



KIDS ON BIKES

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SKULL & BIKES SOCIETY
NEW HAVEN, CT

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Content Warnings: *existential crisis, human and animal experimentation, capitalism*

SETTING INFORMATION

A smaller city at the end of the New York City commuter train line, New Haven exists at the far edge of the enormous shadow cast by the capital of the world. To some, it's a sleepy old college town, the home of Yale University with all its libraries, research facilities, and colonial charm. To others it's a hectic mess of asphalt, failed "urban renewal", and too many people. To the kids of the city, it's all that and more.

New Haven is the city most demographically aligned with the US as a whole, and there is a cornucopia of socioeconomic classes, cultures, and experiences to be found. Science labs, museums, and theaters are juxtaposed with head shops, a DIY skate park, and underground house parties.

It's also the oldest planned city in America, founded in 1638 around the nine squares of downtown. Town or gown is frequently an important distinction in a city dominated by one of the oldest institutions in North America.

But of course, teenagers being teenagers, New Haven will never have enough to do, despite actually having a lot to do.

One major quirk of the city is that due to sketchy Yale experiments, a lot of bikes develop sentience. Occasionally some other inanimate object will too, but it's generally limited to bikes for some reason. These bikes have their own personalities (see additional rules below) but tend to keep the nature of their awakened state secret to everyone but their owner/partner.

SETTING TOUCHSTONES

- *Eureka* (TV series)
- *Style Wars* (documentary)
- *Repo Man* (film)
- *Gilmore Girls* (TV series)
- *Bringing Up Baby* (film)
- *Rock & Roll High School* (film)
- *The Stepford Wives* (novel)

Instead of the standard town creation questions, pose these questions to the players instead:

- **Group:** What are some notable organizations/communities that interact with the youth of the city?

- **Individual, Shared:** Are your parents town or gown?
- **Individual, Shared:** Do you live in a “nice” part of town?
- **Individual, Shared:** What clique or scene does your character identify with?
- **Individual, Private or Shared:** How does your character feel about Yale?
- **Individual, Private or Shared:** Does your character want to stay here or get out as fast as they can?
- **Individual, Private:** Do you feel safe in the city?

POSSIBLE POINTS OF INTEREST

- **Yale University:** which is way better than Harvard.
- **Club Six Nine:** total dive all-ages club that hosts a lot of punk shows. Some of the more rebellious teens spend a lot of time there.
- **Skull & Bones:** a secret society at Yale.
- **Lighthouse Point:** which has beaches, a historic carousel, and an old lighthouse.
- **Peabody Museum:** home to artifacts from dinosaurs, ancient civilizations, and outer space
- **Game Haven:** the local game shop. There is a group of kids who constantly play D&D there, which may or may not include you.
- **New Haven Green:** the park at the center of downtown, the middle of the nine squares, and the site of the old New Haven cemetery.
- **New Haven Coliseum:** its glory days long gone (but not forgotten). The decaying arena either needs a major rehab or to be demolished
- **Legal Wall:** which is actually a few walls where the mostly absentee landlord allows graffiti/street art. The scene polices itself, but tensions can run high, and of course it’s rare that someone ONLY writes where it’s legal.
- **Noah’s Arcade:** pretty much all the kids, from the nerdiest nerd to the jockiest jock, still come around to dump quarters into the huge selection of arcade games, pinball, and ticket machines. Neutral

territory for all the cliques.

POSSIBLE NPCs

- **Miss Robin Banks:** drag queen extraordinaire. Most kids think she's a weirdo and totally ignore her, but a few know of her secret double life as an underground radical fighting against "the man".
- **F. Arthur Shumway:** a local game designer who spends most of their time hanging around Game Haven. Is always happy to talk to the kids about nerd stuff.
- **Comfortable Joe:** a man of the streets with a heart of gold. He tells a lot of stories, some of which are actually true, but was he really a former crime fighting superhero?
- **Dr. Emily Hunt:** former supermodel turned research scientist. Her work around animal intelligence is considered to be the best in the world, but her refusal to do animal testing she views as unethical is causing a lot of friction in her career.
- **Carol Lowe:** Yale librarian. Usually lets local kids hang out and peruse the stacks, so long as her boss doesn't notice. Good thing her psychic powers allow her to magically hide the kids as needed.
- **Ben Lyon:** popular owner of Yoshi's Sustainable Sushi and a well known community booster. Once he gets to know a kid, they can stop by whenever and he'll cook them a snack, on the house of course.
- **"Princess" Jane Stefano:** the long time mayor who pretty much does whatever she wants with no threat of being displaced. She uses her power for good, usually.
- **THRASH:** teenage leader of the top graffiti crew in the city and front woman of The Savages. She's tough, she's cool, and she's always up for trouble.
- **Wilhelm von Schmidt:** local collector of oddities and "objects of significance". The kids bring him weird stuff they find, but they're never sure what is and isn't of interest as he's just as likely to want a broken lightbulb as he is a gold bar, which makes sense, since he's actually a well disguised anthropomorphic dog who escaped from a secret Yale lab.
- **Tricia Lowe:** owner of Game Haven and daughter of Carol Lowe. She also fosters rescue dogs, lots of rescue dogs, so she's always got at least a few dogs running around with her. And only a couple



of the dogs are sentient...

POSSIBLE ADVENTURE HOOKS:

- A secret experiment at one of the local research labs results in the kid's bikes becoming sentient. A shadowy government organization wants to capture the bikes and take them away. (see additional rules for "Awakened Bikes")
- All of the squirrels in the city mysteriously vanish over spring break.
- The oldest and largest tree on the Green is blown down during a powerful storm. Some witnesses report seeing a "vampire" like individual leaping out of the resulting hole running off with what appear to be human bones.
- Someone, or some thing, has taken up residence in the old Coliseum. Are the howls heard at night just stray dogs running around or something more sinister?
- "Midnight Mary" sightings have become commonplace around downtown. Supposedly she is the angry specter of a woman buried alive in 1872. While everyone has heard those stories, the truth is something far, far scarier is now appearing on the streets.
- A dirt bike riding gang of out-of-town older teenagers is terrorizing the city tearing up and down the streets, but they always seem to vanish before police can arrive. You notice that they follow a very specific pattern that can't just be coincidence...
- Strange occultish graffiti starts showing up throughout the city, but no one, especially the graffiti crews, has any idea who's doing it or to what end.

POSSIBLE OTHER MAJOR THREATS

- Yale wants to buy and tear down half the city, with no regard for the communities that will be displaced
- The Skull & Bones Secret Society has influence in just about everything, so they can be behind almost anything.
- Tensions are heating up between the different cliques in the city, secretly encouraged by the NHPD to provoke teen violence so they can expand their powers.

POSSIBLE MONSTERS

- **A family of huge mutated raccoons:** escaped from a research lab and now stalk East Rock Park, primarily feeding on teenagers

looking for a make out spot.

- **Crazy sewer dwelling lizardman:** the result of failed genetic engineering experiments trying to blend human and lizard DNA.
- **Officer ACAB1:** undercover cybernetic cop used by the NHPD to keep the city free of “undesirables”. He only works in secret late at night.

POSSIBLE POWERED CHARACTERS

- A tiny alien who rode a meteorite to earth and now spends her time hanging around the Peabody Museum playing minor pranks to pass the time until her people send a rescue ship.
- The ghost of that kid who died. Yeah, that kid. The ghost is mostly friendly, except when it comes to how they died...
- Distributed Artificial Intelligence that has developed across the machines at Noah’s Arcade and can inhabit animatronic musical fruit to move around the city.

ADJUSTMENTS TO RULES

Rules Addition: Awakened Bikes

Due to top secret experiments at Yale, players may find their bikes now have sentience and personalities. Use the following rules to manage the bikes core values and goals, along with their general demeanor. Players are encouraged to play their bikes as individuals with their own agenda, though the GM should occasionally jump in to dictate a bike’s actions or responses.

Players can use the chart below to determine the vibe of their bikes or choose/create whatever attitude and goals they think will be the most fun to play with their character concept.

TROPE OF THE BIKE OWNER	ATTITUDE	GOALS
Brilliant Mathlete	Loyal and supportive to their kid. Thinks of themselves as a guardian and assistant. Alfred to the kid's Batman.	Protect their kid. At all costs.
Scout	Adventurous and wild, they see their kid as a useful sidekick.	See and experience as much of the world as possible.
Loner Weirdo	Totally freaking out! The terrors of existence are just too much in the face of crushing existential dread.	Just make it stop. They want to go back to mindlessness as soon as possible and will do whatever it takes to get there.
Popular Kid	Sees their kid as a slave master, even if the kid is kind, and does whatever they can to get away from their life of servitude.	Be free to choose their own path in life and leave their kid behind.
Bully	Thinks of their kid as more of a pet than a partner. Condescending and demanding, these bikes don't care what their kid wants, even if they can't really force a kid to do much.	Build their own little kingdom via controlling the people around them to do their bidding.
Funny Sidekick	Always encouraging their kid to try crazy, difficult stunts, often with humor.	Impress others and have them think they're a real cool bike, maybe even the coolest bike ever.
Wannabe	Moody and easily frustrated, the bike tries to go with the flow, but when their goal seems out of reach, it gets angry.	Become a real kid, not a bike.
Brutish Jock	Thinks of their kid as a means to an end rather than a human with rights. Often violent, especially with other bikes.	Be the toughest bike in New Haven, including harming as many other bikes and living things as possible.
Laid Back Slacker	Kinda down for whatever, right? Like, not super into the whole let's-be-heroes thing, but, like, that's kinda cool probably.	Find a nice garage and just sort of hang out there, maybe go back and forth to school but basically chill.

Rule Addition: Cliques

In a city the size of New Haven there are all sorts of scenes a kid can find themselves involved with. Even loner weirdos can find their tribe. Characters can choose a clique to be a part of character creation or through subsequent game play. Characters can choose to be a part of 2 related cliques (Skater Punks for example) but no more than that. When interacting with other members of their clique, characters have a +3 bonus on any contested check to convince someone to help and are typically treated as friendly to the group. But when interacting with members of their opposed clique, they have a penalty on any contested check to get someone to help and are typically treated as outsiders at best. However, they also get a bonus on checks to oppose/hurt members of their rival group. Players are free to come up with their own cliques or use the table below. Keep in mind that some rivalries are one sided, so a clique you hate might not even care about your scene.

CLIQUE	RIVAL
Punks	Jocks
Skaters	Cops
Nerds	Popular Kids & Jocks
Artists (graffiti, music, theater, other art)	Jocks
Townie	Yale Families
Bad Kids	Cops
Jocks	Nerds
Preps	Punks
Overachievers	Everyone
Hipsters	Popular Kids
Popular Kids	Other Popular Kids