

JACKRABBIT PAROLE



a GM-less
prison break
TTRPG

3+ players

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JACKRABBIT PAROLE

You've got a plan. But will it be enough?

Jackrabbit Parole is a GM-less, minimal prep game for 3+ players.

The Score

Well, you screwed up. Whatever you did, it was bad enough to land your ass in prison. Not just your average state-of-the-art correctional institution, either. This place is Bad News.

Parole? Don't make me laugh. This is your life now. There's no help coming for you and your fellow unfortunates. You'll shit, sleep, work and eat when and where they tell you to for the rest of your miserable existence. If you want out, there's only three paths:

Execution. Suicide. Or escape.

And since the first two don't sound too promising, all you're left with is jackrabbit parole.

The Goals

You and your fellow conspirators need to come up with a foolproof escape plan. You'll need to deal with the guards, and any other obstacles in your path. However, not all of you are going to make it out alive. One of you will be actively working against his/her fellows to secure their own happy ending. The rest of you'd better not let The Snitch ruin your plans.

Supplies

- Index cards (at least four for each player)
- Blank paper (several sheets)
- Pencils/pens (one for each person, and all should be the same color)
- One d6 (a regular six-sided die)

GAME SETUP

Choose Your Setting

Jackrabbit Parole comes with several inbuilt prison settings, in a variety of genres. Feel a little breathless? Try *Lunar Lockdown*. In for a fantasy flavor? *The Demonstone Pit* gets positively medieval. If you don't see anything you fancy, however, you can create your own setting in about half an hour, using the template from **Appendix A**.

Roll Obstacles

Every good prison escape starts with a plan. To win this game, you must collaborate with your co-conspirators to create a multipart, foolproof scheme. The number of obstacles that need to be overcome depends on the number of players.

3 players: Guards and one other obstacle

4-5 players: Guards and two other obstacles

6+ players: Guards and three other obstacles

Roll on the setting's **Obstacles Table** the requisite number of times, and write them down on an index card.

Note: after the LOCKDOWN event, you will roll for a final obstacle on the setting table

Character Creation







Step 1: The CHARACTER Card

Grab an index card and write your:

- Real name
- Prison name (evocative nickname)
- Serial number (if appropriate to the setting)
- What are you in for?
- What's waiting for you on the outside?

Step 2: Roll Relationships

Once that's done, have everyone roll a d6. The person with the highest number is handed the die. Now, they will go around the table and roll a d6 for each other character:

-  **Cellmates:** you meet in the **Cellblock**
-  **In the same gang:** you meet in the **Exercise Yard**
-  **You owe them a favor** you meet in the **Cafeteria**
-  **They owe you a favor:** you meet in the **Showers**
-  **You share a work detail:** you meet in your **Work Area**
-  **Wildcard:** choose one of the above

The next person (clockwise) will roll the d6 for everyone they don't already have a relationship with, on around the table until the last person. That person is **The Ringleader**:

Step 3: Choose a Snitch

Now, grab one blank index card for every person. Draw an X on one of them, then shuffle them together facedown. Everyone draws a card from this pile and whoever gets the X is **The Snitch**. Discard these cards or save them for the next game. (*Note: the Snitch and the Ringleader can be the same person*)

The Ringleader

Congratulations. You are the one inmate who is granted access to every area of the prison by default. You know why, but maybe that's your little secret.

The Snitch

Your job is simple: don't let them win. Weasel your way into their plans. Report to the guards. You're guaranteed a life of ease, if you play your cards right.

Step 4: The PLAN and SNITCH Cards

Finally, each player takes two more blank index cards. Write **SNITCH** on one and **PLAN** on the other. On the back of the **PLAN** card, write “G” for guards and a number for each additional obstacle.

G 1 2

(leave space underneath the numbers for notes)

Keep the **PLAN**, **SNITCH** and **CHARACTER** index cards in front of you during play. Both **PLAN** and **SNITCH** cards should remain face down to conceal their contents, while the **CHARACTER** cards stays face up as an aide during play.

ACT ONE

However bad things are for you right now, you've got a feeling they're about to get worse. Whatever. You've got two hands, a brain and nothing but time on your hands. What you don't have is someone to watch your back.

Yet.

Playing The Game:

During ACT ONE, each player will get to perform two actions from the following list.

1. Start a scene in a location they have access to, with one or more other characters who also have access to that location.
2. Check bathroom graffiti.
3. Shake someone down in the showers

These actions **do not have to be performed in turns**: Tank can rope Leer and Thumper into a short scene while Y2K chooses to check the bathroom graffiti. Just make sure that everyone in a scene knows who is starting the scene, and therefore whose action is being consumed by doing so.

Get up, move around. Go to other locations if you want to. Just mind the time limits.

The goal is to create an escape plan without the guards finding out what you are up to. Sounds simple, until you realize that they hear most of what you are saying and watch your every move. Pass notes, keep a lookout and be wary: the guards know more than they should. Are they really that much smarter than you? Or is someone feeding them information?

Also, **The Ringleader** and **The Snitch** both get to perform an additional action. Neither of you have to, but it gives you some extra flexibility. Snitch, you'd best hope that everyone else is too busy taking actions to notice how many you're taking.

1. Starting a scene:

A scene is a short, in-character chat between two or more players. During a scene, you discuss and informally vote on elements of your escape.

Choose a location, tag the people you want to talk with, and say whatever it is you need to say in five minutes or less. Others can listen join the scene only if they have access to that area as well.

Whatever you propose as a solution to one of the Obstacles should be given a unique SYMBOL as shorthand.

You may pass notes back and forth, but they must be destroyed at the end of the scene (the guards will find them otherwise).

Example:

Tank suggests neutralizing the guards by causing a prison riot to overwhelm them. He uses a dagger (†) symbol to represent this. After some debate, Leer and Thumper both agree to Tank's proposal. All three draw a dagger (†) on their PLAN index cards under the "G", and go their separate ways. The scene is over.

Restriction: scenes should be relatively brief. Give yourselves five minutes or less to get it done.

2. Bathroom Graffiti:

The Bathroom Graffiti is a single piece of paper, placed facedown in the center of the gaming area. The Guards can see bathroom graffiti during LOCKDOWN, and is the primary way for The Snitch to pass on any dirt they have on you.

If you choose to write mess with the graffiti, you have 2 minutes. You can

1. Look at the paper and then place it back as it was, face down
2. Draw one or more SYMBOLS and NUMBERS on the paper
3. Replace it with a blank sheet of paper and destroy the original. No crossing out something that is already there -- the only way to destroy bathroom graffiti is to wipe it completely.

Example:

Thumper can't access the same areas as his buddy Y2K, but he owes him a debt. With no way to communicate important plan information to him and no trusted intermediary, he takes a chance and decides to leave some cryptic bathroom graffiti for Y2K to find.

However, when he picks up the paper, he finds a curious downward-facing arrow (↓) and the number 2. Was this left for him? Regardless, it's important information. He writes the symbol down on his own card under the number 2

draws his dagger symbol (†) on the paper, replacing it facedown when he's through.

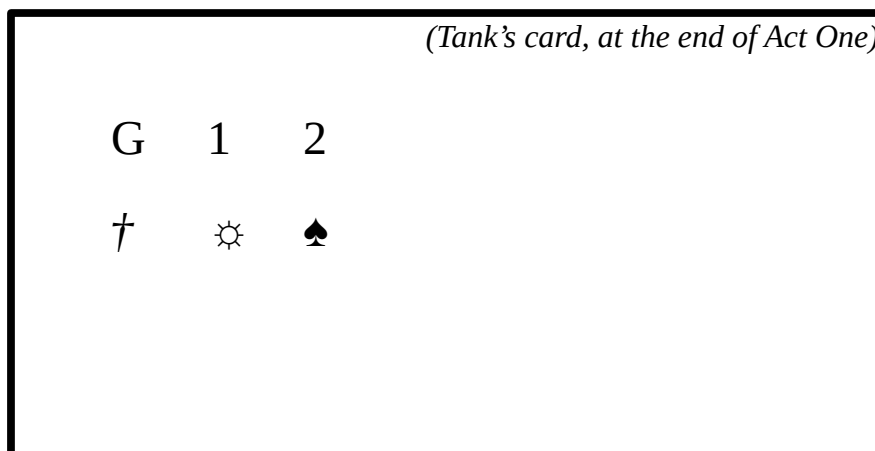
Later, Y2K comes to check the Bathroom Graffiti himself, but all he finds is a blank sheet of paper. Someone has wiped it clean.

3. Shakedown:

A short scene between you and one other player. You demand to see either their PLAN or SNITCH cards (privately), and they must show it to you. However, they can also demand to see one of your index cards in return.

Clean up:

At the end of each action, you must update both your SNITCH and PLAN cards. The SNITCH card should hold the name of the character you think is the Snitch, while the PLAN card should reflect the current state of your escape plan (as you understand it). This will be a series of symbols, labeled as in the example. When you are done, place your cards back facedown on the table (or hidden somewhere privately).

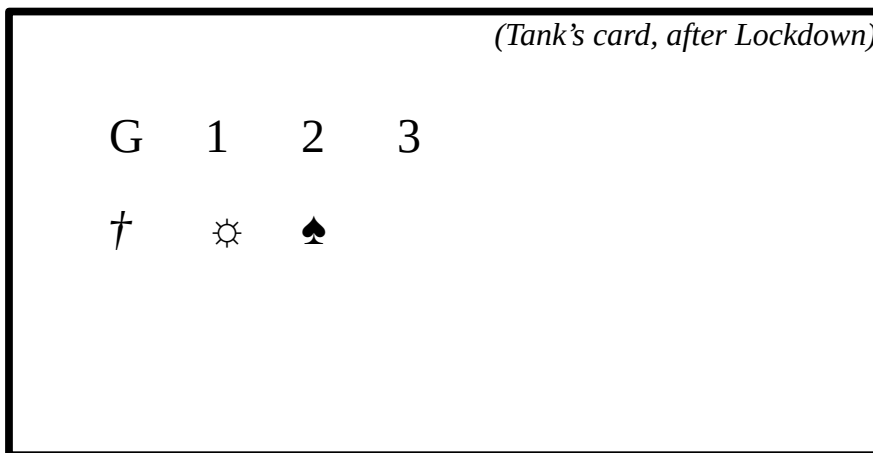


LOCKDOWN

Once every player has performed all of their actions, the prison enters a Lockdown.

1. The guards read the **Bathroom Graffiti**: (e.g. Take the bathroom graffiti sheet and put it in a safe place, face down. Put a new, blank one in its place). This will be checked at the end of the game against the final PLAN. If any parts match, there will be consequences.

2. Roll one last time on the Setting chart for a Final Obstacle. This is a new security measure introduced by the nervous prison administration. Everyone writes a new number on their index cards that will have to be filled out by the game's end.



ACT TWO

Play resumes as during ACT ONE. Once again, every player gets two actions to perform, while The Ringleader and The Snitch both get (up to) three. When everyone is out of actions (or declares themselves to be), it's time for **THE ESCAPE** phase.

THE ESCAPE

Time's up. If your plan is going to succeed, it's now or never. All you have to do is put it in motion, and crush anyone who stands in your way.

Step 1: Reveal SNITCH cards

Everyone turns over their SNITCH card. If half or more of the players choose the same person, that character is shanked (dies) before the escape begins.

Did you get it right? You won't know until later.

Step 2: Reveal PLAN cards

Everyone reveals their PLAN card. (excepting any players who were shanked in the previous step)

1. If two or more of the players have the **same** symbols in the **same** order, there is a viable escape plan. Whichever PLAN sequence has the most identical copies is now the **ESCAPE PLAN**.
 - **NOTE:** If everyone has a different PLAN, then everyone loses (including the Snitch, who provides useless information to the guards).
2. At this point, **The Snitch** reveals themselves. If they are still alive, things are about to get very complicated for everyone else.
 - **NOTE:** If The Snitch's PLAN card matches the majority PLAN, they win. The guards know all about your master plan, and all of the conspirators are executed before they can escape.

Step 3: Reveal Bathroom Graffiti

Turn over the sheet of Bathroom Graffiti confiscated during LOCKDOWN. This will come into play shortly.

Step 4: Execute the Escape Plan

The escape plan will be played out in scenes. For each phase, check the **Bathroom Graffiti** and the **Snitch's PLAN card** against the selected **Escape Plan**.

1. If one of those two symbols match the symbol on the ESCAPE PLAN, the attempt is successful but someone dies during this phase. Everyone who did **not** have the correct PLAN (e.g. any sequence of symbols that doesn't match the ESCAPE PLAN) rolls a d6: the lowest score kicks the bucket (re-roll ties). If all of those unfortunates are dead, the remaining conspirators (with the correct PLAN card), roll amongst themselves. The Snitch is exempted from any roll where his/her PLAN symbol matches the ESCAPE PLAN.
2. Repeat for every phase of the plan.
3. If at the end there are more conspirators alive than the Snitch, they shank the Snitch and escape. If there is one conspirator and one Snitch, they roll to determine who lives.

Example:

At the end of the game, everyone's PLAN cards look like this:

	G	1	2	3	
Tank:		†	☀	♠	◇
Leer:	†	☀	♠	◇	
Thumper:	†	+	♠	\$	-- SNITCH!!
Y2K:	↓	☀	+	◇	

Since Tank and Leer's PLAN cards match, their sequence is chosen as the Escape Plan.

Thumper is revealed as THE SNITCH. So, the escape plan phase plays out like this:

The characters successfully get past the guards, with the dagger gambit (prison riot). However, because Thumper was able to forewarn the guards, Y2K (the only one without the correct Escape Plan) gets caught up in the prison riot and left behind. Guess he didn't see Tank's helpful bathroom graffiti after all.

The Snitch wasn't able to divine the correct symbol for obstacle one, so that goes off without a hitch and all three players move on.

For obstacle two, however, The Snitch got the right symbol, so Leer and Tank roll a d6 to see who gets past this obstacle alive. Tank rolls a 5 to Leer's 3, so Leer takes the fall and Tank/Thumper move on.

For the final obstacle, Thumper has the wrong symbol again. This means that he and Tank roll the d6 to see if he manages to get the drop on Tank and foil the escape entirely. They both roll 5, and have to roll again. This time, Tank edges him out 4 to 3. Tank shanks the Snitch and makes jackrabbit parole.

Too bad about all of those other dead guys.

SETTINGS

Here's a small set of prison settings for your game of Jackrabbit Parole. I've covered three genres in this first release:

“The Farm”: A modern, high-security prison in Louisiana.

“Lunar Lockdown”: An experimental off-world prison set in the near future

“The Demonstone Pit”: A squalid mine run by an tyrannical empire

Appendix A also includes instructions for creating your own prison setting.

SETTING: “The Farm”

Louisiana State Penitentiary – one of the most notorious prisons in the lower 48. Home to 5,000 male inmates, over half of which are there for life, it’s also known by the cheery moniker “The Alcatraz of the South”. You’re here for the long haul, son, unless you can figure your way to a jackrabbit parole.

Areas:

Cellblock

Most prisoners live in dormitories with lovely names like Hickory, Ash and Cypress. These contain concrete floors, steel posts, and rows upon rows of beds with hospital sheets. Cheery.

Exercise Yard

You get a basketball court and a punching bag. Have fun.

Cafeteria

Rows of metal tables with benches welded to their sides. There are no corners on any of the tables and the light is so bright it hurts the eyes.

Showers

Stalls with low walls and no doors, accented by a few tiles in red and blue. The hot water even works. Most of the time.

Work Area

New prisoners pick cotton. Yes, really. If you’ve been there awhile, maybe you’re working with peppers or squash, or get to care for the horses used for field work. Yes, really.

Obstacles:



Cameras. Every modern prison has them. Everything you do is monitored, and the guards will see you coming long before you get there. Find a way to fool the eye in the sky.



Security doors. Sliding steel bars that close inmates off from administration, security and the other more sensitive areas of the prison. They also stand between you and the outside, so you’ll have to find a way through them.



Tear gas. If the guards even *think* you’re about to riot, get ready to be gassed. That is, unless you can find a way to shut it down or neutralize its effects.



Fences. Fifteen feet high, topped with barbed wire. There are gates, obviously, but they’re not opening for you.



Mounted patrols on horseback. Because there’s a lot of land to cover on this 18-acre modern plantation, and those bastards are lazy.



Guard towers. The last line of defense. They’ve got scopes, rifles and night vision goggles. Maybe you’ll get lucky and catch them sleeping on the job.

SETTING: Lunar Lockdown

Space was supposed to be cold. That's what you always thought. But deep within the underground bunker of Lunar Penal Colony 8326, it's stuffy and hot. Everything was done for cheap – shitty ventilation, shitty plastic clothing, shitty food. But Uncle Sam wants to go to Mars one day, and a lunar prison colony might just give him the tools for the job.

Areas:

Cellblock

A bank of 10ft x 10ft cells, with four bunk beds apiece. They've got you packed in tighter than sardines, and it's smells like Satan's armpit in there.

Exercise Yard

A cavernous underground room, carved directly into lunar rock. Gravity is pretty low, so you can get some impressive height when jumping.

Cafeteria

Metal tables, screwed into the rock. Fluorescent lights on a ceiling that's too low for comfort. Food that comes in tubes and pastes.

Showers

Low gravity cleanliness is a challenge, even when the water isn't floating away. Enjoy stepping into one of ten metal cylinders with a sponge and a clear plexiglass front. Vacuum pressure helps drain the stale, recycled water away from your sorry ass.

Work Area

Congratulations: you're a living test subject. Enjoy growing your own hydroponic food, running laps with weights strapped to your legs, and otherwise contributing to the frontiers of scientific research.

Obstacles:



Operations. Those guys can shut down the ventilation to any area of the prison complex. Have fun trying to riot when you can't breathe. You've got to get into Operations somehow and take them out, or shut them down remotely.



Security doors. Thick, steel-reinforced doors stand between every area of the lunar base. During an environmental or security breach, they will slide shut. You've got to find a way to open them, or prevent them from closing in the first place.



Sleepy gas. Remember those environmental controls? The vents that deliver your air can also also deliver a fun chemical cocktail that will knock your ass right out. Can you close those vents or neutralize the gas somehow?



The main airlock. This is the one entrance/exit to the lunar prison complex. It won't cycle without at least two authorized keys. Where are you gonna get those from?



The unforgiving lunar surface. This is space, dumbass. There are other lunar colonies, of course, and even a couple of joint government/corporate "space ports". But you've got to get from here to there, and it's a long walk in the cold dark. Hope you've got a space suit or something.



Get off the moon. How, exactly?

SETTING: The Demonstone Pit

Your sins offended the Emperor, and your life now belongs to him. You will toil in his mines forevermore, seeking Demonstone – a jewel more precious than life, for it amplifies the power of his magery. One gem earns you one day of rations from the guards. Spend them wisely, delver, and watch your back.

Areas:

Cellblock

A cluster of crude, hide-covered shacks huddled against the walls the Pit. The guards don't care much what you do here, or what is done to you.

At the end of the day, you and all of the other fortunates with a raw

Exercise Yard

Demonstone crowd into a giant lift that raises you to the surface. You're allowed to walk around on the grass for a few minutes while they count your stones and hand over your rations.

Cafeteria

The most common cause of death (other than crushing, cave-ins and exhaustion) is starvation. And cannibalism. But you know a small crack in the rock where you can eat in peace, perhaps with several trusted fellows.

Showers

Your one source of water is an underground waterfall, accessed by a permanent tunnel. There is a convenient shelf outcropping with wooden cups and rags, though no one much bothers with personal hygiene anymore.

Work Area

Once a day, you must descend into a crack in the bottom of the Pit and grope through the darkness, eyes straining for the faint red glow of a Demonstone node. Many don't make it back alive.

Obstacles:



The elevator. There is only one way out of The Pit, and that is the cable-powered platform that brings prisoners to the surface once a day. It had better be there when you need it.



Cannibals. They're hungry and you have food. Also, you look tasty.



Magic tattoos. Every prisoner has one. They lock down any magical talent or extraordinary skill you may otherwise have possessed, and provide a convenient focus for tracking you by imperial mages. Destroy or disable it, somehow.



The Warden. A mage specializing in air magic. He can crush you under a wall of wind or steal the breath from your lungs. You'll need to neutralize him, somehow.



The badlands. The Pit is located practically in the middle of nowhere. With no food, no water, no town for miles, you weren't just planning to *walk away* from here. Were you?



The guards' horns. Aside from sounding the alarm, the horns can also deliver a sonic attack that paralyzes anyone directly in front of the blast. The guards will pull them out at the first sign of trouble, so be ready to counter them somehow.

APPENDIX A: Creating your own setting

Write some flavor text here. Is your prison setting based on a particular time period or place? What makes it a tough nut to crack? Think of a bunch of stumbling blocks and gotchas to make your lives as interesting as possible.

Areas:

Cellblock Describe the area where your prisoners sleep.

Exercise Yard Most penal institutions provide some place for prisoners to stretch their legs. This is often “outdoors”, if applicable to your setting.

Cafeteria A place to get some grub. Possibly literal grubs, if you’re unlucky


Showers A dreaded place for many. Where a prisoner is at his most vulnerable. Guard presence is usually light.


Work Area Ain’t no such thing as a free lunch. You’re gonna be earning your keep here, Charlie.

Obstacles:


 Obstacle one

 Obstacle two

 Obstacle three

 Obstacle four

 Obstacle five

 Obstacle six