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**A game of mecha, love, and rock & roll  
by Daniel M. Perez**

# INTRODUCTION

It is the near future, some twenty-five years after the crash-landing of the alien spaceship on Earth. Banding together to form the Earth Coalition, humanity back-engineered dazzling technology from the alien wreckage, allowing the formation of the Space Navy, and its fleet of space cruisers, orbital stations, and variable mecha fighters. Enjoying some years of tranquility and global cooperation, peace has been shattered by the arrival of an alien fleet bent on invasion. Early skirmishes proved that Earth's new tech was up to the task of defending the planet, but now the battle rages closer to the home planet. It is a volatile, exciting, and dangerous stage to set our scene, but even in the midst of war, love finds a way...

**DO YOU REMEMBER ROCK?** (DYRR) is a role-playing game for a gamemaster (GM) and one to three players inspired by the popular anime featuring transformable fighter jets named after warrior-goddesses of Nordic folklore, love triangles flourishing in the middle of a war, and lots of music. In this game, players take on the roles of three iconic characters of transformable-mecha anime—the Human Pilot, the Music Idol, and the Alien Ace—and play through their emotional issues over a series of three to five scenes as war rages around them, culminating in the grand finale where the big battle happens and hearts are bared for all to see.

## SETTING THE GAME

All players agree on the aesthetics of the world. The game's default setting emulates the popular anime series of transformable fighter jets (in any of its incarnations), providing a base reference for everyone. Each player then chooses a character.

## THE CHARACTERS

There are three iconic characters to choose from, each awesome in their own right, and with their own emotional issues to resolve. These three characters are engaged in a love triangle that complicates their lives way more than the ongoing war does, and which must be resolved by the end of the game. Each player chooses one of the characters and gives them a name.

- **ALIEN ACE** - They are the best the Alien war machine has to offer, deadly with a flying mecha, dedicated to the invasion. If only those pesky Humans weren't so fascinating, their noise so enchanting, and their Music Idol so intriguing.  
**Emotional Issue:** The Alien Ace is enthralled by the Music Idol, and has a need to one-up the Human Pilot.  
**Bonus:** The Alien Ace chooses two theme songs declaring one for interactions with the Human Pilot, and one for interactions with the Music Idol.  
**Drawback:** The Alien Ace must concede any conflict in which another character uses their theme song. This drawback goes away once the Alien Ace has resolved one of their emotional issues.
- **HUMAN PILOT** - They are the hotshot pilot of a variable mecha fighter, full of passion and hormones, ready to do anything and everything for honor, duty, Earth, and love.  
**Emotional Issue:** The Human Pilot is infatuated with the Music Idol, and has a rivalry with the Alien Ace.  
**Bonus:** Whenever the Human Pilot's theme song comes up, they gain +1 Skip for the Finale.  
**Drawback:** The Human Pilot may be drawn into a conflict during any scene by another character questioning their honor, bravado, or emotions. This drawback goes away once the Human Pilot has resolved one of their emotional issues.
- **MUSIC IDOL** - They are the voice of a generation, belting out tunes that play in speakers all over, uplifting civilians and military troops alike. They are emotional, full of fire on and off the stage, doing everything on a grand scale.  
**Emotional Issue:** The Music Idol is smitten with the hotshot Human Pilot and the exotic Alien Ace alike. Their feelings could tip either way based on interactions. The Music Idol can be Human or Alien.

**Bonus:** The Music Idol has +1 Skip in every scene and may choose which song to use from all those Skipped.

**Drawback:** The Music Idol can only win a conflict if their theme song comes up. This drawback goes away once the Music Idol has resolved one of their emotional issues.

Characters that aren't chosen are played by the GM. Now all players create the Playlist.

## THE PLAYLIST

The GM (or all players in consensus) creates a playlist of 10 to 15 songs (about three songs per scene to be played). These songs constitute the series soundtrack, and lay out the tone and feel of the game. You are free to choose any songs you want, but you'll want to pick music singles with emotional oomph and cinematic bravado that fit the awesomeness of mecha anime and can speak to the emotional journey of the characters. After choosing the playlist songs, each character picks a theme song and makes a note of it on their character record. Lastly, shuffle up the Playlist and get ready to play.

## PLAYING THE GAME

A game of DYRR consists of a series of scenes bookmarked by an Opening and a Finale. The Opening scene sets the stage for the game, introduces the characters, and their emotional issues. Think of the Opening scene as a combination of the opening sequence and first few minutes of the anime, laying the foundation for the show to come.

The middle scenes (between three to five is good) develop the storyline, and set up the characters to interact with one another, giving them the opportunity to get into conflicts where their emotional issues are put to the test as the war rages around them. Each character should have at least one spotlight scene in which they are the protagonist, and along with the GM, drive the narrative to explore their emotional issue. During these spotlight scenes, other characters may appear in a supportive role. Each scene is acted out until the protagonist calls for a conflict to be resolved. The scene ends when the conflict is resolved one way or another.

Characters may earn Skips during their spotlight scenes by acting to the fullest extent of their stereotype and by playing out their emotional issue in full dramatic fashion. Skips are awarded by the GM and/or fellow players as a reward for in-genre roleplaying. This is the time to grandstand, to be a hotshot pilot, to narrate how badass a mecha warrior you are, how amazing your new single is, how fearsome you truly are, etc.

## CONFLICTS

At the heart of DYRR are the characters and their emotional issues. The variable form mecha are awesome, and you should totally be narrating to the fullest extent of the genre, but in the end, it's all about the characters trying to live normal lives and deal with regular emotions in the middle of extenuating circumstances.

The way the characters deal with their problems during a scene is through conflicts which put their emotional issues on the table, so to speak. A protagonist, with the help of the GM and any supporting characters, determines when a conflict needs to be called based on the narration and the action described. When this happens, the protagonist describes their stakes, what they want to get out of the conflict, while the GM sets the stake for any other party involved. Once stakes are set, the conflict is resolved by hitting play on the Playlist.

The protagonist hits play, and whatever song comes up is now the theme song to the scene. It is up to the protagonist and GM to negotiate in what way the song speaks to the conflict at hand, and how it resolves it, muddles it, or makes it worse. This is a very subjective moment; some songs will immediately speak to the conflict, others will require some back-and-forth. Get creative. Listen to the lyrics, feel the melody, headbang to the guitar solo, and let the song speak to you. If a protagonist character's theme song comes up, they automatically achieve their stake, though they still must narrate how and how it affects the opposing party.

If a character has Skips, they may use them to skip the song that comes up randomly on the Playlist. A player may use any number of Skips during a scene, but once used they are gone. Skips may be saved for future scenes or the Finale. Players may only use Skips to go forward on the Playlist, never back. After however many Skips are used, the player must use the last song that comes up.

For a character's emotional issue to be resolved, they must win two conflicts in which that issue is dealt with directly. Once the protagonist and GM have agreed on a resolution, the conflict ends, and the scene ending is narrated.

## THE FINALE

The Finale is the big ending of the show: the war is raging in full force, everything is on the line, and there's no place to hide your feelings. During the Finale, all characters are considered protagonists, and each gets to tackle their emotional issue head-on looking to resolve it, as well as seeking a resolution to the war around. The Finale is a time for Legends to be made, and sequels to be established.

During the Finale, each character gets an automatic +1 Skip, and they get to call for a conflict to deal with or resolve their emotional issue. This is not a time to hold back: the battle, and your emotions, are on the line! Act out to the best of your ability, be the awesome pilot, idol, or ace you know you are. Earn Skips and use them to get the best song possible. Make this the Finale your series deserves.

The Finale goes on until three conflicts have been declared and resolved, then the group narrates the ending based on those results. If any character has an unresolved emotional issue, that player could set up a possible sequel to address that particular issue. Pick a song from the Playlist to be the theme to the end credits, high-five each other, and end the game.

## OPTIONS

The basic form of DYRR can work with any kind of music, but if you want a specific feel, try building specific Playlists.

- **Do You Remember Loverboy** - The game is set in the 1980s that never were, and while full of futuristic high-tech, it's also full of neon, uniforms with big shoulder pads, and nuclear weapons. Build your Playlist using songs from Loverboy, Journey, REO Speedwagon, and other such rock bands. Make sure you throw in some rad power ballads.
- **Do You Remember Love & Rockets** - The game of emotional mecha anime with extra dark eyeliner and feelings dialed up to 11. It's a world of new wave, synthpop, and old-school goth. Build your Playlist using songs from Love & Rockets, Bauhaus, Siouxsie & the Banshees, The Smiths, (early) The Cure. Make sure you have extra black lipstick.
- **Do You Remember Compton** - Mecha + 80s gangsta rap. Boyz-n-the Hood cruising down the street in their giant robots. F\*#@ the interstellar police.

## NOTES

I threw together DYRR in like a day so that I could enter it into the Itch.io Emotional Mecha Jam. It is my little homage to Macross/Robotech (the title is a reference to the Macross movie Do You Remember Love?) and the awesome combination of transformable mecha, animated telenovela, and music. The game is untested, and the resolution mechanic of the Playlist is about as vague as you could possibly get, even if it is perfect for the theme and atmosphere. I may revise this down the line, or I may leave it as the frenziedly-written labor of love it is. I'm looking forward to playing this myself, and I'd love to hear how it goes if you play it.