



OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD



# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

BY MITCH SCHI WAL

Our Love Can't Save The World is a two-player role-playing game using a standard deck of playing cards. Together you play as two people in a failing relationship, meanwhile, the world is ending.

These are of equal importance.

You will go back and forth setting up, playing through, and resolving scenes together. Over the course of the game, you will be trying to save either the world or your relationship.

Is it worth letting the world end to save your partnership?

If the world is ending shouldn't you spend the time you have wisely?

This game makes no judgement on what you do with your limited time. Play to find out what your characters value.

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

**Safety:** This game specifically deals in two very tricky topics: relationships and existential dread. Before starting the game, please discuss with your partner any lines you do not wish to cross during the course of the game. Respect your partner's choices in any subject matter they do not wish to delve into.

There are tools created to assist in playing role playing games comfortably and safely. One I recommend is the X-Card by John Stavropoulos. Even if both players trust each other there can be comfort in providing one another with a safety net. More information on the X-Card can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/x-card-rpg>

The other safety tool I would like to share with you before beginning are Lines and Veils. Simply put they are player comfort limits written down or expressed so everyone knows where not to tread in their storytelling.

A line is a hard limit, a veto put in place before the topic ever reaches the game. A line is drawn when a topic is particularly triggering or unpleasant where interacting with it in fiction would ruin your enjoyment of the game. If someone draws a line, you do not cross it.

A veil is a softer limit. It is saying that while these topics or themes may exist in the game, as both directors and audience we do not wish to see them on screen. When a veiled topic is broached, the scene will fade to black or cut away.

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

Setup: Players should decide their character's relationship. It could be romantic, familial, or even just friendly. The important thing is that is a relationship where love is present and that it is starting to fall apart.

Players should then decide what threat the world is under, why is it coming to an end? This can be anything and will set the tone and setting for your game. The key thing to keep in mind is that whatever apocalypse you create for your game, it needs to be one that these two people have a hope of stopping on their own.

Setting up the Game:

- \*Set aside both Jokers
- \*Shuffle your deck of playing cards
- \*Cut the deck into roughly even stacks
- \*Each player will draw a hand of 5 cards from a different stack
- \*One player places a randomly places one Joker at the bottom of each stack.
- \*The other player will then place a stack of their choice on top of the other to make the play deck.

The game should now be ready to play. There should now be a well shuffled play deck with a joker on the bottom and another roughly half-way through. Each player should have a hand of 5 cards and the scenario in mind. You are all set to start playing!

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

**Theatrics:** Optionally for added effect, the author highly encourages that instead of discarding cards when prompted, destroy them.

**Play:** Before play begins both players need to know that they are unable to give any information about the cards in their hand. No values or suggestions are permitted.

Play starts with the player who most recently had their heart broken to be The Call. They will play a card face up between both players, this card may either be played from their hand or the top of the deck.

Red cards represent crisis and events in the relationship. Black cards represent threats and dangers threatening the world.



Red Suits



Black Suits

The Call will detail what is occurring in the narrative. The higher the value of the card, the more dangerous or stressful the event should be. Cards played by The Call are worth their numerical values listed, with all face cards being worth a value of 10 and aces being worth 11.

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

The players will then roleplay a scene where their characters attempt to survive or overcome the scenario.

The partner who did not play the scenario will be The Response. They will play at least one card from their hand. These cards must be the opposing color of the scenario i.e. The Response will play red cards for a black scenario and vice versa. The numerical value for cards played by The Response are worth their numerical values listed, with all face cards being worth a value of 10 and the aces being worth 1. They may play this card at any time during the scene the partners are role playing, allowing things to come to an end depending on the card they choose.

So long as the value of any cards played exceeds the numerical value of The Call's card, the partners successfully navigate the scenario. If the card(s) do not exceed the value, the partners fail.

If The Response successfully overcomes The Call's card, take that Scenario card and set it to the side. Keep any successfully completed scenario cards and keep them in two face-up stacks, one red and one black. While it is possible to keep a mental tally on your scores, players are never allowed to check these piles until the end of the game. All Response and unsuccessful scenario cards should be discarded.

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

**Disaster:** If The Response cannot play a card of the opposing color, they instead declare that the situation has become disastrous. The Call will draw a card from The Response's hand at random and play it to the situation, the played card's numerical value counting as zero. The players should play out the scene to show why it was so particularly disastrous.

Both players then draw back up to 5 cards after finishing the scene and swap roles for the next turn.

**Ending the Game:** The game ends either when a Joker is drawn or the partners decide to stop.

If the Red Joker is drawn the relationship comes to a final end. Your differences become irrevocable and absolute.

If the Black Joker is drawn the world is destroyed or its progress towards that end has become inevitable.

If either Joker was drawn, discard the pile of successfully completed scenarios that match its color (i.e discard the romantic successes if you draw the red joker). These successes no longer matter as they are past the point of salvation

# OUR LOVE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD

**Scoring:** Once the game's end has been triggered by player choice or joker and you have any remaining success piles, score them. Red and Black cards score individually, do not add up both piles. For the purpose of scoring remember that face cards are worth ten and aces are worth eleven. Once you have counted up your values, compare your score.

**40 Black - You have saved the world.**

**40 Red - You have saved your relationship.**

If players chose to end their game before reaching a Joker then they can count up both piles. This means that it is possible to reach a value of 40 for red and black, saving your love and the world. While this endstate is possible, know that pursuing mutual salvation is the most frequent path towards saving neither.

**Finale:** Knowing how successful your partners have been, play out one final scene together.