

## Focus Questions

- When/how/why was I deactivated?
- What happened to all the people?
- Are any humans still alive? Unchanged?
- Can (should) humans be renewed/revived?
- Can I rewrite my own programs? Do I have free will?
- Do I have real feelings or are they an illusion?
- What happened to the Earth? Why is it different?
- What was my original purpose? Why was I built?
- What is will my purpose be in this new Earth?

## Scenes from 3113

- You enter a vast wasteland filled with rusting machines of war. The things there fight on.
- A giant, creature with ropy tendrils and a taste for metal lives in the swamp you must cross.
- A new source of interference causes terrible feedback loops in your sensors, effectively blinding you.
- You find a living thing with almost human intelligence deep in the jungle.
- An attempt to repair your memory triggers a rogue program that drives you to kill and/or destroy.
- A swarm engulfs you and finds a way into your plastron, where the creatures chew at your delicate parts.
- A still-active defense system protects an area that might hold humans or clues to where humans are.
- A flash flood carries you into a giant cavern system where you find mummified humans.
- You stumble into a familiar place, the recognition of which retrieves a disturbing memory.
- One of your appendages or systems seems to develop a mind of its own and no longer obeys commands.

## Quick Reference

Choose a focus question at the start of the game.

The Control narrates until it is time for ® to act, there is a question how ® will act, and the potential outcomes are risky/interesting.

Beginning with the Control and going clockwise, players play a single card face up in a line pointing away from the deck. Aces can be high or low (declare when played). Ties go to the card furthest away from the deck.

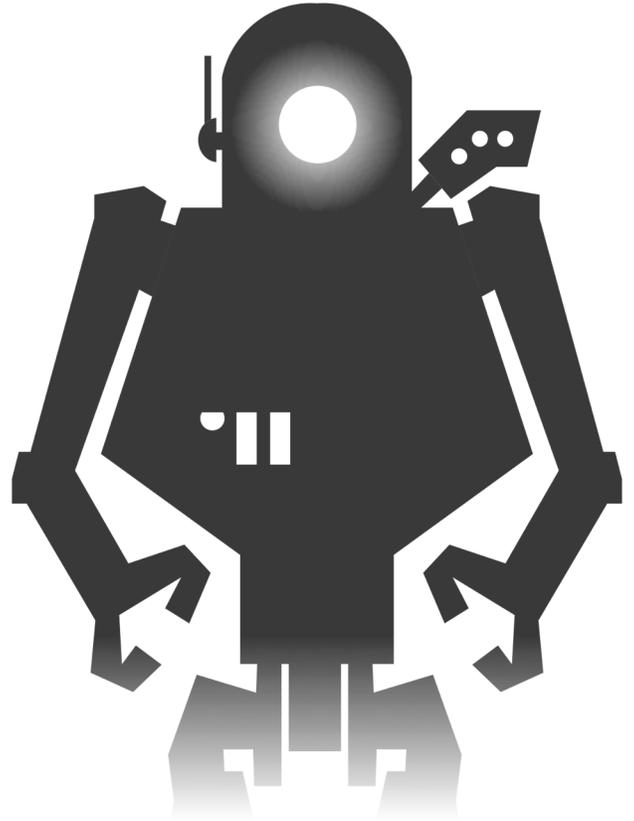
The high card sets trump and the mode in which ® will act: ♣ with Force, ♠ with Finesse, ♦ with Intelligence, ♥ with Humanity.

The low card determines the new Control, who says what happens, clears away the played cards, and then starts a new scene. If the Control incorporates something written on the trump card, everyone draws another card.

If you answer the focus question or run out of cards, end the session and each player records a key phrase on a played card.

# Rhishushima 3113

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**You are Rhishushima** (“®”) a giant robot suddenly reactivated after centuries of oblivion. All the humans are gone. The world has changed beyond recognition. Your memory is fractured. What happened to you, to the Earth, and to your creators?

**Rhishushima 3113 is a story-telling game** in which three to five players control a single giant robot in the radically changed world of 3113. Players bid with cards to decide what ®, their shared character, is capable of, how it will respond to interesting or difficult situations, and who gets to narrate the results. In each session, the group will answer an important question. A series of these question-based sessions tells the story of ® and the fate of humans. The story ends when all the questions a group cares about have been answered.

**Prepare a deck of playing cards** by sorting out the 8-10 of each suit and the Ace of hearts. With a permanent marker, draw a jagged line from one numbered corner to the other on these 13 cards. These are the *Fault* cards. On the 8 of diamonds write, “fractured memory crystals.” Also sort out the 5 of spades and clubs. On the 5 of clubs write something the group invents that ® might use when being forceful, like “sonic shout” or “tac missiles.” Similarly, on the 5 of spades write something ® might use when acting with precision, like “cutting lasers” or “x-ray vision.” Finally, write the word “Control” on one Joker and throw away the other. This card will be the *Control Token*. Then, shuffle all the non-token cards together again and begin the first session.

**The group chooses a focus question** at the beginning of each session. There is a list on the back cover; you may use, combine, break them up, or replace them with your own as you like.

The player who was most recently asleep is the first *Control*. The Control takes the token, shuffles the deck, and deals out seven cards to each player. Players may look at their cards but must keep them secret. Any player with a beginning hand of “no ace & no face” cards may show his or her hand, discard it, and draw a new hand of seven. (Then shuffle the discards back into the deck.)

**For the first session, first scene** turn over three cards and consult the suits to determine ®’s (your) initial situation.

**You wake up...**

- ♥ on an icy mountaintop, wreathed in clouds.
- ♦ at the bottom of the sea, beyond all sunlight.
- ♣ in a steamy jungle of giant fungi.
- ♠ in the middle of a scorched wasteland.

**You are...**

- ♥ connected by countless cables.
- ♦ covered in small crawling things.
- ♣ pinned under giant rocks.
- ♠ scattered, in pieces.

**The last thing you remember is...**

- ♥ looking into the dark opening of a massive building.
- ♦ a trusted human saying something “wrong” to you.
- ♣ the smell of ozone, followed by intense heat.
- ♠ staring at the night sky and emitting a piercing shriek.

**The Control begins** each scene, freely narrating cool stuff until an interesting event or conflict arises and there is some question about what ® will do or how it will react. The conflict can come at any time, and anyone can stop the narration and call for *The Bid*.

**The Bid** is a card-play mechanic that resolves how ® will act in a situation and who gets to be the next Control. Starting with the current Control and proceeding clockwise, each player bids one card face up. The first card is placed next to the deck, and each card after is placed next to the previous card in a line extending away from the deck.

The highest card sets the *Trump* suit, which determines the mode in which ® will act. The player with the lowest card becomes the new Control. Aces can be high or low, but their value must be declared when played. Ties go to the card furthest from the deck.

**The Suits** each represent a mode of action:

- ♣ **With Force.** Stomping on something, punching or kicking it, falling on it, blasting away with a weapon, shouting a sonic barrage.
- ♠ **With Finesse.** Cutting with a finger-laser, building an intricate structure, performing surgery, dodging through a still-active laser defense, handling something fragile.

♦ **With Intelligence.** Algorithmically solving a passcode, expressing logic, deducing, analyzing, interpreting sensory input.

♥ **With “Humanity.”** Arguing with passion, making a joke, simulating an emotion (or just emoting?), developing a personal preference, empathizing, validating another intelligent creature.

Note: *Humanity is tricky!* How “human” ® becomes is up to the players. ®’s programming is sophisticated and may be capable of simulating human qualities and emotions. ® may even be self-aware or “alive.”

**Once Trump and Control are set** the new Control takes the token and narrates the outcome of the scene, using the trump mode. The Control should definitely move the story forward, describing ®’s actions and all outcomes relative to it.

If the high trump is a fault, the Control must narrate at least one negative or unexpected outcome.

If the trump card has other writing on it, the Control may reincorporate the text on the card into the scene in an interesting way. If the Control does so, everyone may draw one more card (if there are enough left). After each session, players get a chance to write more stuff on the cards.

Note that success or failure in a scene is not determined by the cards, though faults always cause at least one negative outcome. The cards only determine the mode in which ® acts. Focus on narrating something interesting and moving the story forward.

**When a scene is over** the Control shoves all the played cards into a discard pile and then starts a new scene. Sometimes the next scene will naturally flow from the previous one. If it isn’t obvious, there are some ideas for scenes on the back cover. The Control may use one of those or just make one up.

Unless otherwise noted, no one draws new cards and spent cards are never shuffled back into the deck until after the session. (You’ll understand why in a second.)

When the central question for the session is answered *or* if the players have no cards in hand, the session ends.

If players run out of cards before the question is answered, the answer may remain a mystery *forever!* Or, if *all* players agree, you may revisit the question in a future session. But only one more time! Sometimes leaving a mystery is cool. When you have answered all the questions you care about, ®’s story is done.

**At the end of each session**, players take a moment to recall something memorable from the game and how they might represent it by a word or phrase. Then each chooses a card from the discard pile with an appropriate suit and writes on the card to commemorate the idea/event. Cards without writing on them must be chosen before ones with writing. Things written on non-fault cards should be positive — a capability, shining moment, or a hopeful clue. Things written on fault cards should be negative — a breakdown, setback, or hanging threat. In this way the group “seeds” ideas for future stories.

**Thanks** to my friends who took this idea seriously: Conan, Jocelyn, Clash, and Rob. Find more Ray Otus games at [www.jellysaw.com](http://www.jellysaw.com).