

An aerial, black and white photograph of a large, rusted metal boat wreck in a river. The boat is partially submerged and overgrown with several large, leafy trees. The water is dark and still, reflecting the sky and the surrounding trees. The top of the image shows a dense line of trees along the riverbank.

ECHO

Peace. Kids playing in mech wreckage. A ghost.
A GM-less storytelling and map-drawing game
for 3 or more players.

Photo by @emjeiamira

www.roleoverplaydead.com

ECHØ

by Role Over Play Dead (©2019), created for the Emotional Mecha Jam



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A GM-less storytelling game for 3 or more players.

A land at peace. Scars of a great war have healed over the decades. **Children** play among the wreckage of giant mechs of war. They find a ghost.

The mind of a dead mech **Pilot**, backed up in a tiny **ECHØ** drive just before death, lodged in the dirt and long forgotten. It regales them with stories of the great war that once ravaged the world.

In exchange, it asks that they reunite it with its fallen mech and final resting place.

1) PILOT: 1 player

You are a ghost. Power is failing.
You can never go home.

All that's left is to find where you fell.

Introduce yourself to the Children:

- 1) Name, unit, serial number.
- 2) Your last mission.
- 3) What you loved most about your past life, people you left behind.
- 4) Whether you came from this land, or another country, or even another planet.

2) CHILDREN: 2+ players

Introduce yourselves to the Pilot:

- 1) What are your names?
- 2) How old are you?
- 3) What were you doing when you found the **ECHØ** drive? Playing, school field trip, scavenging for scrap?
- 4) How do you know each other? Schoolmates, best friends, family, sports team?

3) WORLD

Children, teach the pilot about your world. The **ECHØ** drive can speak and hear but not see, so be their eyes. Start by making a **MAP**, marking where you found the drive. Was it a cave, a beach, an orchard?

As you describe more locations during the game, feel free to add woods, hills, rivers and lakes, coastline, towns, roads.

Choose if the world is ADVANCED or LOW-TECH. Are there windmills?

Pilot, was the world as advanced back then as it is now? Has it regressed?

4) HOME TOWN

Children, choose 1 **HOME TOWN** (or more) from the Advanced or Low-tech options, or roll a die. Mark it on the map.

Low-tech	HOME TOWN	Advanced
1	Tiny fishing boats go out from a village on a sandy coast.	
2	Lush forest where we hunt and harvest forest goods.	
3	Lonely oasis on the edge of desert or dry scrubland.	
4	Crop fields spread out as far as the eye can see.	1
5	Contented herds graze in orderly fenced pastures.	2
6	Crossroads market town, bustling with trade.	3
	Mining mechs and digging machines toil in a quarry.	4
	Towers and great halls of government and commerce.	5
	Busy port city. Many ships/spacecraft come and go.	6

What scars on the land, and on the adults, show the impact of the final war? How have they faded, how much damage remains?



Photo by @emjeiiamira



5) JOURNEY: 1 per child

Children, each of you, in turn, leads the group on a journey to a **MECH**, a mighty wreck that lies silent, disarmed, harmless.

The oldest child goes first, or decides who does.

Choose a **DESCRIPTION** and **FATE** or roll a die for each, then mark it on the map.

Any child can add details to fit the story. How large was the mech? Humanoid or bestial? Colours of the armour, if there's

any left? Thrusters, wings, specialised limbs?

Pilot, what do you remember of this mech? Friend or foe? Hero or craven? How did it meet its end? How do you feel about its final resting place?

Ask questions about the mech until you are satisfied, then say "Let's move on."

The next child takes their turn to journey to another mech, until the **FINAL MECH**.

Low-tech	DESCRIPTION	Advanced
1	Scattered wreckage across a windswept hillside or lonely field. A foot or shoulder or hand lie intact here or there.	
2	Two battered halves, blown a hundred metres apart from each other, now partly buried under sand or grass.	
3	Fallen on its side, mostly intact, overgrown with brush or vine or moss. A playground for adventurous children.	
4	Just a head and upper torso, the rest underground. A tunnel leads down into the hollowed-out wreck - someone's home?	1
5	Slumped, rusted, just offshore. Barnacles grow below the waterline. Fishermen might tie their boats to it at dusk.	2
6	Still standing, mostly upright, or leaning against a cliff or tree. Visible from far away, an imposing silhouette of war.	3
	Someone built a house around this mech. The torso acts as a load-bearing pillar. An amazing living room display.	4
	Lying in peaceful repose, like a giant sleeping Buddha statue, at a roadside. Why is it positioned like this?	5
	Bolt upright on its feet. Displayed in a public square, outside a museum, or perhaps a military academy?	6



Low-tech	FATE	Advanced
1	Idol of worship. Pilgrims come from far away to give offerings, incense, prayers.	
2	Shunned and avoided. Is this mech cursed, ill-omened or off-limits by law? Only fools and children dare to visit.	
3	Birds' droppings cover the upper portion of the mech, and children collect eggs from the nests on its shoulders.	
4	Stripped for scrap down to the frame. The heaviest and most solidly welded parts remain, lodged deep and immobile.	1
5	Adults gather here to sing, dance, tell stories. They fly a banner to indicate that a gathering is in session.	2
6	Covered in graffiti. Anti-war slogans. Colourful stripes and checkerboards, lovers' names, layer after faded layer.	3
	Tourist spot. Guides tell (totally inaccurate) tales of the mech and the war. Is it glorified or villified?	4
	Controversial wreck, a political symbol. Protesters demand its removal. Police guard it.	5
	Treasured monument. Armour cleaned, markings repainted. People leave flowers, wreaths, offerings.	6

6) FINAL MECH

The final resting place of the pilot.

Child, describe this mech, same process as above.

**Are there bones, a helmet, scraps of uniform?
Describe all that remains.**

After this scene plays out, the **ECHO** drive's power fails for the last time.

Pilot, meet your end. Stoically, or in tears. Do you approve of the world that came after? Does it sadden you? Do you wonder about loved ones you will never see again?

Children, say farewell. Provide consolation. Bear witness.

