

Too Much ROCK For One Hand

A live-action roleplaying game about rock, love and motorbikes.

Playtest version
by Graham Walmsley

Too Much ROCK For One Hand

Welcome to “Too Much Rock With One Hand”, a game about rock, love and motorbikes. It’s a live-action roleplaying game for 8 – 13 players.

This is the playtest version. It’s freely available at www.catchyourhare.com. If you do a playtest, please do let me know: either post a description of the playtest at Story Games (www.story-games.com) or The Forge (www.indie-rpgs.com) or mail me at graham@catchyourhare.com.

If you playtest Too Much Rock For One Hand, I will, if you like, send you a postcard from London. If that doesn’t appeal to you, then I’ll just be very, very grateful, and credit you in the final product.

You can run this game with one GM but, if it’s your first time, two is better.

Where to start

First, read the character sheets. These sheets tell the players the rules: so they're the best place to start.

Then, read some of the Claim and Modification cards. Get a picture of what a Claim is and how it's used.

This guide will tell you everything else you need to know: the rules not covered on the character sheets and how to run the game.

What you need

Here is a checklist of everything you need to play.

<i>What you need</i>	<i>Where you get it</i>
Six “Bike” cards	Download “Bike Cards.pdf” from www.catchyourhare.com
Thirteen character sheets	Download “Character Sheets.pdf”
A spare copy of the character sheets	
Four Claim cards for each player	
One Modification card for each player, with a hole punched in each	Download “Cards for characters.pdf”
Six Object cards: five bike keys and one “Raven’s scarf” card	
The “Key to Muddy Dirt Bike” object card	
Three other Modification Cards	Download “Cards to place.pdf”
Four packs of cheap playing cards, preferably with identical backs	A toy store
60 nuts 20 bolts 20 washers 10 wingnuts	A hardware store
A large wad of paper and pens (for the bike races)	A stationery store
Some blank cards, in case cards get lost and you need to write a replacement	

Preparing

Before the game, this is what you need to do to prepare:

1. Using a hole punch, punch eight holes along the edge of the bike cards, for the nuts and bolts to go through.
2. Punch one hole in each modification card.
3. Deal the hands of cards, as follows:
 - a. Take three packs of cards
 - b. Separate the red cards from the black cards
 - c. Deal thirteen hands of black cards: one of Aces, one of Twos, one of Threes, and so on. Each hand will contain six cards.
 - d. For the black hands, swap an Ace and a King; a Two and a Queen; a Three and a Jack; a Four and a Ten; a Five and a Nine; and a Six and an Eight. Leave the hand of Sevens alone.
 - e. Deal thirteen hands of red cards in the same way. As before, swap an Ace and a King; a Two and a Queen; a Three and a Jack; a Four and a Ten; a Five and a Nine; and a Six and an Eight. Again, leave the hand of Sevens alone.

Setting up

Before the game, give each player:

1. Their character sheet
2. Their two hands of cards (red and black)
3. Their four Claims cards
4. Their Modification card
5. Any objects they hold: either a key to a motorbike or Raven's scarf.

To set up for the game:

1. Place the remaining Claims on a table. This is the Claims Pile.
2. Place the following around the play area:
 - The Bike cards
 - Most of the nuts, bolts and wing nuts
 - The three remaining Modification cards.
 - The Key card for the Muddy Dirt Bike.
3. Keep aside for later
 - Some spare nuts, bolts and wingnuts
 - The remaining pack of cards

Should the players know the rules before the game?

Before the game, you can either show all the players the rules and all the character sheets, or keep everything secret.

If you keep everything secret, the game will feel more mysterious, because players won't know exactly what's happening. In particular:

- Players won't know what Claims other characters have, which makes other characters less predictable.
- Players won't know who likes them and who doesn't
- Players won't know what happens if they choose to die tragically

If you show everyone the rules and character sheets, the game will feel more fair, since everyone knows everything about everyone. In particular:

- Players will know which characters have which Claims
- Players will know exactly who likes them and who doesn't
- Players will know what happens if they die

You can play the game either way.

Schedule

Too Much Rock For One Hand lasts for three to four hours, divided into three play sessions. Each session ends in a bike race. In the game, the first race is at sunset, the second at midnight and the third at sunrise.

So, the first play session covers the 45 minutes leading up to sunset. Then there's a bike race. After that, game time moves on, and the second session covers the hour leading up to midnight. There's another bike race. Then game time moves on again and the third session covers the 45 minutes leading up to sunrise.

Here's an approximate timetable (which doesn't include set-up time and your opening speech).

<i>Real time since start of game</i>		<i>Game time</i>
00:00	The first play session starts.	45 minutes to sunset
00:45	First bike race	Sunset
01:05	The second play session starts.	11pm
02:05	Second bike race.	Midnight
02:25	Third play session starts.	45 minutes to sunrise
03:10	Final bike race	Sunrise
03:30	Wrap-up session	-
03:40	Game ends	

Play finishes immediately after the final bike race.

Don't stick strictly to this timetable: races may overrun and, if a play session flags, you may want to start a race early.

Starting the game

To start the game, gather the players together and:

1. Welcome them.
2. Take a hand of cards from any player. With another player, demonstrate how to exchange cards when you Fight and Make Love. Emphasise the differences: in Making Love, the cards are face-up and both players keep the cards they took; in Fighting, the cards are face-down, and the winner keeps the cards. Afterwards, return the cards to their original hands.
3. Explain that:
 - the first bike race will be in exactly 45 minutes
 - you will explain the racing rules at the start of the race
 - when the race starts, all other play will stop immediately. For example, if someone wants to steal a bike to race on, they must steal it before the 45 minutes is up.
4. Show the players the Claim Pile.
5. Ask if anyone has any questions.
6. Lead the Gang Members to one end of the play area. Lead the Schoolkids to the other.
7. Start the game

Your role

Rules queries

Your role, at the start, is mainly to handle rules queries. For example: what happens when there's more than two people in a fight? How do you handle a threesome? Many of these queries are dealt with later in this document.

However, some situations will arise which will need rules calls that weren't foreseen by this document. For example: can you break a modification by hitting it?

In these situations, simply make a ruling that seems fair to you and that keeps everyone having fun. (In the example above, breaking a modification would probably stop people having fun, so I'd say no). If a similar ruling is needed later in the game, be consistent.

Doing things

Players may ask to do things that can't be accomplished by talking to the other players. For example, can they burn the bar down? Can they report a motorbike stolen?

Here are some tips on dealing with these queries.

- **Deal with the query quickly.** If the query will take a long time – “Can I find how to make a bomb on the Internet?” – explain that the query will take too much time and the player should find something else to do.
- **Keep the players focussed on each other:** for example, don't let a player find a computer and research bike modifications.
- **Don't bring other characters into the story** unless you have the time to play them.
- **Accept anything that sounds fun,** even if it will affect other characters: such as burning down the bar or reporting an illegal street race.
- **Reject anything that will stop others having fun:** for example, don't let one character get another character arrested.
- **If you reject a suggestion, explain why:** most players will accept being told “You can't do that: it'll spoil the game for other characters” or “I can't deal with that, it'll take too much time, and other players need me.”
- **If you accept a suggestion, let it affect the game visibly:** if one character reports an illegal street race, there should be police sirens in the next bike race.

Racing

Play stops

When the race starts, all other play stops immediately. Be fairly strict about this: if someone wants to steal a motorbike, they must do so before the race.

There is *some* room for last minute actions, if no-one objects: for example, a player might leap on a motorbike as a passenger, if the rider doesn't object. Use your judgement.

Once the race starts, there should be no Claims and no roleplayed scenes.

Positions

At the start of the race, position the players as follows:

- The players who are racing stand in a line, each with their motorcycle and key in front of them. They are the **Racers**.
- Players who are passengers on a motorbike stand behind the player on whose motorcycle they are riding. They are the **Passengers**.
- All other players sit on chairs, some distance away, facing the Racers. They are the **Spectators**.

If there's any doubt about who's racing and who isn't, sort this out now.

One other person stands next to the Racers,. He is the **Road Condition Guy**. If you have another GM, that GM should be the Road Condition Guy; otherwise, choose one of the Spectators.

Before the race

Tell each Racer to check the bike belonging to the player to his left. They should check that:

- the Rider has the key to the bike
- any modifications are correctly attached

Any incorrectly attached modifications count as Damage (see below).

The race

In the first two races, there are four rounds. In the final race, there are five.

In each round:

1. The Racers hold up a card to describe what they're attempting. For example: "Speed off", "Knock Spanner off her bike", "Jump into the air, the moonlight glinting off my shades".
2. If the Passengers want to attempt anything, they hold up a card too. For example: "Jump across to Spanner's bike".
3. The Road Condition Guy holds up a card describing the road conditions. For example: "Long, moonlit highway", "Sharp curve", "An inclined tombstone which forms a jump across a river".
4. You ask the Spectators to decide what happens. For example, does Spanner get knocked off her bike? Does the passenger jump across to the other bike?
5. In particular, the Spectators decide who overtakes and who crashes. Anyone who overtakes takes a step forward; anyone who drops back takes a step back; anyone who crashes becomes a Spectator.
6. If someone crashes, ask them whether they want their character to die. Hence, Spectators decide who crashes, but the player affected decides whether the crash is fatal.

Modifications and Damage

A Racer may use a Modification in describing what he is attempting: for example, "I use my Nitrous Injection to speed ahead", "I use my Blades to make Spanner crash".

Encourage the Spectators to think of Modifications as *really cool*. Attempts using Modifications should usually succeed. Each Modification may be used once during a race.

If a Rider has Damage on his bike, they *must* mention this, at some point during the race, as part of something they attempt. For example, "My gear box makes a grinding noise".

Claims

When the race ends, players with a Claim to make line up, in the following order:

At the start of the line, all Racers and Passengers who finished, in the order in which they crossed the finishing line.

After them, all Racers and Passengers who didn't finish, in order of how close they came to the finishing line.

After them, any Spectators who have a Claim to make, in decreasing order of how many Rock cards they have. If they have the same number, use Love cards instead. If they have the same number of Love Cards, toss a coin.

Then, starting from the head of the line, the players make their Claims.

Your role

During the race, you act as a facilitator: telling Racers to hold up cards, asking Spectators to make decisions, controlling any discussion and explaining the rules.

Use open-ended questions to fire the Spectators' imaginations: "When the ghost bikes crash, what happens?"

Use specific, closed-ended questions to force the Spectators into a decision: "Does Dirtbeard crash?"

Make sure that everything a Rider or Passenger attempts is considered by the Spectators: "What about Verity jumping between bikes? Does that succeed?"

Your role is not to adjudicate: that is the Spectators' job. If a Racer wants to die with his head between another Rider's spokes, ask the Spectators whether he succeeds. If a Rider asks to do something extra, even though they've attempted something already that round, ask the Spectators if they will allow it. If a Rider wants to leap over the moon, ask the Spectators if he succeeds.

The racing rules explained simply

This section summarises the racing rules, so that you can explain them at the start of the first race.

Before explaining these rules: allow the Riders and Passengers to line-up; get them to inspect the Keys and Modifications on other bikes; choose a Road Condition Guy; let the Spectators sit; and resolve any last-minute trickery.

Then explain the rules as follows, turning to the Riders, Passengers and Spectators as appropriate.

1. There are four rounds.
2. In each round, the **Riders** hold up a card, saying what they're doing that round. If the **Passengers** want to do something, they hold up a card too.
3. The **Road Condition Guy** holds up a card describing the road conditions.
4. Then the **Spectators** decide what happens.
5. If a **Rider** has Modifications on his bike, he can use each Modification once during the race in describing what he's doing.
6. The **Spectators** are encouraged to think of Modifications as *really cool*. Doing something with a Modification should usually succeed.
7. If a **Rider** has Damage on his bike, he *must* use that, sometime during the race, in describing what he's doing.

Ask if there any questions. Answer them, then start the race.

Ending the game

When the last race ends, ask the players to sit down and count their Love and Rock cards.

Find out who has the most Love cards. Their character will ride out of town to a new life. Ask them which other character they take. Then ask them to describe how their character rides out of town and, hence, end their character's story.

Then find out who has the most Rock cards. Their character will die gloriously in a bike crash: ask them to describe how that happens and end their character's story.

Then, in the order they're sitting, ask each player to describe how their character's story ends.

Thank everyone and end the game.

Death

No character dies unless the player decides they should die.

However, it's likely that a player will choose to let his character die, since the first character to die tragically gets 1 Rock Card from everyone in the room.

If someone chooses to die (usually in a bike race), take them aside and ask them what they would like to happen next. They might want to come back as a ghost, a vision or a zombie; or to rise from the dead. They might, of course, want to remain dead.

Negotiate with the player. Ensure that, whatever they want to happen, it's dramatic and satisfying, but doesn't take over the game. As a guideline:

- There should be a break before they return
- Their reappearance should be short, especially if it's a dramatic scene that stops everyone else playing

For example, in a playtest at MayCon, two characters died in the second bike race. Both characters wanted to return as ghosts. It would be rather dull if they were immediately resurrected as two ghosts, who would act exactly as their previous characters did. Instead, they decided to return as ghost bikers in the final race.

Rules questions

Here are some common rules questions, which aren't answered on the character sheet.

What happens when a player runs out of cards?

When a player runs out of Love or Rock cards, they should find a GM (as instructed on the character sheet).

Allow these players to choose, at random, two red cards or two black cards, as appropriate.

What are the rules for a threesome?

Split the threesome into two sessions of Making Love: one player Makes Love to another, then one of those players Makes Love to the remaining player.

This means that one player will Make Love twice in quick succession: here, the rule about waiting a number of minutes before Making Love again is waived.

What are the rules for a group fight?

Split everyone fighting into pairs. Each pair Fights. Whoever wins goes through to a second round.

Again, split everyone in the second round into pairs. Each pair Fights. Repeat until there is one winner.

If there is an odd number of players fighting, or an odd number in a round, then the player with the most Rock Cards automatically gets through to the next round, without fighting.

Can players bribe each other with Love and Rock Cards?

No: you can only give Love and Rock Cards away by Making Love, Fighting or as part of a Claim.

(Note: having said this, I'm interested to know what happens if cards are used to bribe other players. If you want to run a game like this, feel free, and let me know how it works).

Are Claims cumulative?

Yes: if a player can apply two Claims, they may do so.

What do modified, repaired and sabotaged mean?

Many players have Claims related to modifying, repairing and sabotaging motorcycles. As specified on the character sheet:

Modified means “correctly attached a modification to a bike that wasn’t there before”

Repaired means “changed the nuts, bolts and washers on an existing modification so it was attached correctly”

Sabotaged means “changed the nuts, bolts and washers on an existing modification so it was attached incorrectly”

What if the same player has the most Love and Rock cards at the end?

If one player holds the most Love and Rock cards, then they are the only winner. They choose whether they die gloriously or ride out of town. If they ride out of town, they choose another character to take with them.

Other stuff

What if there are less than 13 players?

If there are less than 13 players, drop any of the following characters:

- Rattail
- Jenny
- Spanner
- Marvin
- Blaze

Tell the other players to ignore anything on their character sheet that refers to these characters.

Nice touches

If you can, the following things add a nice touch:

- A stereo, playing rock music, at a volume where people can talk
- A flipchart, which announces the time of the next race (“The next race begins at midnight”).
- A clock showing game time set so that, when it reaches a particular time, the next race starts.