will be better able to pass checks with their higher die.

Each age bracket (Children, Teens, and Adults) also receives bonuses to two of their stats. These are already indicated on your character sheets as +1 after the associated die. For example, Lucy is a Child, so she gets +1 to her Flight and her Charm. As such, on her character sheet, she has d10+1 in Charm and d6+1 in Flight.

DIE	BRIEF EXPLANATION
d20	Superb — Even upon first meeting you, anyone would be able to readily tell that this is a strength of yours. You are remarkably good with respect to this stat.
d12	Impressive — People who know you would say that you're pretty good with respect to this stat, but it wouldn't be something that's obvious during a first encounter.
d10	Above Average — You aren't remarkably good in terms of this stat, but you're slightly above average.
d8	Below Average — You aren't too bad in terms of this stat, but you're certainly not good, either. You're just slightly worse than average.
d6	Bad — People who know you would say that you're pretty bad with respect to this stat, but it wouldn't be something that's obvious during a first encounter.
d4	Terrible — Upon first meeting you, people would immediately be able to tell that this is a weakness of yours. You are remarkably bad with respect to this stat.

Stats will also be used to resolve skill checks and combat, but there's a little more to talk about with your Trope sheets before going further.

Strengths

In the full game, when you select your Trope, you'll also select Strengths and Flaws for your character. For this version, to get you started faster, we've selected Strengths for you - and we'll skip over the Flaws for this game.

In addition to being ways to describe your character, these Strengths are ways that you can use Adversity Tokens. You'll start with three Adversity Tokens and earn one whenever you fail a stat check or lose in combat. Throughout the game, as you accumulate Adversity Tokens, you can spend them to activate your Strengths, as described in the table below.

Each Strength is described on your character sheet, so refer to that sheet for more information on what your two Strengths do!

Introductions and Questions

Since you're all from the same small town, you'll all have seen each other, but you might not know each other all that well. Spend a few minutes discussing how much your characters know each other. It might be that you know someone well - like, best-friend well - or it might be that you barely know them at all - like saw-them-in-the-grocery-store-once barely. But it's a small town. You certainly all know each other by name. Even if one of you

is new in town, word spreads fast. Not a lot of people move to Undecided. Most importantly, though, make sure each character knows at least one other character at the table, and reseal yourselves so that you're sitting next to people you know — counting the GM's seat as empty.

Quick Start Questions (Time: about 2 minutes per player)

In the shortest version of setup, each of you will answer one question about the person clockwise from them at the table. Before answering the questions, you should move so that you are sitting next to someone you have a close relationship with (counting the GM's seat as empty). These relationships don't have to be positive ones, though!

Starting with the player to the left of the GM, do the following.

- Decide whether you want to answer a question about what's positive about your relationship with the character to your left - or if you want to answer a question about what's negative about that relationship.
- Roll a d20 and answer the corresponding question from the "Character You Know - Positive" or from the "Character You Know - Negative" list at the end of this version of the rules. (If the question doesn't fit your relationship with that character or if the question you roll has already been answered, you may answer a question above or below the one you rolled that hasn't been answered yet or reroll.)
- Cross out that question.

Once each of you has answered a question about the character to their left, this part of the setup is complete. Remember, skip over the GM when answering questions; thus, the character to the right of the GM should answer a question about the character to the left of the GM.

Finishing Touches

Now, we'll add the last details about your character and get started! You'll find places for all of these details on your Trope sheets, so write them in there.

Motivation: Write down something that strongly motivates you. It might not be the thing that drives all of your decisions, but it should certainly drive most of them - and especially their big decisions. It could be a specific motivation (e.g., "impress Tom so that he'll go out with me" or "get back at Jessica for what she did to me in 6th grade"), it could be more general (e.g., "look cool" or "learn"), or it could have to do with concealing some information (e.g., "don't let everyone know I'm terrified of the dark" or "don't let anyone know I'm the thief in town"). If appropriate, share these with other players - but most likely, you'll just be sharing this motivation with the GM.

Fears: Think about what it is that scares you. There will be some mechanical implications for this fear that will be addressed in "Planned Actions and

Snap Decisions”, which we’ll talk about soon. More broadly, though, you will, of course, want to avoid your fears, and when faced with them, you’ll behave more irrationally when facing that fear. Ultimately, what you fear in the game is up to you.

Children usually fear things that, rationally, they shouldn’t fear - and don’t fear things that they ought to. They’re more likely to walk up to a stranger covered in blood to make sure they’re okay than they are to open up their closets in the middle of the night. Generally, children fear the unknown and what they can’t see. Kids are also generally not ashamed of their fears; they’ll gladly declare them to friends and strangers alike.

Teens are all over the place. Some teens are still scared of the things that scared them as kids, but they’ll tend to be very tight-lipped about these fears. No teen wants to admit that they’re still scared of the dark. Often, though, teens are more scared of social isolation, losing friends, or embarrassing themselves. Sometimes, though, more mature teens - or ones whose lives have been rough - will have fears more like an adult’s.

Few adults have the fears that children have - and most of them aren’t worried about the kinds of social things that concern teens. Rather, they’re typically afraid of things being taken from them, whether that’s their families, their homes, or their livelihoods. Some adults also fear realistic things going wrong - and there’s nothing saying that an adult can’t be afraid of something that most adults aren’t.

Backpack: Indicate what you have in your backpack, literally and figuratively. Literally speaking, what items are you never without? For kids, these might literally be in their backpack. What would make the most sense for you. For example, a good Scout would never be caught without their pocket knife - except at school, of course.

Figuratively speaking, the backpack is also a good place to list advantages that you have over other people. While this doesn’t have to consider all of the ways in which you are privileged, it would be a good place to think about the more intangible resources you have at your disposal. For example, Azra’s backpack might indicate that her parents are exceptionally supportive and do everything they can to give her the resources to succeed at school. Ibrahim’s backpack, on the other hand, might indicate that his bad relationship with his parents has given him a strong sense of self-reliance and ability to do for himself. The intangible resources in your backpack won’t have a mechanical impact on the game, but they should give you places to turn if you need help in getting out of a problem - or create tension if that resource is suddenly not available.

Character-Specific Questions: Finally, each Trope sheet in the playbook has two questions about your character. Now that you have a good sense of your character, use these two questions to put on the finishing touches!

The answers to these questions do not need to be shared with the other players at the table - but they could be if you would like to. Certainly, though, your responses should be shared with the GM.

Now, you're ready to start your adventure in *Kids on Bikes!*

- PLAYING THE GAME -

The game will take the form of a story that you, the other characters, and the GM tell together. The GM will help guide the action of the story and will make the "big picture" stuff happen, but you'll have a lot of control over what you do and how you face the situations that the GM throws in your way.

Stat Checks

While you're playing, any time you do something that runs the risk of failure, the GM will set a numerical difficulty for the action. You will then roll the appropriate stat die and check the value of that die against the value of the difficulty. If you roll above the number needed, you've succeeded and you do what you're trying to do! If you roll below the number needed, you don't get to do what you tried to do - but you do get an Adversity Token, which you can use to activate your Strengths or to add to later rolls.

When rolling, if you roll the maximum value of the die, your die will "explode" - meaning that you reroll the die and add the maximum value that you rolled the first time to the new roll. Your die may explode multiple times on a check - but once you succeed at that check, your die no longer explodes for that check.

For Example: Andrea has a d20 in Brawn and needs a 14 to pass their check. She rolls a 20, so since she has passed the check, the die does not explode. If Doug, who has a d10 in Brawn, needs to pass the same check, if he rolled a 10 on the first roll, his die would explode since he has not passed the check yet.

Keep in mind that the most you can roll (without the luck of exploding a die) is 20, and that number is extraordinarily unlikely. However, that doesn't mean that the difficulty can't be higher than 20 in cases where a feat seems truly impossible for mere mortals.

DIFFICULTY**EXPLANATION & EXAMPLES**

20-19	<p>A task at which only the most incredible could even possibly succeed - but if they succeed, it will be one of the most impressive things a person has ever done. This is a nearly guaranteed failure.</p> <p><i>A person lifting a car off of another person trapped under it.</i></p> <p><i>A character solving a nearly impossible math problem simply by glancing at it.</i></p>
18-16	<p>A task where success would be incredible and impressive. This, too, is a nearly guaranteed failure.</p> <p><i>Talking a police officer out of arresting you when you have clearly broken the law and have no relationship with the officer.</i></p> <p><i>Breaking a school record in track.</i></p>
15-13	<p>A task where success is extraordinary - but decidedly possible for those who are truly skilled at it.</p> <p><i>A very lucky person finding the right item on the first try.</i></p> <p><i>Someone trained in espionage withstanding police interrogation.</i></p>
12-10	<p>A task where success is impressive - but completely expected for those skilled at it.</p> <p><i>A strong person prying open a heavy, locked door.</i></p> <p><i>A computer whiz repairing a computer quickly and under pressure.</i></p>
9-7	<p>A task where success is certain for those very skilled at it - but not for those who aren't.</p> <p><i>Sweet talking a wealthy person into giving your friends a round on the house.</i></p> <p><i>Running a message from one end of a building to another in very short time.</i></p>



DIFFICULTY

EXPLANATION & EXAMPLES

6-3	<p>A task where success is likely for all but those who aren't skilled or have a low stat in that field</p> <p><i>A lucky person drawing a card from a deck that isn't a face card.</i></p> <p><i>A character silently withstanding a verbal berating.</i></p>
2 or 1	<p>A task where success is nearly guaranteed except in extreme cases.</p> <p><i>A character lifting a 10 pound weight over their head.</i></p> <p><i>Reciting a multiplication table.</i></p>

Choosing a Stat for the Check

As in life, there are always multiple ways to solve a problem. For example, if you're being confronted by bullies, it may seem like you have to start swinging (Fight) and hope it goes well or turn heel and run (Flight) and hope you're faster than they are. But depending on who you are as a character, you might use other stats instead.

High Charm? Try to convince the bullies that you'll show them a secret entrance into the movie theater if they don't beat you up. High Grit? Show them that you've taken worse beatings before breakfast and make it not seem worth their time. High Brains? Talk them in circles until they're too confused to punch. High Brawn? Physically intimidate them so you don't have to show you're not as tough in a fight as you look. There are always multiple ways you can solve your problems.

When you're not sure what kind of check something will call for, you can always just start describing what you're doing and the GM will tell you what check to make. For things like deceit and lying, it's probably going to be Charm. But if you're throwing around a lot of science-y words to convince the sheriff that the mine shaft where you're actually hiding the half-goat, half-child creature is structurally unsound so he should stay away, that might be Brains. Or if you're threatening your way into a secure area past a young, scared guard, that might be Brawn - or Fight if you're describing what you'll do to him if he doesn't step aside. The bottom line is that the stats are here to help guide your storytelling and help you have fun. If you aren't sure what to do, ask the table - and if they aren't sure, go with your gut.

Planned Actions and Snap Decisions

Although the GM always sets a numerical difficulty, there are two distinct

kinds of skill checks: Planned Actions and Snap Decisions. Planned Actions are skill checks when you have time to think about the best course of action and, perhaps, work with your friends. If the characters are sitting at a kitchen table trying to break a coded message that someone left for them and have all night to do it, that's definitely a Planned Action. Or, if your character needs to climb up a wall to sneak into an abandoned factory and has the cover of night and no one in pursuit, that's a Planned Action. In short, Planned Actions are when the conditions are relatively optimal to achieve something.

Snap Decisions, on the other hand, are choices that have to be made quickly under bad conditions - and are thus more chaotic and unpredictable. For example, if your character is being chased through a cave, checks they make while fleeing in panic will definitely be Snap Decisions. Or, if the character is under any kind of great pressure, that would likely be a Snap Decision, too. Combat rolls, too, are always treated as Snap Decisions.

Except in combat, it's the GM's call whether a skill check is a Planned Action or a Snap Decision. Players, though, should feel free to try to convince the GM of how they can get a moment of calm to make a Planned Action in a setting that would seem to call for a Snap Decision.

In order to make a check for a Planned Action, go through the following steps:

- Once you decide to resolve a problem with a particular stat, the GM sets a numerical difficulty. [For example, if you are trying to crack a safe in the privacy of your own home with the right tools, you might try to muscle your way in (Brawn), crack the safe (Brains), or sweet talk a buddy of yours to apply their safecracking skills (Charm).]
- Because you have time to think and react calmly, you may either roll the appropriate die for that stat or you may take half the value of that stat's die. [For example, if you have a d20 in Flight, you may choose to take a score of 10 for Planned Actions involving Flight instead of risking a roll.]
- If the value first rolled is the maximum value of the die, the roll "explodes." Roll the same die again, adding both values together. This may be repeated as many times as you roll the maximum, though you must stop when you have succeeded.
- After determining whether the die explodes, add any applicable modifiers from age-based or Strength-based stat bonuses.
- You may also discard any number of your Adversity Tokens (earned after any failed checks), each token adding +1 to the roll. As with age bonuses, these additions do not count toward exploding the roll.
- Other players may also spend Adversity Tokens to help you with the same +1 benefit as above, though they must also narrate how their



actions are also helping your cause, and this is at the GM's discretion.

- If the total roll is greater than or equal to the value set by the GM, you have succeeded. You and the GM will narrate the success collaboratively.
- If not, you have failed. The GM will direct the narration with minimal input from you (the greater the failure, the less input from you). The more you miss by, the worse the failure. You also receive one Adversity Token, which can be used to activate Strengths or used after future rolls to increase the value at a rate of 1 Adversity Token for +1 to the roll.

When things are dicier and you're under more duress and stress (or if you're in Combat), you'll have to make a Snap Decision. In most ways, the process works as above with the following changes:

- First, you cannot take half of the value of the appropriate die. You must roll to see if you succeed since this is a rushed attempt that you cannot plan.
- Second, although you may spend Adversity Tokens to help yourself, other players cannot spend Adversity Tokens to help you. There's no time for the kind of planning that collaboration requires.
- Third, the GM should make the consequences for failing a Snap Decision less weighty than failing a Planned Action. Narratively, when everything's on the line, the tension is already there, and you aren't doing something stupid - you're just in a bad spot. (On the other hand, when you have time to plan and still fail, that usually means you've decided to take a risk.)

When deciding on the consequences of a stat check, GMs should keep the following in mind:

- Success by 10 or more is an unbelievable success. There will likely be some additional positive results from that success, at the GM's discretion.
- Success by 5 or more is the character making it look easy.
- Failure by 5 or more should be accompanied by short term consequences, but not bad ones.
- Failure by 10 or more is staggering. There will likely be bad short term consequences - and possibly even some long term ones.

Planned Actions and Snap Decisions

Remember, in *Kids on Bikes*, failing a roll isn't all bad. First and foremost, it gives you an Adversity Token, which you can use to succeed when you really

need it - especially if you pool it with other Adversity Tokens - or to activate your character's Strengths. Adversity Tokens give you more options later on, so failing is actually helpful to your later play.

Second, failure can and should push the narrative forward. Remember, a failed roll means that what the character wants to happen doesn't happen - but that doesn't mean that what happens is bad for the story. For example, if the characters try to hack a computer but aren't able to, it might mean that they have to seek out a non-player character to help them with it. That character might, in turn, inadvertently give them a clue that helps them puzzle out a mystery. Or, if a character tries to escape on foot from government forces pursuing her, she might be brought to a facility that holds the secret to the next part of the narrative - or even the powered character.

So, while failures won't be what your character wants, they should almost always feel good for the story - and should give the group more directions to take the narrative you're building together.

Exploding Rolls and Narrative

When you roll the highest value of the die and thus reroll (when the roll "explodes"), the narrative should reflect that you have done something beyond what you could accomplish on your own. When working with a player to narrate an "exploded" success, the success should come, in part, from external forces.

In the case of success as a result of an exploding die, again, that success will have to come as the result of forces beyond the character's control.

For Example: Penelope is trying to run away from a group of government agents pursuing her on foot. She has a Flight of d8, and the GM sets the difficulty at 12: impressive, but certainly possible for someone skilled. She rolls an 8 on her first roll, then 6 on her next roll for a total of 14 - a success! Perhaps, as she's running from the agents, a gate comes down, separating them. Or, perhaps as she's running she knocks over a container of motor oil on which the pursuing agents then slip and fall, allowing her to escape. Whatever it is, it's not that Penelope simply outruns them.

Combat

Combat in this game functions in the same way as other Snap Decisions, though sometimes you will be rolling against another character to determine success or failure.

As with the other tasks in the game, fights can be resolved in multiple ways. Suppose you are about to be physically attacked. You could stand firm and take the hit (a Brawn check). You could attack first and hope to be a better fighter (a Fight check). You could try to talk very fast and talk the attacker

out of it (a very difficult Charm check before the punches start flying). You could try to intimidate the attacker from carrying out the assault (a Brawn or a very difficult Grit check). You could run (a standard Flight check) or stand your ground and dodge the punches (a more difficult Flight check).

Physical Damage: Physical attacks are more direct combat, either a fist fight or, if things have gotten really bad, knives and bats.

Roll the attacker's Brawn against the defender's appropriate stat (likely Brawn or Flight). Presumably, in a physical fight, both characters will be attacking each other, and assuming that's the case, roll attacking and defending separately.

At the GM's discretion, weapons like knives, baseball bats, and so forth, might lead to successful hand-to-hand hit being treated like a projectile hit - or a slingshot or thrown object might be treated like a melee hit. Still, whether the hit occurs or not should be calculated the same way.

Remember, there are no safe fights in this game. Any time physical conflict occurs, a character might die. Once players decide to attack each other, a misplaced blow could hit a temple or a throat. There are no "pulled punches" or "called shots." Every fight could be fatal. That said, of course GMs should allow a playful (or even somewhat aggressive) shove or a nuggie without risk of anything serious - even somewhat hostile wrestling.

Projectile Damage: Most of the time in the game, projectiles will take the form of guns, which are terribly dangerous for all characters. But, kids sometimes throw rocks or have bows and arrows, which could land just right and be bad - but most likely won't be all that bad. Keep in mind, though, that all projectile weapons are potentially lethal.

When projectile combat occurs, roll the attacker's Fight against the defender's appropriate stat (likely Flight or Brawn, depending on whether the character is diving out of the way or taking the shot). If both characters are shooting or throwing at each other, roll separate attacks and defenses for each attacker. And remember, high differences between attack and defense with projectiles are much more dangerous than the same difference for physical combat.

Injuries & Death

During the course of the game, one or more of the characters will likely be injured. In this game, there are no hit points - but none of you are immortal. Far from it. Compared to the forces you will probably come in contact with, you're exceptionally fragile. A well-aimed bullet from a government agent, the quick flick of a monster's jaws, or a telekinetic character could end things in a moment.

In this game, violence should never be without consequence. Rather than trading

blow after blow, stat and applicable skill rolls should determine the outcome of a fight before it starts. Players and the GM should then narrate the outcome. The difference between the rolls (and applicable modifications) should determine the amount of damage that a player sustains (refer to chart below) and who gains narrative control over the encounter.

RESULT OF ROLLS (with applicable modifiers)	NARRATIVE RESULT
Defender's roll is greater than or equal to the attacker's roll	<p>Narrative Control: The defender narrates the outcome.</p> <p>Effect: Defender is uninjured; the projectiles miss or the blows don't land or hurt them enough to matter.</p>
Attacker's roll is greater by 1 to 3	<p>Narrative Control: The attacker explains how they attack, and the defender narrates what they do to mitigate the harm to them.</p> <p>Effect: Defender is hurt, but only temporarily; the bullet grazes them, but they're okay; the punch stuns them but they can shake it off.</p>
Attacker's roll is greater by 4 to 6	<p>Narrative Control: The attacker explains how they attack, and the defender narrates what they do to mitigate the harm to them.</p> <p>Effect: The defender is fairly hurt; the bullet hits them and they need medical attention soon to prevent it from causing permanent damage; they're dazed and likely concussed, but they can keep going; their ribs are going to hurt for a few days and breathing might sting for a few hours.</p>
Attacker's roll is greater by 7 to 9	<p>Narrative Control: The attacker explains their attack, and the defender explains about how they respond. The attacker can alter any of these details as the defender explains them. Then, the attacker explains how this response fails to prevent harm.</p> <p>Effect: The defender is badly hurt; the bullet hits them dead on and they're losing a lot of blood and need professional care immediately or they'll die; they're unconscious and will be badly concussed when they wake up; the bone is broken.</p>

RESULT OF ROLLS

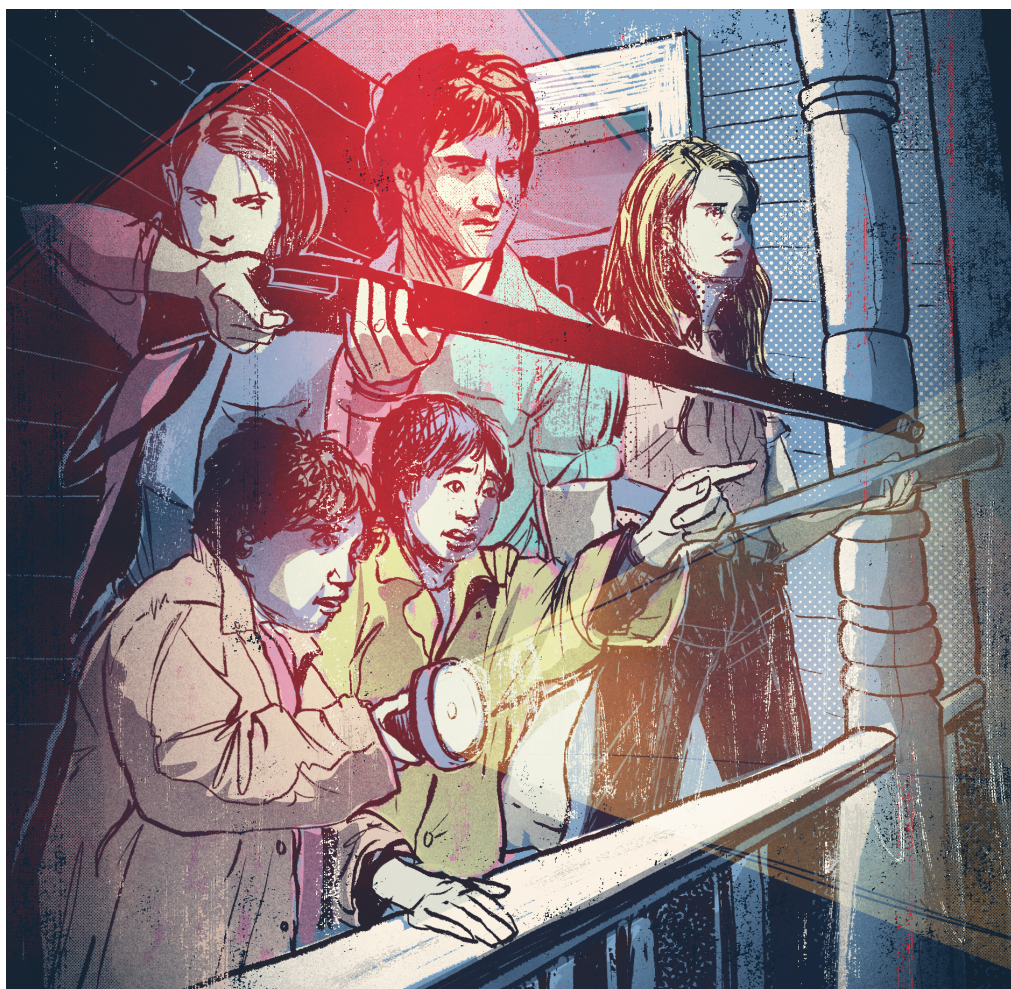
(with applicable modifiers)

NARRATIVE RESULT

Attacker's roll is greater by 10 or more

Narrative Control: The attacker has full control over the narrative. They explain what the defender does in response to the attack - and how ineffective this response is.

Effect: The defender is dead or quite nearly dead; the bullet hits them between the eyes and nothing can save them; they're beaten so badly that only immediate medical attention can help - but there will be permanent effects.



- POWERED CHARACTERS -

Players cannot create a character with powers to play throughout the campaign. But, early in the first session, the GM should introduce a powered character that will then be co-controlled by all of the players. When the character is first introduced, the GM will give each player information about that powered character in order to determine what aspects of the character they will control.

We have a few examples in the “For the GM” section, but the character the GM creates for your group will depend on the direction that your narrative is taking: serious, silly, or somewhere in between. Upon meeting the character, the GM will give out information to specific players related to the following: how the powered character feels about members of the group, how the powered character reacts to people outside of your group, what their personality is like, and, of course, what the character’s superhuman powers are. All of this information will be public, but different players will be responsible for different aspects of the character. For example, the player given information related to how the powered character interacts with people outside of the group will be responsible for those interactions.

Players may flesh out the powered character as they see fit, adding desires, fears, and motivations as they go. Once a player introduces a new aspect to the powered character, players should go along with it unless there are issues with established behaviors. However, the only way new powers can be added is through intervention of the GM. Players cannot, under any circumstances, give the powered character new powers.

When playing the powered character, there should ideally be roughly equal input from each player and the GM. As a player, you should have enough information to make decisions about what the powered character does. If you don’t, ask the GM for more guidance - and remember that Kids on Bikes is a game where players have strong input over the direction of the narrative of the game. As long as you’re within the bounds of what other players are okay with seeing in the game, your decisions are right!

As a GM, your control over the powered character should be used to drive the narrative toward exciting encounters and stressful situations. If players are unsure what to do or seem stuck, the GM could certainly have the powered character figure something out. Or, if the characters need to be pushed toward the revelation of a secret that only the GM knows, the powered character could be very useful in this respect. Remember, though, that players’ input is important in the game - and if their ideas conflict with the plan, try to adapt.

Using the Character’s Powers

Using powers always has consequences. When using powers, the GM will establish a numerical difficulty for the action being attempted. This number should take into account how practiced the powered character is with using

their mental powers in this way and how significant an expenditure of mental energy it would represent. Then, if the player choosing to take that action with the powered character wishes to still take that action, the powered character immediately expends one psychic energy (represented and tracked by tokens) and the player rolls 2d4.

Subtract the roll on the dice from the GM-established difficulty value. If the result is zero or negative, the powered character suffers a very minor physical result (e.g., a very brief nosebleed, a muscle twitch, a momentary but painful headache). If, however, the result is one or greater, the player taking the action has two options: either the attempt fails or the player chooses to expend more psychic energy tokens to increase the roll, expending one psychic energy token for each +1 to the roll. As soon as the roll plus the mental energy tokens spend is equal to the difficulty value, the result becomes a success.

For Example: Jamie is controlling the powered character's telekinesis. She wants to use his powers to move a set of keys off a desk and over to Jamie's hands so that she can let herself out of a pair of handcuffs. The GM tells Jamie that the precision required for this task sets the difficulty at 5. Jamie expends one of the powered character's psychic energy tokens and rolls 2d4, getting 4. She then has to decide whether the attempt fails and narrate the failure or if she wants to expend an additional psychic energy token and narrate the success.

If completing such an action reduces the powered character to zero or fewer psychic energy tokens (which could happen with the GM's permission), very bad things happen to the character. Whatever their standard physical reaction to using powers is will be far worse (e.g., a violent, full-body seizure instead of a muscle twitch) and they will lapse into unconsciousness - or even die if they drop too far into negatives. The exact effects are up to the GM.

Replenishing Mental Energy

In order to replenish their mental energy, the character needs to rest, eat, or take another appropriate action. A full night's rest should restore the character to full mental energy - unless they have dipped below zero. In that case, recovery should take more time, though the exact duration is at the GM's discretion.

Also, there should be one or two things that can help the character recover without sleeping - or recover more quickly if they've dipped into negative psychic energy. Do they have a sweet tooth? Do foods that are high in iron help them more than other foods? Maybe it's meditation or direct sunlight that helps them to recover. In all situations, the powered character should be subtly drawn to these things to give players clues - but the GM should feel free to throw in some red herrings.

- FOR THE GM -

In Kids on Bikes, a big part of the fun is letting the players help to make the story. Whereas a lot of RPGs require GMs to design an adventure ahead of time, Kids on Bikes encourages GMs to roll with what their players want to do and ask them questions. So, if you ever get stuck and aren't sure what to do next, ask your players what happens next! Some of our most fun moments have been when we've asked players, "Well, what do you think happens next?"

Still, it's good to have some structure and possible things to fall back on when guiding the players while they create the story. Here are some possible elements to include in the story - or to adapt to make them best suit your specific game!

Possible Points of Interest

- **Side Pockets:** the local bar and pool hall.
- **Grande Pied National Forest:** near the town and has plenty of hiking trails running through it. It also has more than a few off-the-path areas that can be dangerous.
- **Space Lanes:** the local bowling alley. In addition to having league nights on Thursday, the bowling alley is secretly built from materials scavenged from a downed spacecraft. The out-of-this-world materials make the lanes glow with an alluring grey shine, and the ions given off by the metal make everyone in the alley happy.
- **Flying Robot Arcade:** the one and only arcade in town. What's not to love? It's got all the new games and a monthly King of Quarters video arcade competition. Plus, it looks like a giant robot!
- **Pets Friends Forever:** the local pet store that lately has been displaying rather...different critters, unless a puppy with 2 tails and a kitten with red eyes are suddenly more common.
- **The Spring Fair & Fabulous Freak Show:** the traveling circus that comes through every spring. The show itself is shrouded in mystery, since it doesn't seem to perform anywhere else. And why are there always spots that look like digging has been done when they leave?

Possible Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

Feel free to use any of the possible playable characters as NPCs if the players don't claim them, and be sure to include the NPCs related to the characters players choose!

- **Jess Jindal:** the owner of Side Pockets. If Side Pockets is open, Jess is working the bar. She's quick with a kind word and, on really bad days, a comped drink. She's a good listener who gives great advice — as long as you follow her rules. No cursing, no fighting, and no tabs open for more than 24 hours.
- **Beth Howells:** a welder and widow with a daughter. She would do anything to protect her daughter, and she struggles with giving her the freedom that she needs as she's growing up. When she has a free hour, she'll slip out to Side Pockets to shoot some eight ball and, usually, win some money off of anyone foolish enough to bet against her.
- **Arthur & Bethany Penderworth:** the husband and wife owners of Pender's Foods, a grocery chain that owns most of the grocery stores in this part of the state. They're ruthless when it comes to stomping out competition and will do everything within the law (and sometimes a little more) to make sure that their empire remains intact.
- **Mr. Winkles:** the owner of the Flying Robot Arcade. Wow, what a nice guy! The kids say he reminds them of character from some mystery solving cartoon, so he dressed up like it once, putting on a ghost costume that he keeps in the corner. He lets his favorite kids know the secret way to get more quarters from the change machine. Great guy!
- **Sarah and Sal Sorrison:** owners of Space Lanes. You know how they say people start to look alike when they've been married a long time? The Sorrison's prove that, and if the photos on the wall are right so do all of their ancestors.
- **Dave Gleason:** owner of the Glowstone Strip Mall. While digging up the foundation after leveling a good portion of woods, he exposed the glowing stone that provided the Bigfoots livable atmosphere and tried to hide it in the mine. Unbeknownst to him, some of his workers took pieces of it. He doesn't want any of this to come out.
- **Mizerrarty:** owner of the freak show. He cannot get over the idea that the mine in town was started for gold, and he aims to find it. He controls the freaks with his hypnotist, Madame Ravelle. Mutations to the freaks from the newly exposed stone and these nosy kids are really putting a damper to his plans this year!



Possible Adventure Hooks

- While wandering deeper into the forest, the characters meet a large, hairy creature...a bigfoot! This bigfoot's mate went missing a few days ago and she needs help finding him. She's concerned about the hunters she has seen in the area and wants to find her mate before they do.
- A feral young woman wanders into town seeking help for her "parents", two Bigfoot creatures who have raised her for the past ten years. They've fallen ill or been wounded by hunters, and she's desperately seeking help to save them.
- The pets in Pets Friends Forever get out of control and escape the store, causing panic to erupt at the strip mall. This appears to have all started when the owner's husband gave her a glowing stone he wouldn't say where he found.
- Local reports have been coming in of large creatures described as Bigfoots in the town ever since the mall was built. Your characters see one breaking into the mall office trying to steal a glowing stone paperweight.
- A local kid gets everyone in the arcades attention when he beats Robo Conquer. As he does an electrical charge runs through him and strange robotic parasites start to follow him assimilating people and animals in order to apprehend him.
- A strange colored fox appears to be watching you and others as they get close to the freak show. As you approach it runs and ducks under a tent, yipping what sounds like a warning as it does.
- A young kid or group of young kids closely associated with one of the characters wanders into the forest one afternoon and doesn't come home by dinner.

Possible Other Threats

- A group of hunters hoping to bag one of the bigfoot creatures reported to be in the forest.
- A group of government forces is coming to investigate rumors of cryptids in the area — and exterminate any they find.
- Amalgamated mutations of people and creatures caused by the glowing stone exposed by the crew building the mall.
- Freak show and fair folk trying to keep you from exposing their

treasure seeking — or they're going after the hunters going after the bigfoot creatures.

- Mr. Winkles exposes his plot to take over the world using his giant robot the arcade really is.

Possible Powered Characters

- The Bigfoots, two large creatures living in the forest and trying to reassemble the broken power supply to their spacecraft and trying to stay out of public sight.
- Gremlin, a young girl raised by The Bigfoots after they saved her from a car crash ten years ago. Though she only has rudimentary language, exposure to the shards the Bigfoots are collecting has made her incredibly strong and incredibly fast.
- Various mutated animals, a broad spectrum of critters created by prolonged exposure to shards from the spacecraft's shattered power source. Plus, they've probably watched a few episodes of a certain TV show about turtle martial artists living in a sewer, which might have given them some ideas...
- Arty, the kid who beat Robo Conquer. He is a robot built by Mr. Winkles that escaped during a lightning storm. His face was not quite complete, so Winkles doesn't immediately recognize him.
- A child from the freak show who is tired of nomadic life. They can travel up to 15 minutes back in time with whoever they touch.



— CHARACTER CREATION QUESTIONS —

Character You Know - Positive

1. What did this character do for you that makes you owe them a debt you can't repay?
2. What do you admire about this character — but would never tell them?
3. What great kindness did this character do for you that they don't even remember but you do?
4. What trait about this character that they despise do you genuinely appreciate?
5. Why do you care about this character more than they care about you?
6. What role did this character play in the best day of your life?
7. What plan do you and this character have that most excites you?
8. What is your private nickname for this character and why?
9. What is the kindest thing this character has ever done for you?
10. What is this character sacrificing to protect you?
11. What lengths would you go to in order to defend this character?
12. Why do you have a bond with this character that can never be broken?
13. What about this character always makes you happy?
14. What is the bravest thing you've ever seen this character do?
15. What do you and this character have a mutual, weird love of?
16. What would losing this character mean to you?
17. What aspect of this character's personality do you try to use as a model for your own?
18. When did you first realize that you loved this character — either platonically or romantically?
19. What's your first memory of this character?
20. What item did this character give you that you treasure?

Reminders:

- Roll a d20 and answer that question about the character you're establishing a relationship with. If the question doesn't fit what you have in mind for that relationship, feel free to reroll or choose another question.
- Once you've answered, remember to cross out the question so that you don't answer that question about another character — and so that other players don't answer the same question.
- If you roll a question that has already been answered, choose the question above or below, choose any question on the list, or reroll.

— CHARACTER CREATION QUESTIONS —

Character You Know - Negative

1. What did this character do in the past that you still resent them for?
2. What secret are you keeping from this character that you would be devastated if they found out?
3. What could make you betray this character?
4. What are you sure this character is hiding from you?
5. What does this character have that you want to take from them?
6. What is this character doing, either knowingly or unknowingly, that hurts you?
7. What do you need to take from this character for their own good?
8. What role did this character play in the worst day of your life?
9. What is the most dishonest thing you've seen this character do?
10. What is this character doing that's putting you both at risk?
11. What does this character do that makes you immediately lose your temper?
12. How far would you go to avoid being alone with this character?
13. What part of this character's personality scares you?
14. What would this character have to do to get you to forgive them?
15. What insanity has this character shown warning signs of?
16. How far would you go to make this character suffer?
17. Why do you dislike this character when all the other characters seem to love them?
18. You hurt this character years ago. Why can't you apologize?
19. What do you do to intentionally annoy this character?
20. How did this character betray you the last time you confided in them?

Reminders:

- Roll a d20 and answer that question about the character you're establishing a relationship with. If the question doesn't fit what you have in mind for that relationship, feel free to reroll or choose another question.
- Once you've answered, remember to cross out the question so that you don't answer that question about another character — and so that other players don't answer the same question.
- If you roll a question that has already been answered, choose the question above or below, choose any question on the list, or reroll.