

*EXCITING ADVENTURES!*

10¢

# *DYNAMO*

*ROLEPLAYING GAME!*



***GOLDEN AGE  
SUPERHERO  
ROLEPLAYING***

**BY STEVE KELLER**



# LEARN HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN

# SUPER HERO

BEFORE YOU CAN PLAY DYNAMO, YOU NEED TO HAVE A SUPER HERO. A SUPER HERO IS A NORMAL PERSON WHO HAS GAINED SUPER POWERS. NORMAL HUMANS HAVE AN ATTACK OF 2, A DEFENSE OF 2, AND A PLUCK OF 1. YOU HAVE 10 POINTS TO SPEND TURNING YOUR NORMAL PERSON INTO A SUPER HERO THROUGH THREE STEPS -

## 1. PICK A TEMPLATE

Templates set your character's base super abilities and also give them additional attack, defense, and pluck points - These points are in addition to the base 2-2-1 that normal people have.

Templates are vague, so it's up to you to decide what the powers actually look like and how they function. Be aware that you **must** play your powers as you describe them; be careful of "ability creep" - the tendency to add new features to your powers as the game progresses.

Templates are not optional. All super characters must have a template.

<b>SUMMONER</b> <b>3</b> POINTS	HAS THE POWER TO MAKE A TYPE OF OBJECT APPEAR FROM THIN AIR. EXAMPLE ITEMS INCLUDE WEAPONS, VEHICLES, OR ARMOR. ATT +2 DEF +0 PLUCK +1	<b>SHIFTER</b> <b>3</b> POINTS	BODY OR BODY PARTS TRANSFORM. NEW FORMS CAN BE MECHANICAL, LIQUID OR GAS, OR EVEN ANIMALS. ATT +1 DEF +1 PLUCK +1
<b>BLASTER</b> <b>4</b> POINTS	CREATES WAVES, BEAMS, OR PROJECTILES MADE OF HEAT OR ENERGY TO ATTACK DISTANT TARGETS. ATT +2 DEF +1 PLUCK +1	<b>RUNNER</b> <b>4</b> POINTS	CAN MOVE SUPER-HUMANLY FAST, EITHER BY PHYSICALLY MOVING OR BY TELEPORTING SHORT DISTANCES. ATT +0 DEF +2 PLUCK +2
<b>FORCE WIELDER</b> <b>4</b> POINTS	USE FORCES LIKE GRAVITY AND MAGNETISM TO MANIPULATE OBJECTS AROUND THEM. ATT +2 DEF +0 PLUCK +2	<b>WHISPERER</b> <b>4</b> POINTS	CAN COMMAND OR ASK HELP FROM PLANTS, ANIMALS, OR MACHINES. ATT +3 DEF +0 PLUCK +1
<b>KISMET</b> <b>4</b> POINTS	HAS NO REAL SUPER POWERS, BUT EVERYTHING SEEMS TO GO THEIR WAY, OFTEN QUITE IMPROBABLY. ATT +0 DEF +0 PLUCK +4	<b>GADGETEER</b> <b>5</b> POINTS	EXCELS AT CREATING AND UTILIZING MECHANICAL DEVICES TO DO THEIR WORK FOR THEM. ATT +1 DEF +1 PLUCK +3
<b>SPECIALIST</b> <b>5</b> POINTS	USES ONE PARTICULAR WEAPON AND USES IT REALLY, REALLY WELL. ATT +2 DEF +1 PLUCK +2	<b>ROCK</b> <b>5</b> POINTS	POWER PROTECTS THEM +EITHER BY CREATING A FORCE FIELD OR BY LITERALLY CHANGING THEIR SKIN TO STONE OR METAL. ATT +1 DEF +3 PLUCK +1
<b>BRUTE</b> <b>5</b> POINTS	A PUNCHING MACHINE WITH THE AMAZING STRENGTH TO BEND BARS AND LIFT CARS. ATT +3 DEF +2 PLUCK +0	<b>BEHEMOTH</b> <b>6</b> POINTS	WHEN POWERS ARE ENGAGED, TAKES ON THE THE FORM OF A HULKING, MUSCULAR BEAST. ATT +4 DEF +2 PLUCK +0

## 2. CHOOSE A POWER VARIANT

You may also, buy one variant For your power. Variants provide a little more nuance to powers and may help you decide on a exactly how your template works and what your power is.

Power variants are not required.

	<b>Activated Power</b> Your powers must be turned on before they can be used. Regain points at twice the normal rate and gain +1 to your secret identity.		<b>Slippery</b> Sacrifice a die From any pool to escape combat. IF you do, discard your roll and ignore your opponent's roll.
	<b>Weakness</b> There's a thing that turns your powers off - completely! Gain +2 attack and watch out!		<b>Acrobatic</b> After combat has been rolled, you may choose to lose 1 attack pool die to ignore all of your opponent's attack successes.
	<b>Tough</b> Automatically gain 1 defense success each combat round.		<b>Object Based</b> Your powers only work when you are in contact with a certain object. Gain +2 pluck and don't lose that object!
	<b>Flight</b> You can fly! Gain +1 defense. You can also leave combat at any point, even if you don't have the narrative.		<b>Scraper</b> In combat against minions, every defense success you roll also gives you +1 attack success.
	<b>Faint</b> The worse the beating, the more you fight. After rolling combat, you may swap your attack and defense success totals.		<b>Recharge</b> Your power must be recharged. Begin combat with 3 extra dice of any kind, but take an extra hit each round. Recharge at 4 times the normal rate.
	<b>Regeneration</b> Each round of combat, regain 1 lost Attack or Defense die.		<b>Great Big</b> Your powers make you larger than normal people, up to three times as large. Gain +2 pluck.
	<b>Transformed</b> Your power has transformed your body completely, permanently. You may not have a secret identity. Gain +3 pluck For your misfortune.		<b>Armored</b> Your powers make you harder to hit or give you armor! Gain 2 defense successes every combat round automatically.

## CHOOSING A SECRET IDENTITY

You may also give your superhero a secret identity. A secret identity is the "normal" persona your super hero assumes when moving about in the non-super-powered world. A secret identity gives your character extra, non-super abilities to call upon during the game. For example, if your secret identity is a reporter, your character will have contacts from which they can garner information. If they are a pilot, they can fly air planes. If you choose to have a secret identity, you must place between 2 and 6 points in the secret identity's dice pool.

## SPENDING REMAINING POINTS

Once you've purchased your template and decided whether or not to have a variant or a secret identity, you may find yourself with some points left over to spend from your original 10. If this happens, you may use those points to increase your attack pool, your defense pool, or your secret identity pool.

YOU MAY NOT SPEND POINTS TO INCREASE YOUR PLUCK.

# SAMPLE CHARACTERS



## DISCO DAN

When Disco Dan gets down, his disco demolition thunder power sends bad guys flying!

**Template:** Force Wielder

**Variant:** Recharge

Att: 4 Def: 4 Pluck: 4



## CLEFT SQUAREJAW

The only thing Cleft likes more than himself is fisting evil!

**Template:** Rock

Att: 7 Def: 6 Pluck: 3



## MOIRAI

Moirai Meritumopolis is just a normal 16 year-old girl who happens to have incredibly odd luck - both good and bad.

**Template:** Kismet

**Variant:** Scrapper

Att: 2 Def: 5 Pluck: 6

## THE SILKWORM

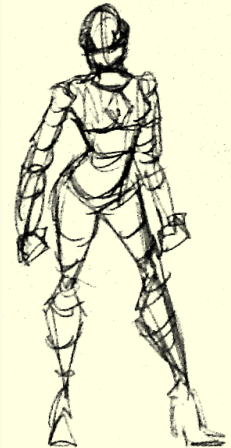
Her silky webs can trap bad guys like glue!

**Template:** Summoner

**Variant:** Acrobatic

**Secret Identity:** Ace reporter  
Bambi Mori

Att: 4 Def: 2 Pluck: 4



## NESSIE

When not running her kids to soccer games or doing the shopping, Nessie serves up a dish of haggis and whoop-ass!

**Template:** Behemoth

**Variant:** Great Big

Att: 6 Def: 4 Pluck: 4



## THE EARTHOG

This tough-as-nails Canadian dishes the damage with his deadly twin garden spades!

**Template:** Specialist

**Variant:** Regeneration

Att: 5 Def: 3 Pluck: 4



## ERIC THE RED

This bearded badass likes drinking and punching and not much else!

**Template:** Brute

Att: 8 Def: 6 Pluck: 2





## COLUMBIA DAY

Columbia strikes Fear into the hearts of evil-doers with her army of pigeons!

**Template:** Whisperer

**Variant:** Flight

Att: 5 Def: 4 Pluck: 4

## HERMLE CHIME & HERCULE

When Mile Hermle couldn't Find a best Friend, she built one! When not discussing Sartre or eating bread, these two chase down villains tout de suite!

**Template:** Gadgeteer

Att: 6 Def: 5 Pluck: 5



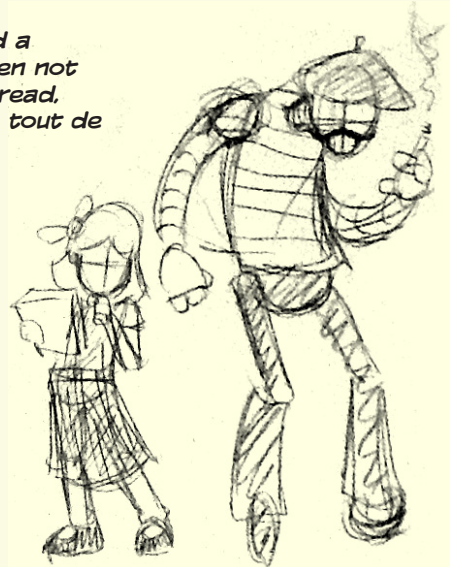
## HEDGEROW

Hedgerow, the shrubby hero, gets to the root of the problem with evil-doers!

**Template:** Shifter

**Variant:** Tough

Att: 5 Def: 6 Pluck: 3



## THE ARCHER FISH

Archer Fish can spit farther and faster than any thug can run!

**Template:** Blaster

**Variant:** Slippery

Att: 6 Def: 5 Pluck: 3



## THE RAZER KID

Villains tremble when this nameless do-gooder cruises into town on his bad pedal scooter!

**Template:** Runner

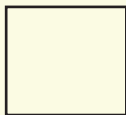
**Variant:** Object Based

Att: 4 Def: 5 Pluck: 6

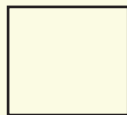


Name \_\_\_\_\_

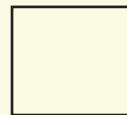
Player \_\_\_\_\_



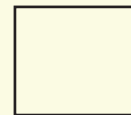
**ATTACK**



**DEFENSE**



**PLUCK**



**SECRET  
IDENTITY**

Template \_\_\_\_\_

Variant \_\_\_\_\_

# CONTROL SUPER HEROES WITH YOUR MIND!

## THE CURRENT SYSTEM

Dynamo operates on the **Current System**. Every character aspect has a score that equals the number of dice in that attribute's "pool". The dice used are special dice called Fudge dice, also known as Fate dice. These are shaped like normal 6-sided dice, but have a plus on two sides, a minus on two sides, and two sides blank instead of being numbered 1-6. When you roll your dice, every combination of + / - rolled equals one current, or one success.

Each pool's dice should be a different color to easily tell the different dice pools apart.

## PERFORMING ACTIONS

To perform an action, you simply state what it is your character is doing - **and they do it!** What needs to be determined is how successful they are.

Outside of combat, you would decide if the action is **proactive** (your character takes initiative in performing the action) or **reactive** (something happens, the character does something in response).

Next, decide what abilities the action makes use of. If the action is a proactive use of your powers, roll your attack dice and your pluck dice. If it is reactive roll your defense dice and pluck dice.

If the action makes use of your secret identity skills, regardless of proactive or reactive, roll your pluck and your secret identity dice.

If the action does not use your skills or powers, roll 2 dice and your pluck.

### Action Success Table

0 successes - desired outcome didn't happen

1 successes - desired outcome happened, but was limited in some way

2 successes - desired outcome happened exactly as hoped for

3 successes - desired outcome happened and also had an unforeseen extra benefit

## COMBAT AGAINST VILLAINS

Villains are super powered, and may be equal or better than the heroes in terms of strength and abilities. They have attack and defense stats, but no pluck, and use both when fighting.

When fighting a villain, both the hero and the villain declare how they are entering the combat round. What they don't describe is the kind of attacks they'll be making. For example, it's ok to say, "I drag the tip of my sword across the ground, shooting up sparks, as I charge at him!" But not, "I'm swing my sword at his head!"

Both sides roll all of their attack, defense, and pluck dice. Attack dice can be used to make currents only with other attack dice. Defense dice can be used only with defense. Pluck dice, however, can be added to either attack or defense to make currents, but not other pluck dice.

Each current made is one success, and each success is a hit against your opponent. Each hit does 1 point of damage to them. Each defense success blocks one of your opponent's attack successes, saving you from 1 point of damage.

## COMBAT AGAINST MINIONS

Minions may or may not have super powers, but they always attack (and fall) in groups. But no matter how many fall, there will always be more.

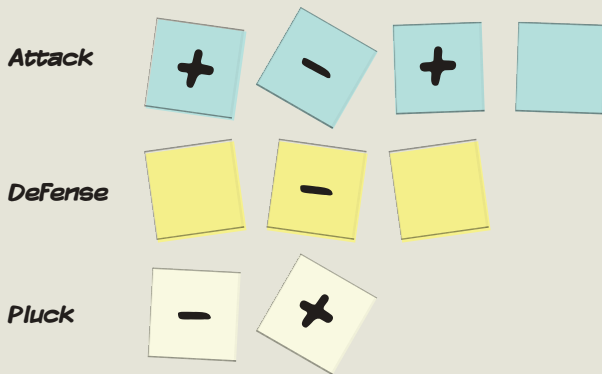
Minions only have two stats - **drive** and **fight**. Drive represents the minions' willingness and ability to continue fighting. Fight represents the number of dice they roll against each character not already in a fight with a villain (minions never get involved when the boss is fighting).

As in villain fights, players narrate how their characters are entering the current round of combat against the mooks. Players may also give their characters goals - things such as running for an object or shutting down a reactor.

Heroes roll attack and defense dice, minions only roll to make attacks with their fight dice.

Each hit against the minions reduces their drive by 1 point (minions have no defense). When drive reaches zero, the minions have either all fallen or run away.

### Sample combat roll



The above roll ends up giving the character two attack successes and one defense success. In the attack roll, there's a current just in the dice. The other + can be added to the - in the pluck dice. The other pluck die, the +, can be added to the defense - to create a defense success.

## COMBAT WITHOUT POWERS

Occasionally, players may attempt to attack without using their powers. When this happens, they may roll their pluck and defense dice, but only 3 attack dice if using a Firearm or 2 attack dice for any other sort of attack.

## ASSISTED COMBAT

There are always enough minions for characters to have plenty to fight on their own. However, at times multiple characters will choose to go up against a single villain. When this happens, they have a few options on how to proceed -

**1. Attack in Tandem** - each player takes a turn attacking the villain. as soon as one player finishes a round of combat, the next narrates how they are attacking the villain next and both the new player and villain roll combat dice.

**2. Attack Concurrently** - A character may also do something to help another during combat. Both the main attacking character and the villain roll normal combat dice. The assisting player rolls only their pluck dice. The helping character makes no attacks and takes no damage, but their pluck dice rolls can be added to the attacking character's rolls to increase attack and defense successes.

## INJURY

For every point of damage taken, characters lose 1 die from the pool of their choice.

You may choose to lose dice from your secret

identity rather than attack, defense, or pluck, however secret identity losses are **permanent** and **do not regenerate**. If you lose all of your secret identity points, your cover is blown **permanently**.

## CONTINUING THE FIGHT

Once the round of combat is over, the side that does the most damage (ties go to the players) gets to narrate how that round of fighting ends. A couple of ground rules apply -

**1. You can only end a fight early by running away.**

That means you can't narrate an attack that ends an opponent who still has dice or leave your opponent trapped or disabled, unable to fight. You also may not leave unless you win the round.

**2. You can't narrate a handicap.** You may not limit your opponent's abilities, either through grievous injury, restricting movement, or otherwise keep your opponent from fighting at their full capacity.

**3. You can regain dice by adding tension.** If your narration adds a story element that increases tension or makes things harder on the heroes (a speeding train appears in the distance heading right toward the combatants or the countdown on a bomb gets activated) you recover one free die of any pool. You may also give this recovered die to another party member. Added elements must make sense in the context of the story, and the other players may vote against it if it doesn't.

## CHARACTER DEFEAT

A hero or villain who is reduced to zero dice pool is not dead, but they are out of the fight (villains gloat over defeated heroes rather than kill them outright, and defeated villains are carted off to jail).

If any party members remain undefeated at the end of a scene, they may help defeated allies to a safe location to recover. However, if all characters have been defeated, the villain wins.

## RECOVERING DICE

At the end of a villain fight, all characters who took part in the fight and who have not been defeated recover 5 dice in any pools automatically. At the end of a fight against minions, the recovery is 3 dice.

All characters, defeated or not, recover 1 die of any pool or every 10 minutes, regardless of activity, as long as they are not fighting.

Recovered dice can only be added up to the pool's original total.



# TELLING HEROIC TALES

*Become a great Dynamo Game Master in 3 easy steps!*

- 1. Design a villain, a henchman, and minions!*
- 2. Create the villain's grand scheme!*
- 3. Plan an adventure in the standard golden age adventure Format!*

## CREATING VILLAINS

Mechanically, a villain should be about 10 points, the same as the characters. Like the characters, villains are built by spending points on templates, variations, and secret identities. However, since villains do not have a pluck stat, any pluck points gained during character creation are instead converted to attack or defense dice during the last stage!

You can, of course, spend more than 10 points on a villain, but a villain of more than 15 points will be almost impossible for a 10-point hero to defeat in combat, especially after the pluck conversion.

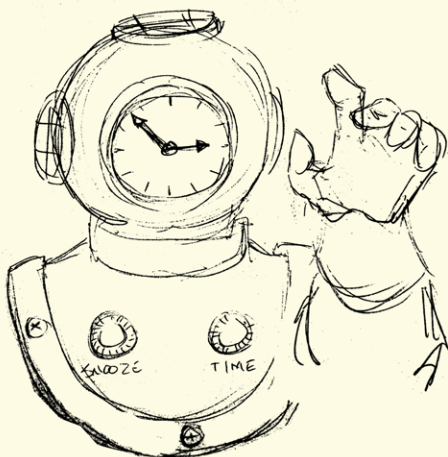
## CREATING GOOD VILLAINS

The best villains always represent the expected taken to an unexpected extreme. Start with the kind of theme you'd use for a hero, then ramp up the ego and insanity to ridiculous levels.

Suppose, for example, your villain is built on a Brute template and they call themselves El Toro. Having that villain wear a bull costume is exactly what would be expected. However, what if El Toro is a former bullfighter, one who has seen the error of his ways and now fights on behalf of Nature? He still wears his bullfighter's outfit, but now sports a pair of two foot long horns and he stamps on the ground before charging - now you've got an interesting villain.

## CREATING SIDEKICKS

A villain will always have a lieutenant to make sure their plans are carried out. This sidekick doesn't need powers or a "theme" that matches the main villain's, it's enough that they have an unwavering faith in the villain's ability to prevail.



Sidekicks are also built on around 10 points. However, a sidekick will always be less powerful than the villain they serve.

In combat, sidekicks count as villain fights.

## DESIGNING MINIONS

Unlike sidekicks, minions do need a theme that matches that of the villain - or perhaps the villain's sidekick if the minions are hired thugs and not sychophants or automatons. Although treated with endless contempt by the villain, minions will continue on in the villain's service until forced to stop.

An average minion group is 15 points, with 10 drive and 5 attack. However, if you use a second group of minions in scene 3, the second group should be slightly tougher than the first.

## VILLAIN SCHEMES

A villain's schemes must come from their own experiences. Start by asking how they view things like justice or revenge? Or tyranny or oppression? These are the things your villain wants to either overcome or become.

Suppose your villain is a hyper-intelligent toddler. A toddler's life may be filled with toys and cartoon characters, but it's also filled with enforced naps and bed times, high chairs and strained peas, and diapers. It's possible a super villain toddler would try to rid the world of sleep in order to be free of nap time forever without considering the impact that would have on others.

## DESIGNING ADVENTURES

Comic book adventures are simple things, and can be reduced to three "scenes".

**1. The Introduction** - Introduce the characters to the story by starting them in action. If they're part of an agency, have them receive a mission from their handler. If they're not together yet, give them each a reason for going to the same place at the same time. The important thing here is that the characters are given a task that seems important but only exists to get them to the right place at the right time to end up in the middle of an attack by the villain's minions. If the villain puts in an appearance here it will be fleeting; they will not stick around long enough to be in any danger from the heroes. The minions, however, have a mission, and whatever that mission is, it's one of the final stages of the villain's secret plan.

The heroes should have reason enough to fight against the minions, possibly even thwarting their goal. Whatever the outcome, the heroes should be



# VILLAIN MOTIVATIONS

All villains are, at heart, driven sociopaths who will stop at nothing to achieve their goals. What makes one villain different from another is their reasoning. There are basically five types of super villain motivations -

**1. The Rejected** - Picked on as a kid, rejected by a parent figure, or pushed aside by society in general. This type of villain doesn't need to kill the heroes to win, they just want to "show" those who rejected them that they are too powerful to reject now. Their schemes are grand because they are, at their heart, attention getters. Particularly narcissistic villains may even believe that what they're doing is on behalf of other downtrodden souls just like them.

**2. The Hero's Past** - Something the hero did in the past took something from this person that was very dear to them, leaving them with nothing but hatred and pain. As a villain, they will do increasingly destructive things to get the hero's attention, with the ultimate goal to hurt the hero in a similar fashion.

**3. The Hero's Reflection** - If the city's main hero is someone who fights crime with a belt full of elaborate toys, nobody should be surprised that his nemesis is some clown who does evil with his own toys. This type of villain is exactly like the heroes in every way minus any drive to do good. They don't commit evil for personal gain; as the heroes became heroes because they have the power to, this villain does evil because they can.

**4. The Lost** - Some villains have no humanity - it's been taken or lost, maybe supplanted by another personality, or they've just gone completely insane. Or maybe they had no humanity to begin with. Either way, they have a dedication to a "higher" purpose or larger entity outside of the scope of humanity; any cost in human tragedy is entirely as incidental. A variation of this type of villain is the Idealist who is convinced that only they, in their higher, enlightened form or mind, can save the world from itself and if a few eggs have to be broken in the process so be it.

**5. The Egotist** - And, yes, there's the super villain who just wants it all - total conquest of the city, country, world, or beyond. This villain rarely, however, launches head-on attacks. Instead, their schemes are often intended to prove their superiority to cow governments into submission. Their flaw is that almost every scheme is overthought and made unnecessarily complex just to account for every contingency.

left with a motivation to find out who's behind the attack and what they're up to.

Excluding the opening, this entire first scene is run in reaction to the minions' attack. That means that all of the action will be the characters reacting to what the minions are doing.

**2. Investigation** - the characters now begin turning ears and bending elbows to find out who the villain is and what they want. They'll quickly climb their way up an information chain until they eventually have a possible name for the villain and collect a few clues about the other elements in the villain's plan (already completed, of course, as the villain starts the game almost victorious). They might even get a glimpse of the villain's lair, or at least find out where it's located.

They're also more likely to be discovered by the villain's second in command the more noise they make while investigating. This might even lead to a confrontation with the villain's lieutenant.

From this second scene on, the action of the game should change to the non-player characters reacting to the actions of the player characters. Let the players drive the story and simply invent whatever NPCs, locations or clues are required to move the characters' actions forward.

Most importantly - remember that the game starts when the villain's plan is almost complete. Don't hide what the villain has already accomplished. This is information the characters should find relatively easily because the more they learn about what's already been done the less they'll be able to guess about why.

It's also invaluable to listen to the players as they try to figure things out. Sometimes, they'll give you a better idea than you had originally. Don't be afraid to use incorporate their ideas into the game if they're better than what you've got planned.

**3. Confrontation** - The characters have now located the villain and put together a fair idea about what they're up to. The villain now gives their speech about why they're doing it.

The characters and villain clash. The villain should be dangerous, but the major threat here should be the mechanisms of their scheme. The villain, and any minions they may have left, should serve only to delay or prevent the characters from stopping it.

