GET IN THE
FUCKING
ROBOT

GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT

Playtest Version 0.4

A competitive RPG for 3–5 players, by David J Prokopetz

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Important Note: This document may not represent the most up-to-date version of *Get in the Fucking Robot*. You can always find the latest revision at the following address:

https://penguinking.com/get-in-the-fucking-robot/

Credits & Acknowledgements

1 The Story So Far

The Apocalypse is coming, and nothing can stop it – nothing, that is,
except your giant robot. All it needs is a willing pilot. Unfortunately, you're
all deeply dysfunctional people, and no matter who steps up, it's sure to
end in disaster; for yourself, certainly, and very likely for the world as well.
It's not like you have any choice, though. In the end, one of you must GET
IN THE FUCKING ROBOT.

2 The Game in Brief

Get in the Fucking Robot is a competitive, GMless RPG where your objective is to lose the game. Play proceeds in a series of rounds; once all of the rounds have been played out, the player with the highest score GETS IN THE FUCKING ROBOT.

To be clear, this is a bad thing. It does not end well for you. From an in-character perspective, your character may very much want to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT, but as a player your goal is to prevent this outcome by any means necessary. You can do this both by avoiding scoring opportunities for yourself, and by forcing other players to score.

Once it's been determined who GETS IN THE FUCKING ROBOT, a short epilogue follows in which the losing players collaborate to describe the horrible things that happen to the lucky winner.

2.1 What You'll Need

Get in the Fucking Robot requires the following paraphernalia:

➤ Twelve six-sided dice (that is, 12d6).
➤ Six index cards. Write the word "Enthusiasm" on two of them, and leave the other side blank – make sure the ink doesn't bleed through. Do the same with the words "Empathy" and "Vulnerability", so you have three pairs, one for each word.
➤ A sheet of paper for each player. Each player should draw three large circles on their paper, and label them "Apathy", "Alienation" and "Self-Loathing", respectively. Also mark a column labelled "Confidence".
➤ Nine tokens (coins, beads, etc.) per player.

2.2 Getting Started

The first order of business is to have a quick brainstorming session – ideally no more than ten minutes – to figure out why you have a giant robot and what sort of apocalypse needs dealing with. The important questions to answer, in order, are:

1. What is the nature of your group?
2. What are you up against?
3. Why are you the only ones who can help?
4. Why can't you deal with it right now?

Take a few minutes to discuss each of these questions. If you're stuck for answers, you can use the tables in for inspiration.

Once you've got the scenario sorted out, it's time to create your characters. The covers that part in detail.

3 Creating Your Character

Your character has two traits with rules attached to them: a **role**, and a trio of **attributes**.

3.1 Your Role

Each player must choose one of the following six roles. No two players should choose the same role. Each role comes with a pair of abilities; how these work is discussed in the next section (p. 13).

3.1.1 The Hero

This isn't your first rodeo, and you've Seen Some Shit that makes you very sure you don't want to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT – if only you could convince yourself that you have a choice in the matter.

- ➤ **Key Attribute:** Alienation
- ➤ **Fatalism (Focus):** If you spend at least one token and gain Confidence, recover one token.
- ➤ **Saviour Complex (Support):** If the focus character you support has less Confidence than you do at the start of the scene, your support grants two dice rather than one.

3.1.2 The Rival

You're brash, loudmouthed, and obviously the most suitable candidate to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT. Or that's what you tell anyone who will listen, anyway; deep down, you're not sure if you believe it yourself.

- ➤ **Key Attribute:** Self-Loathing
- ➤ **Impostor Syndrome (Focus):** If you have more Confidence than your partner at the end of the scene, recover one token.
- ➤ **Pushy (Support):** If the focus character you support has their attribute overcome by their partner's attitude, your support grants two dice rather than one.

3.1.3 The Pro

You were made to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT, possibly literally. For you it's strictly business, which is exactly why your heart's not really in it. Can you really save the world just by going through the motions?

➤ **Key Attribute:** Apathy
➤ **Lone Wolf (Focus):** If you are supported by more characters than your partner, recover one token.
➤ **Voice of Experience (Support):** If the focus character you support has more tokens remaining than you do at the start of the scene, your support grants two dice rather than one.

3.1.4 The Traitor

You're not here to prevent the Apocalypse. Quite the opposite, in fact. It'll be a bad time if you GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT. Trouble is, you kind of don't *want* to destroy the world; it's where you keep all your stuff!

➤ **Key Attribute:** Alienation
➤ **Tell Them What They Want to Hear (Focus):** If neither you nor your partner reveals an attitude that overcomes the other's attribute, your partner rolls one extra die.
➤ **Guilty Conscience (Support):** If the focus character you support does not gain Confidence this scene, recover one token.

3.1.5 The Mascot

You're great at supporting others, but secretly you resent being taken for granted. You've never thought it might be *you* to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT, and you wouldn't be mentally prepared if you did!

➤ **Key Attribute:** Self-Loathing
➤ **Enabler (Focus):** If you and your partner reveal the same attitude, your partner rolls one extra die.
➤ **Third Wheel (Support):** If the focus character you support reveals an attitude that overcomes their partner's attribute, recover one token.

3.1.6 The Novice

You only found out about apocalypses and giant robots yesterday. They say you have that special something that's needed to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT, but surely there's been some mistake?

- ➤ **Key Attribute:** Apathy
- ➤ **Misplaced Optimism (Focus):** If you have more Confidence than your partner at the start of the scene, your partner rolls one extra die.
- ➤ **Awkward Silence (Support):** If the focus character you support spends at least two tokens, recover one token.

3.2 Your Attributes

In addition to your role, your character is defined by three attributes: Apathy, Alienation, and Self-Loathing. Each attribute represents a different mode of emotional disconnection.

Distribute nine points among the three attributes. You must place at least three points in your role's key attribute, while the other two attributes have a minimum rating of one. You may not place more than five points in any attribute.

3.2.1 Apathy

Apathy represents disconnection from your circumstances. Apathy is a key attribute for the Pro because they're so burned out, the end of the world is just another day at work for them, while the Novice is simply in denial about the seriousness of their situation. Apathy is overcome by the attitude of **Enthusiasm**.

3.2.2 Alienation

Alienation represents disconnection from other people. Alienation is a key attribute for the Traitor because they can't let people get close for fear of blowing their cover, while the Hero doesn't see any point in connecting with others because of their own impending doom. Alienation is overcome by the attitude of **Vulnerability**.

3.2.3 Self-Loathing

Self-Loathing represents disconnection from yourself. Self-Loathing is a key attribute for the Mascot because they don't value their own strength, while the Rival has the opposite problem: their expectations for themselves are unreasonably high, and they blame themselves for not living up to them. Self-Loathing is overcome by the attitude of **Empathy**.

What each attribute's opposing attitude means will be covered in the next section.

3.3 Your Damage

For each of your attributes, write down something about you that means it would be a bad idea for you to GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT.

For an attribute rated 1–2, write down something small or subjective – something that makes you *think* you shouldn't, but that isn't necessarily a big deal from anybody else's perspective. e.g., "I don't think I work hard enough to deserve it."

For an attribute rated 3–4, write down something that makes it likely to end badly for you. e.g., "I push myself so hard because I have an unacknowledged death wish."

For an attribute rated 5, write down something that just makes it objectively a bad idea for everyone concerned. e.g., "I secretly want to cleanse the world in blood and fire, and if I get in the robot I'm probably going to do it."

3.4 Finishing Touches

Come up with a name for your character, and jot down a few notes about their appearance – just enough for the other players to know who they're talking to. You can put some thought into their backstory as well, but *don't* write it down; let those details emerge as they become relevant in play.

4 Playing the Game

Play proceeds in a series of **turns**. Starting with the biggest anime fan of the group and working clockwise around the table, each player takes a single turn. A set of turns where every player has gone once comprises a **round**.

A round can represent any amount of narrative time, depending on the exact scenario your group has invented. In some scenarios, the apocalypse may be mere hours away, while in others it may be weeks out. By default, it's assumed that one round represents the passage of one day.

(These rules specifically do *not* endorse announcing "dawn of the first/ second/final day" at the start of each round, but that's not going to stop anyone, is it?)

4.1 Setup

Before the first round begins, put your sheet of paper in front of you, and place the number of tokens in each circle equal to your rating in the corresponding attribute. The number and type of tokens you possess must be publicly displayed to the other players at all times.

4.2 Your Turn

When it's your turn, carry out the following steps:

4.2.1 Select a Partner

Choose a player other than yourself. You and the player you chose are the **focus players** for this turn; the player you chose is your **partner**, and you, conversely, are theirs.

In a game with four or more players, you may not choose the same player who was chosen on the previous turn. (i.e., the same player cannot be chosen two turns in a row – though they can participate in two turns in a row if one of those turns was their own!) This restriction doesn't apply in a game with only three players.

4.2.2 Frame the Scene

Briefly frame a scene where the two of you interact. This could be a training session, a team building exercise, a beach episode, a weirdly intimate piano recital, etc. Unless it's the first turn of a new round, you can decide that the current scene is a continuation of the previous one if you wish. If you're not sure what sort of scene to frame, you can ask the other players to help you brainstorm, or roll on the tables provided in .

4.2.3 Choose Your Attitude

Pick up one of the sets of index cards, and secretly select one of the three **attitudes**. Place your chosen card face-down in front of you, so that only you know what it says; don't touch it again until these rules say so. Your partner should do the same.

The attitude of **Enthusiasm** represents engagement with the situation at hand. It's not necessarily cheerful – in-your-face aggression also qualifies as Enthusiasm. Enthusiasm overcomes the attribute of **Apathy**.

The attitude of **Vulnerability** represents a willingness to let your true feelings show. It's not necessarily pretty – a messy emotional breakdown also falls under Vulnerability. Vulnerability overcomes the attribute of **Alienation**.

The attitude of **Empathy** represents the effort to understand. It's not necessarily sympathetic – calling someone out on their bullshit is also a form of Empathy. Empathy overcomes the attribute of **Self-Loathing**.

(You can pick any attitude you want, regardless of your current attribute ratings. All characters in *Get in the Fucking Robot* are extremely good at fronting!)

4.2.4 Play it Out

Play out the established scene. Your play should be consistent with the attitude you chose in the previous step, though you're allowed to send mixed signals.

Non-focus players may insert themselves into the scene at any plausible opportunity to lend **emotional support** to one side or the other. If the scene is framed in a way that makes it implausible anyone else would be present, non-focus players may still lend emotional support by narrating quick flashbacks, imagine spots where one of the focus characters pictures what they *would* say if they were present, or similar contrivances. Keep track of who supported whom – you'll need to know in a moment.

4.2.5 Gather Dice and Spend Tokens

When the scene reaches a natural stopping point, pick up three dice. If any non-focus players lent you emotional support, pick up one additional die per player who supported you. Your partner should do the same.

You may each now spend **up to three** tokens from a single attribute (i.e., Apathy, Alienation or Self-Loathing). You may spend zero tokens if you wish. The attribute you spend from should be consistent with whatever is most holding you back this scene, but ultimately this is on the honour system. The player who framed the scene can choose whether to spend their tokens first or second.

4.2.6 Reveal Attitudes

You and your partner flip your cards face-up. If your partner's attitude overcomes the attribute you spent tokens from, those tokens are discarded without effect; play out how your partner's attitude gets to you in a way you weren't expecting.

If your attribute wasn't overcome, reduce the number of dice in your hand by the number of tokens you spent. Your dice may be reduced to zero in this way.

Discard all spent tokens.

4.2.7 Roll and Conclude

Roll your dice and total the results; your partner should do the same. If you roll zero dice, your total is zero.

The player with the highest total marks two points of Confidence. If there's a tie, each player marks one point of Confidence instead.

Conclude the scene appropriately.

4.3 Role Abilities

Each role has two abilities: a **Focus** ability, and a **Support** ability. Focus abilities only take effect when you are one of the focus characters in a scene, while support abilities take effect whenever you lend emotional support.

A role ability has a specific action or circumstance that triggers it, and one of two effects: adding dice to someone's hand, or allowing to to recover a token. While most role abilities are self-explanatory, a few clarifications are provided here:

➤ When you recover a token, you can choose which attribute's pool it goes into; however, you may not cause an attribute's pool to exceed its starting value.

➤ Recovered tokens are awarded at the *end* of the scene. You may not spend a given token on your dice roll during the same scene in which you recovered it.

➤ Some role abilities are triggered when a player reveals an attitude that overcomes (or doesn't overcome) a particular attribute. If you spent zero tokens, you have no active attribute this turn, so any abilities that would have been triggered by overcoming your attribute have no effect; however, abilities that are triggered by *not* overcoming your attribute are still fair game!

➤ If an ability asks you to compare numeric values (e.g., Confidence, total number of tokens, etc.), pay attention to exactly when the comparison occurs; some abilities compare at the start of the scene, others at the end.

➤ For the purpose of such comparisons, "more" and "less" should be construed strictly. If both values are the same, neither one is more or less than the other, so abilities with more-than/less-than wording have no effect.

5 The Endgame

The endgame phase begins when at particular set of criteria has been met. By default, this happens upon reaching the end of the third round – that is, after every player has taken three turns. The current scenario may introduce other endgame triggers.

Once the endgame has been reached, the player with the highest Confidence total GETS IN THE FUCKING ROBOT.

Using the answers noted during the Your Damage step (p. 12), collaborate as a group to describe the winner's horrible fate. If all of the winner's attributes are rated 4 or lower, it only needs to end badly for them; however, if they have any attributes rated at 5, the whole world goes down with them.

5.1 Resolving Ties

If two players are tied for the highest Confidence, play out one final scene. This scene follows all the usual rules, and other players may provide emotional support as they normally would. Whoever achieves the highest roll in this final scene GETS IN THE FUCKING ROBOT.

If the tie-breaking roll also results in a tie, it's too late: the Apocalypse has arrived while you were arguing about who should GET IN THE FUCKING ROBOT. Everybody wins!

If there's a *three*-way tie for highest Confidence going into the endgame, you're on your own.

6 Optional Rules

6.1 Social Fatigue

A problem you may might into with more tactically minded players is that when someone takes an early lead, all of the lower-scoring players may decide to gang up on them and shower them with screen time and support in order to grow that lead. If that's something your group wants to discourage, you can give the following rules a try:

➤ If this is your second scene *in a row* as a focus character, regardless of whether you received focus because it was your turn, or because another player chose you as a partner, the amount of Confidence you receive is reduced by one point, to a minimum of zero. That is, you receive one Confidence if you win, and none if you lose or tie.

➤ If this is your *third or subsequent* scene in a row as a focus character, you receive no Confidence at all, regardless of the outcome.

➤ In either case, your partner's Confidence rewards are not affected (though they might independently benefit from these rules if it's also their second or subsequent focus scene in a row).

➤ As soon as at least one scene in which you are not a focus character passes, your Confidence rewards reset to normal the next time you receive focus.

If these rules are in play, they entirely replace the regular rule that you can't be chosen as a partner two scenes in a row; like that rule, they're only appropriate for games with four or more players.

Appendix A: Random Tables

Random Scenarios

Choose or roll 1d6 on each of the following lists.

What is the nature of your group?

1. An elite fighting force with extensive conflicts of interest.
2. A scrappy band of rebels making a desperate last stand.
3. A team of conveniently colour-coded superheroes.
4. The product of unethical experiments, now your creators' last hope.
5. Ordinary people who've gotten hold of a giant robot by luck.
6. A pack of meddling kids and their talking dog.

What are you up against?

1. A planet-killing meteor.
2. An invasion fleet of brain-sucking aliens.
3. A giant monster from another dimension.
4. A wizard. From space. A *space wizard*.
5. An allegory for your shitty childhood.
6. God.

Why are you the only ones who can help?

1. No one else knows about the threat.
2. No one else believes the threat is real.
3. No one else has the resources or expertise to deal with it.
4. No one else can get there in time.
5. Everybody else who had a chance has been killed or subverted.
6. Space magic.

Why can't you deal with it right now?

1. The threat isn't here yet.
2. There's something you need to protect.
3. You've only got one shot, and your timing needs to be perfect.
4. The giant robot will only accept a worthy pilot.
5. The giant robot's batteries need to charge up.
6. For the drama.

Random Scenes

Roll 1d6 to determine a scene category, then 1d6 again to choose a specific scene type.

d6	Scene Category	d6	Scene Type
1–3	Official business	1	Giant robot combat simulation
		2	Team-building activity
		3	Hand-to-hand sparring exercise
		4	Lunch at giant robot headquarters cafeteria
		5	Performing maintenance on the giant robot
		6	Group therapy session
4–5	Unofficial business	1	Friendly outing or date
		2	Roommate drama
		3	Attending a party or concert
		4	Hitting the gym
		5	Doing something stupid to blow off steam
		6	Fight or unsanctioned duel
6	The weird stuff	1	Shared dream sequence
		2	Trauma flashback
		3	Genre shift (e.g., beach episode)
		4	Non-apocalypse-related paranormal encounter
		5	Non-canon "what if?" scenario
		6	Tabletop RPG night

Changelog

2021-01-25 – Version 0.4

➤ Cover page added.

➤ PDF edition reformatted for better viewing on tablet devices.

➤ Fixed font embedding issues.

2020-11-16 – Version 0.3

➤ Actually did a proper job of the credits and acknowledgements section (p. 5) this time around.

➤ Collapsed What You'll Need (p. 7) into a subheading of the game summary – it didn't really warrant its own chapter!

➤ Added some brief guidelines on getting started (p. 7) to the game summary.

➤ Added an Optional rules chapter (p. 18).

➤ Expanded Appendix A (p. 19) to include random scenario generation as well as random scene generation.

➤ Minor revisions to the Random Scenes table, mostly in the "weird stuff" subtable.

➤ Improvements to tag structure in PDF version.

➤ Miscellaneous typographic fixes.

2020-11-06 – Version 0.2

➤ Added a credits and acknowledgements section (p. 5).

➤ Fix an outdated reference to static token assignment by role in the setup section (p. 13).

➤ Relaxed restrictions on partner choice in three-player games, since they can lead to unplayable situations when the number of players is small (and the problem of ganging up that those restrictions are meant to address doesn't really arise with only three players anyway).

➤ Clarified that you can frame a new scene as a continuation of the previous one (unless it's the start of a new round).

➤ Added provisions for lending emotional support even if your character can't plausibly be present in a scene.

➤ Capped the number of tokens spent per turn at three to close a potential exploit of the Pro's (p. 10) Voice of Experience support ability. This also prevents a weird edge case where you're technically rolling a negative number of dice.

➤ Clarified that you're allowed to spend zero tokens if you wish.

➤ Clarified that tokens are always discarded after spending them, not just when your attribute is overcome.

➤ Completed the Random Scenes tables (p. 19).

➤ Various styling changes.

2020-11-02 — Version 0.1

➤ Initial version.