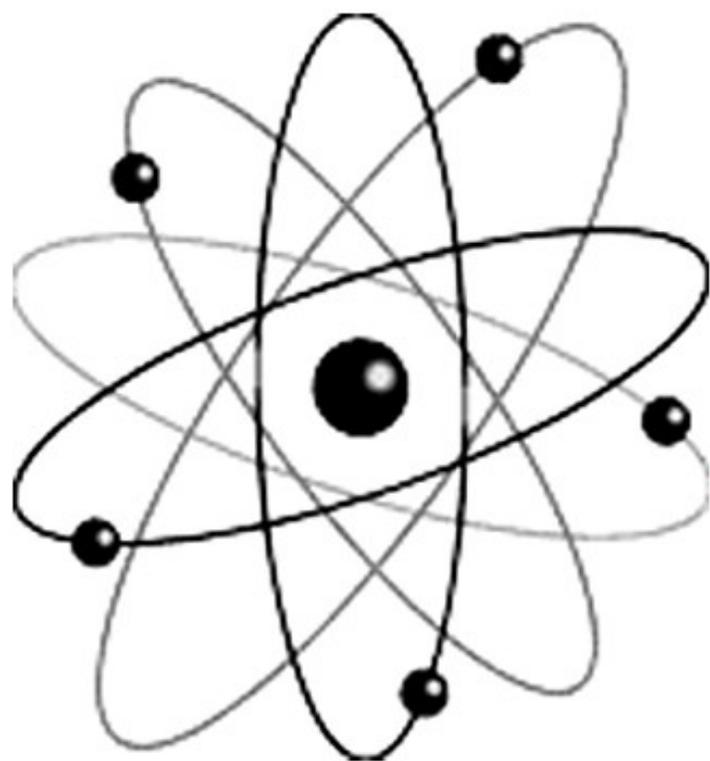


# MAD SCIENCE BOYS



# MAD SCIENCE BOYS

*A roleplaying game of genius, social awkwardness and SCIENCE!,  
an entry for the "[a tro challenge] my game-fu is stronger than yours"  
Game Chef style contest.*

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## INGREDIENTS USED

Rules (1)

\* A game mechanic that is specifically tied to the setting.

Setting (1)

\* Events revolving around the Secret War and/or its aftermath.

Phrases (2)

\* Unrest

\* Cloning

Theme: Build stuff. Fight monsters. Get the girl. FORWARD SCIENCE!

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## What You Need To Play

All you need to play *Mad Science Boys* is:

- \* A copy of the *Mad Science Boys* rules (this document)
- \* A twelve-sided die (d12) for each player
- \* Pencils or pens
- \* A character sheet for each player (the last page of this document)
- \* Your imagination

## FOREWORD

This game is about Mad Science Boys. They're like the flipside of Magical Girls. They share a lot in common with Magical Girls -- yearnings for romance, amazing powers, secret identities. But when you turn "magic" upside down, you get "science" (in this case *mad* science), and the opposite of girls are, of course, boys.

That does not mean that every word here has to be taken as male-exclusive. Not in the slightest! Anybody can play ***Mad Science Boys***. You can just as easily play a Mad Science Girl, too, and some Mad Science Boys might just have a *boy* of their dreams instead of a girl. You could even go all-out and play a Mad Science Girl who prefers her own sex. It's all in what you feel like playing. The game just lays out one basic way of doing things; you can change whatever you want. Wherever the text says "Boy" or "he", just read "your character".

This game is meant for fun and action, not deep, meaningful pathos. Mad Science Boys can get emotional, but it's always played for effect, and not a serious explanation of the human psyche. (Unless you really want to do it that way, of course!) The game is written in a way that assumes you have played a tabletop roleplaying game before and don't need to be told what RPGs are and do.

And so, without further ado, we begin...

## ANATOMY OF A MAD SCIENCE BOY

You've always been a supergenius.

From the day you figured out that those things waving in front of your face were your own hands, you realized you had command of the secrets of the universe. When most kids were crawling, you were taking apart the kitchen appliances and putting them back together better than they were before. By pre-school you were already reading science journals.

Then came kindergarten, and you realized that normal kids were completely different. They didn't want to be around you because you talked funny. You were too smart and you made them look bad.

It only gets worse from there.

Maybe you're at the start of your career, or maybe you're navigating the rocks and shoals of middle school, when girls and boys really start to differentiate and you just stay scrawny. Or maybe you've even made it into high school, and while everyone else is dating and driving and generally getting ready to settle into boring adult roles for the rest of their lives, you're spending your nights burning the midnight, 2 AM and 4 AM oil feverishly trying to save their worthless hides.

No matter how old you are, you have to deal with the fact that you just don't fit in, and kids don't like kids who are different. You can think of it as training for fighting real evil, or you can think of it as proof that humanity isn't nearly as noble as it thinks it is, but you're going to be a target for people with a lot more muscles than brains.

Maybe you've resisted the temptation of selfish evil and decided that it's your lot to give of yourself no matter what. Maybe you've removed yourself from moral consideration and decided you will do what you must for your own reasons. Or maybe you've given in, and you see them all as obstacles and tools... all except one, that is.

Regardless, there is one thing above all that, the one thing that gives you solace and power: science!

You breathe physics. You eat quantum chromodynamics with your breakfast. You could run CERN without even being there. Nothing in your family's possession ever stays broken, because you can fix it in your sleep. Everything you look at, you see as potential for a greater invention. If it weren't for the need for secrecy, you'd have turned your family's car into a nuclear-powered world-cruiser. The internet? You could design a computer to contain it all. If it weren't for the fact that your parents continually check to see if you're doing your homework and your household chores, you'd already have built a robot to handle all that.

College? Forget it. You could teach university *professors* all new tricks. Your destiny is much greater.

You slog through all this, knowing that it has to change at some point. Either you're going to rule the world, or you're at least going to become a legal adult some day and move out. Until such time, you have to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, while taking arms against a totally different sea of troubles.

The world needs you, though it doesn't know this yet.

## THE GIRL OF YOUR DREAMS

Like it or not, you're a human being, and that means you desire companionship. You have one true weak point, and she barely notices you... mostly because you cower in terror whenever she's around.

The girl of your dreams is an angel descended from heaven. She is perfect in every way, and can do no wrong. "Dreams" here is both literal and figurative -- she represents the summation of ideal womanhood to you, but you also see her every time you close your eyes. Her name is a divine song, and if anyone hurt her, you'd... you'd...

You just can't stop screwing things up, though. Even if you do overcome your fear and try to talk to her, your tongue betrays you. Every time you fail the worst, she's to be there watching. And when she does notice you and invite you to spend time with her... something always goes wrong.

She's the girl of your dreams, but she's also your worst nightmare. You just would never admit that second part.

## WILD BOYS...?

In a perfect world, a Mad Science Boy would have free rein. He would have a perfect laboratory, an adoring public and no demands on his time except his own. It doesn't work that way, however. Mad Science Boys are still legally required to attend school. They must complete their assignments, no matter how boring, and pass all their tests, no matter how inane. They must be in by a certain time and they most certainly must do what their parents tell them.

No matter how they try, even the most well-intentioned Mad Science Boys get in trouble. You can't fight the invaders without leaving the house. You have to field-test your gadgets. You need to sleep *some* time. You have more important concerns than your parents or the police can ever understand -- you *must* break the rules sometimes. You've developed a reputation as being self-centered and heedless, whether you are or not, and it works against you every time you get caught in a compromising position.

## TRUE EVIL

Even if you're a cackling villain in your spare time, you want to rule the world, not destroy it. No, the real danger comes from the invaders.

The aliens.

Some time in the last year you noticed figures of authority behaving strangely. (More strangely than usual, that is.) Your Phys. Ed. teacher became even more militant about your participation. Your history teacher started spouting nonsense. Your math teacher decided to start focusing on how you would use math in jobs. Your mind quickly latched on to the peculiarities, and you decided to perform a few... tests. The results confirmed it -- somehow these people had been replaced by look-alikes, and they bore the marks of strange technology you had never seen before.

Other Mad Science Boys noticed at about the same time. Long-standing rivalries ground to a halt almost immediately as the scope of the threat was realized. This was happening in a lot of places, and it was spreading. It wasn't long before somebody put forward the theory that there was alien influence at work. Like a true scientist, you tested this theory, and the data you gathered seemed to confirm it. There was a secret invasion afoot!

There's no way the authorities would believe you. The authorities might already have been replaced by these weird clones. You even have to keep looking over your shoulder at your own parents!

When the first Boys took the fight to the *really* bad guys, you cheered, and decided to join the fight. If they could do it, so could you. This is your world, either as one of humanity or as its destined sole ruler, and you're not going to just let them take it.

So far you've only had tantalizing glimpses of who the aliens are and what they're doing. The invaders work through multiple levels of henchmen, slaves and fronts. They prefer clones to mind-control, since mind-control can be broken. They go after adults in positions of power, not kids or people with no influence. Their plan seems to be to gain control, and after that, who knows what?

You've gotten a look at their technology -- clone pods, energy-suckers, nanite-manufacturing. Everything they do is aimed at getting control of people and using them. You've even learned a few things to apply to your own inventions.

How do you fight them? You track down their resources, their projects and their minions, and put paid to them. People in your town talk about the disappearances, the accidents, how everything seems so uncertain now, but you know what's causing it. How do you find them? You know what to look for, now. Strange business

transactions, people behaving oddly, sudden shifts in politics or trends. People in power have their own desires and aims, and when they get bent to the aliens' will, it shows if you look closely.

So far no alien ships or monsters have dropped out of the sky in broad daylight, but you privately believe that it won't be long. This secret war might not stay secret for very long, and when that happens, you'll be ready.

## COVER STORY

You don't operate as your true self. If you did, you'd be finished the first time you were seen with a backpack nuclear accelerator. No, your mundane troubles come to you when you're yourself, during the day and before and after operations. But when you're out there, when you're doing the thing you were born to do... you've got a different identity. You wear a costume, and you use a code name.

Face it, it's fun to dress up in a cool costume and call yourself Doctor Magnificent or Professor Danger. When you take it to the foe, when you pose in the moonlight and deliver that devastating, courage-breaking speech to your enemy, you rise above your mundane self and become something truly amazing. You bask in the mystique generated by the wonderment of those few who witness your battles. You hear rumors about your other self circulating around school, and for a moment you can feel the glory... before you have to duck and cover again.

Imagine what ordinary people would do if they found out the Boy was a supergenius with a fantastic laboratory in his basement. They'd want all kinds of things. People would want to control him. The police and government would come after him for all sorts of crimes. The aliens would be all over him in minutes.

So it is that Mad Science Boys don't talk about their work to others. They don't show off their Inventions to the mundanes. They hide their activities behind costumes and code names. Maybe some day soon, the Boys will be able to cut loose, but right now there's a war on; loose lips sink ships, and all that rot!

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

So what does the world look like to a Mad Science Boy?

Let's examine a typical school day. He gets up in the morning, either because his alarm goes off, his parents shout for him, or he never went to sleep the previous night thanks to his new Invention. Depending on his age or how willing his parents are to accept weirdness, he might pound half a pot of coffee to get moving. He gets dressed like everybody else. Well, maybe not like everybody else, but he does try to blend in the best he can.

Then the problems begin. Perhaps the Boy is driven to school by his parents, and gets one last bit of reprieve on the way. Or maybe he walks to school, or rides the bus, and collides with his so-called "peers". Sometimes this is when the taunts begin. Sometimes the Boy gets lucky and it's a quiet morning. Sometimes he catches a glimpse of *her* and his heart does a double backflip with a twist.

One way or another the Mad Science Boy arrives at school and another day of tedium begins. He already *knows* everything the teachers spout. Much of the Boy's classtime is spent daydreaming, working on a problem in his head, or sleeping. He can pass tests without even looking at the paper most of the time. At least once a week, the Boy has to deal with the dreaded Physical Education class -- Gym. Depending on his school, the Boy may be forced to endure the indignity of class showers. He definitely has to deal with being forced to participate in activities he has no interest in, such as basketball, "touch" football, running and so on. He's always the last one to be picked, but he *is* picked.

Throughout the day, the Mad Science Boy is the target of the occasional taunt or verbal slam. Sometimes it gets worse, especially when the teacher's can't see. Every so often the Boy finds himself accosted by a physically more powerful student, or even a group, and comes out on the other side with bruises, torn clothing, scattered class materials and a fuming rage.

Some Boys have to maintain their fictional covers by participating in extracurricular activities, but most escape the confines of school and immediately break for home. It's another opportunity for insults and drubbings, but most of the time the Boy makes it home all right. If he has no homework, he can head straight for his lab. Otherwise it's time for more tedium, making sure his parents see that he's behaving "normally".

Once that's taken care of, it's quality time. Free of his onerous responsibilities, the Mad Science Boy can finally indulge his passions. If he does leave his lab, it's probably to obtain materials and information, to maintain his relationships with his allies, or to test something in the field. Even Mad Science Boys need fresh air sometimes, though, and unless he's got a neighborhood bully, it's usually safe in the immediate area of home.

Evenings belong to the Boy, and so does the night. He'll have to fool his parents into thinking he's gone to bed, and usually wait for them to turn in as well, before he can return to his lab for uninterrupted work -- or

head out to do battle with the alien menace. Sometimes, though, especially after a really hard day, it's nice to just curl up, doze off and leave the world for a while.

This is just the bare framework of a typical day in the life of a Mad Science Boy. What makes the game so much fun is when the day becomes extraordinary, and something happens, for good or ill.

# BUILDING A MAD SCIENCE BOY

To build your character for *Mad Science Boys*, just follow these simple steps:

- 1.) Determine the character's Background, Name, Code Name and Costume.
- 2.) Determine Orientation: Heroic, Neutral or Villainous.
- 3.) Determine Age Category: Elementary, Middle or High Schooler.
- 4.) Distribute 40 points among Attributes and Assets.
- 5.) Apply Attribute and Asset modifications for Orientation and Age Category.
- 6.) Describe the girl of your dreams.
- 7.) Describe your laboratory.
- 8.) Describe up to three Goals.

## BACKGROUND

Mad Science Boys is a game about characters. Characters have stories. What's yours? Depending on your chosen Age Category you might only have six or seven years to fill out, but there's a lot of story in even that. How did you awaken to your potential? What was your first invention? How did you learn about the alien menace? Who are your parents and teachers?

## ORIENTATIONS

These are the general moral attitudes a Mad Science Boy can have. Choose one.

### HEROIC

Despite the pressure, despite the insults, despite your inability to deal with average people on something resembling a normal level, you still believe the human race is worth fighting for. You do your best not to cause harm, and you are genuinely concerned with the welfare of other people. You fight because you believe it's the right thing to do for everyone. Heroic Mad Science Boys receive +1 Spine and +1 Allies.

### NEUTRAL

You are more concerned with science than people. You generally don't want people to be harmed, but if there's a chance you could discover something new, people would do well to get out of your way. You fight because it helps you develop your abilities, and because the aliens want to hurt you personally. Neutral Mad Science Boys receive +1 Creativity and +1 Resources.

### VILLAINOUS

People are fools, sheep to be led and tools to be used. You are the most important thing in your world, and science is how you prove it to everyone. You don't care who gets hurt -- except that one special girl you can't seem to stop dreaming about. You fight because it's *your* world they're trying to take! Villainous Mad Science Boys receive +1 Oratory and +1 Laboratory.

## AGE CATEGORIES

As a Mad Science Boy ages, things change. Decide how old you are.

### ELEMENTARY SCHOOLER

Kindergarten through the fourth grade in most places, generally ages 5 through 9. People tend to trust these young children, giving them the benefit of the doubt, and the world hasn't ground them down quite yet. Elementary Schooler Mad Science Boys receive +1 to Oratory and +1 to Allies for being able to use their cuteness.

### MIDDLE SCHOOLER

Grades five through eight in most places, generally ages 10 to 13. This is where kids get vicious, and the Mad Science Boy has to be both quick on his feet and devious to survive. It is here where the Mad Science Boy will also start to turn inward, focusing more on his equipment. Middle Schooler Mad Science Boys receive

+1 to Creativity and +1 to Laboratory.

### HIGH SCHOOLER

Grades nine through twelve in most places, generally ages 14 to 17. This is when the Mad Science Boy comes into his glory, for good or ill. Confronted by know-it-all adolescents and the expectations adults place upon him, the Mad Science Boy must fight to be true to himself, or crack under the strain. High Schooler Mad Science Boys receive +1 to Spine and +1 to Resources.

## ATTRIBUTES

Attributes are the innate abilities of your character that *differ* from other Mad Science Boys. They cover three important areas of your life and relation to both science and your mission to stop the alien menace. Attributes change only slowly over time, through the expenditure of experience.

### CREATIVITY

All Mad Science Boys are geniuses. This attribute measures how well the Boy can tap into his vision and realize it. Creativity is used whenever the Boy wants to make something, come up with a new use for an existing object to further his progress, or scheme up a plan.

*Sample uses for Creativity:* Finalizing your plans for the Solartron 5000 solar-powered two-wheeler. Figuring out how a hose, a brick and a coat hanger can be used to lift you over a wall. Finding a way to apply the Dimensional Warp Blaster to getting across town in time to save the day.

*You may not use Creativity to:* Paint a picture. Compose a song. Write a fiction book. Etc.

### ORATORY

All Mad Science Boys have trouble talking to normal people -- the public, the girls of their dreams. This attribute measures how well the Boy can overcome this impediment when the chips are down. Oratory is used whenever the Boy wants to make a speech to avoid trouble, explain his ideas to a clueless normal, or berate his enemy.

*Sample uses for Oratory:* Confusing a bully long enough for you to get away. Evading a grounding when you get caught sneaking back into the house at 2 AM after kicking alien butt. Wheedling parts out of the mean old junkyard owner or the director of the government research lab.

*You may not use Oratory to:* Sing karaoke. Perform in the school play. Talk to the girl of your dreams in anything other than a stutter, blather or embarrassing ramble. Etc.

### SPINE

All Mad Science Boys fall firmly on the "brains" side of "brains and brawn". This attribute measures the Boy's courage to fight despite his physical weakness, and to remain dedicated to his cause.

*Sample uses for Spine:* Holding it together in the face of yet another failure in your lab. Remembering that you have to fight the aliens tonight when you've finally been invited to a party where the girl of your dreams will be. Continuing your work after having your eye blackened and your glasses broken... again.

*You may not use Spine to:* Go skydiving for pure pleasure. Work up the courage to ask the girl of your dreams on a date. Etc.

## ASSETS

Assets measure things external to the Mad Science Boy. They are things he can use, and use up. Assets may be bought, sold, traded, gained and lost with regularity, and while their current ratings are sometimes rolled against in the same way as Attributes, they are much more variable.

### LABORATORY

This is where you practice your craft. It represents the size and security of your lab, as well as your available tools and materials. The higher the number, the better and more secure the lab. One Boy may let another use his Laboratory, but two Mad Science Boys may not share a single lab.

Laboratory points are spent to create Inventions. They are regained through roleplay and expenditure of Resources or experience.

## RESOURCES

Not your materials, but your ability to get more when you need them. The higher the number, the more places you can get stuff, the more stuff you can get, and the more esoteric -- or dangerous -- stuff you can obtain. Boys may be able to obtain materials from the same sources.

Resources points are spent to buy materials (regaining Laboratory), to obtain materials for bribery or other monetary applications. Resources are regained through roleplay or expenditure of Allies and experience.

## ALLIES

People who understand your work and want to help, or even people who don't understand or know what you're doing but like you and are willing to cover for you. The higher the number, the more people who are willing to help out and the more help you can get. Boys may have the same allies without realizing it.

Allies are spent to get the Mad Science Boy out of hot water through intervention, or to help the Boy locate Resources. Allies may be regained through roleplay, monetary application of Resources, or experience.

Attributes and Assets are given a number ranging from 1 to 12. Rolls are made against the Attribute or Asset's value with a d12. If the number rolled is lower than or equal to the Attribute or Asset's value, the roll is a success. The higher the number rolled, the better the success, so long as the number does not exceed the value of the Attribute or Asset. See *Mechanics* (page 11) for more information.

Attributes and Assets are sometimes rolled against in tandem. A roll is made against each and the totals of each roll are added together. Failures on either the Attribute or Asset roll count as zero (0). A great success with one may make up for a poor success or failure with the other.

## GOALS

Aside from someday winning the girl of his dreams, and saving or ruling the Earth, every Mad Science Boy has goals. Things he wants to achieve. Things he wants to acquire. Things he wants to do.

Goals are more than just character fluff. If a Mad Science Boy can achieve a Goal he has listed on his character sheet, he earns extra experience; see *Experience* (page 16) for more information.

A starting Mad Science Boy can list up to three Goals. Appropriate Goals include the defeat of a certain non-minion enemy, capturing a certain device, attainment of a certain position or thing for the Boy or someone he cares about, and so on. A Goal should require significant roleplay and in-story progress to achieve.

When a Boy achieves one of his listed Goals, he immediately receives experience points for that Goal. Each Goal is rated from one (1) to six (6). Goals with higher ratings are more difficult to achieve than those with lower ratings. Once the Boy achieves his Goal, he receives experience points equal to the Goal's rating. The Goal is erased from his character sheet and the player may add a new Goal of any rating.

Goals may specifically not include the girl of the Boy's dreams. She is an utter weakness. Winning her love has its own rewards.

# MECHANICS

## DICELESS...

*Mad Science Boys* uses simple diceless resolution for most actions. Mad Science Boys are all alike in many ways. They are all supergeniuses, meaning they will easily succeed in any task which requires their intellect. They are all focused on their minds much more than their bodies, which means that they will struggle in any task that requires physical might and prowess. They are all socially awkward, which means that they will have difficulty dealing with normal people... especially that one special girl.

Mad Science Boys do have varied interests other than science, but these do not usually have direct bearing on the game's focus. You can say that your Boy loves rock music, can name all the hottest bands and quote all their lyrics, but that won't help you against evil aliens, and when it comes to the girl of your dreams, your brain just shuts off.

For any action not directly involving science and inventions, the player can simply describe what his or her Mad Science Boy is trying to do, and based on the general traits all Boys share, or on the Boy's personal interests, the gamemaster will decide the outcome. Dealing with normal life is less a matter of dice rolls and more a matter of creative roleplaying. The needs of the story, common sense and the guidelines of what Mad Science Boys are good and bad at will direct most of the action.

When the chips are down, however, and the Boy must perform an action related directly to science and his mission, the drama and uncertainty of dice come into play. Pleading with your parents not to ground you, three sleepless nights of ceaseless toil in your lab, ignoring the taunting of sports jocks so that you can keep your mind on your goal... these are when rolls are made.

Assets are used in similar ways, but not completely the same. For some actions, you will make a roll against your current rating in an asset. Points spent from your asset's rating are lost only after the roll is made, not before. Other times, you may spend an Asset to make something happen, such as spending points from Allies to get out of a scrape.

## ...AND DICED

*Mad Science Boys* uses a "blackjack" rolling system for diced actions. A single twelve-sided die (a d12, or 1d12) is rolled and compared to the rating of one of the Boy's Attributes or Assets. This is a "roll" or a "check". If the number rolled is less than or equal to the rating, the roll is a success. The catch here is that the higher you roll, the better your total is, much like playing a hand of blackjack. If you roll over the rating, you fail -- a "bust".

The average roll of a d12 is 6.5, so a successful roll of 6 or 7 means you complete a task in "average" time, have "average" effect, and so on. Lower successful rolls take more time and accomplish less. Higher successful rolls take less time and accomplish more.

*Example:* Doctor Midnight, a fourth-grade Mad Science Boy, is trying to get past a locked door into the school's office to get access to personnel files, and all he has available are a paper clip and a wire pipe cleaner. The GM asks Doctor Midnight's player to roll a die against the Boy's creativity.

Doctor Midnight's creativity is 7. The die rolls a 5, which is less than 7 but not spectacularly high. The Boy turns the paper clip and pipe cleaner into an impromptu lockpick and eventually opens the door. Had the die rolled a 7, that would be the best result Doctor Midnight could get, and since it's a bit higher, the door would open a bit faster. If the roll had been a 9, however, that would be a failure. The door would not open, and the clip or pipe cleaner might have broken.

When both an Attribute and an Asset are rolled against at the same time, called a "combined roll" or "combined check", the procedure is a little different. When this is being done, the total of the successes is more important than pure failure and success. These rules will give examples of when such combined rolls are made; one such example is the Creativity and Laboratory roll used to make Inventions.

Here's how to do a combined check. The player rolls a d12 against the Attribute, and another one (or the same die, rolled a second time) against the Asset. The successes of both rolls are added together. Failure on an individual roll (rolling above the Attribute or Asset's rating) count as 0. If the combined rolls equal or *exceed* a total given by the GM or the rules for a specific action, the Boy succeeds.

*Example:* Doctor Midnight is attempting to explain to his parents, with the assistance of a friendly neighbor who sometimes covers for the Boy, why he was out so late this evening. He spins a story about watching for a satellite passing overhead. The GM calls for a combined Oratory and Allies roll, since the grandfatherly neighbor is pitching in to keep the Boy out of hot water. The GM has decided the total the player needs to succeed and have the parents believe the story is 8 or better.

Doctor Midnight has an Oratory of 8 and an Allies of 6. His player rolls a d12 against Oratory and gets a 3. His player rolls the die again, against Allies, and gets a 6! These are added together to make 9. The Boy's parents buy the story and ignore the scrapes and bruises the Boy tried so desperately to hide.

If Doctor Midnight's player had rolled a 7 against Oratory and a 10 against Allies, the Allies check would be a failure. Zero (0) would be added to the 7 of the successful Oratory roll. Though the Boy's impassioned speech about wonder and astronomy would have made his parents swell with pride, it wouldn't be enough to keep him from getting busted!

## USING WHAT YOU GOT

As previously mentioned, Assets are "spendable". They can be used in ways that change their ratings, or the ratings of other Assets. For example, Laboratory is most often spent on Inventions. Resources points are spent when the Boy attempts to locate new materials to refresh or increase his Laboratory rating. Allies are spent when the Boy calls in or incurs a favor. Specifically:

**Laboratory** points are spent whenever the Boy uses his existing tools and resources. They may also be traded from one player to another; the giving Boy loses a number of Laboratory rating points, and the receiving Boy gains the same number. A Boy may cannibalize a discovered device, or lay claim to existing resources if he can make off with them, raising his Laboratory rating by the point value of the device or materials. Finally, a Boy may let another Boy use his lab. The Laboratory points lost either by failure or success are deducted from the Laboratory rating of the Boy who owns the lab.

**Resources** points are spent whenever the Mad Science Boy goes looking for specific items, calling various sources and using favors to get access to things no young man has a right having access to. Component makers, material sellers, tool manufacturers -- these are all covered abstractly by Resources points. Resources may be given from one player to another to represent the Boy tipping another Boy off about a particular source. Since the other Boy will be using that Source, the first Boy will lose access to its capacity until it is reacquired in another trade. Lastly, Resources points may be spent to "buy" allies, through bribery, gifts and so on.

Resources points spent to regain Laboratory points are traded on a one-for-one basis. The Resources points are lost immediately. The Laboratory points are not gained until the next day when the new stuff becomes available.

Resources points spent to gain Allies points are also traded on a one-for-one basis, but the Allies points are gained immediately.

**Allies** points represent an abstraction of people willing to aid the Mad Science Boy in various ways: running off bullies, providing cover stories with the Boy's parents or teachers, and so on. These points are spent by the player to invoke help, either resolving a diceless situation in moderate favor of the Mad Science Boy or turning a diced situation into a combined check. They can also be spent to recharge the Boy's Resources rating, meaning the Boy has tapped information sources to locate something special.

Allies points spent to regain Resources are traded on a one-for-one basis. The Allies points are lost immediately. The Resources points are not gained until the next day.

Obviously, it is possible for a Boy to shuffle his Asset points about in many ways. The drawback is that doing so takes time for most cases.

Regaining Asset points through roleplaying involves the Boy seeking out what he needs and gaining it through interaction. The player tells the GM what the Boy is looking for and how he is going about trying to get it, then handles the consequences and swerves the GM puts in his path. This can add depth to the story being told, but can also take a great deal of time. When speed of play is not a major concern, however, roleplaying Asset manipulation can be especially rewarding.

## BUILDING WHAT YOU USE

Inventions are at the core of what Mad Science Boys are all about. An Invention can be or do anything the Boy can imagine, so long as he has the proper materials and the vision to build it.

Inventions are rated in three categories: Power, Control and Endurance.

### *POWER*

The impact of the Invention. If it's a weapon, this is its ability to overcome or damage the enemy. If it's a tool, this is how useful the tool is.

### *CONTROL*

How accurately or thoroughly the Invention can deliver its intended effect. Low Control means erratic behavior that can have unintended side-effects.

### *ENDURANCE*

A measure of how resilient the Invention is. This can be armor, fuel, time or some other measure of "lasting".

When a Mad Science Boy creates an invention, he first designs it with its full intended capabilities. The player decides the Invention's desired ratings in Power, Control and Endurance. These are then added together to become the Project Target Number.

To actually work on an Invention, the Boy's player makes a series of checks. Each check involves a roll against the Boy's Creativity and a roll against the boy's current Laboratory rating. A check represents one day's (or night's) work on the Invention.

If both rolls succeed on the first check, the scores of both rolls are added together. If that total meets or exceeds the Project Target Number, the Boy is successful in building his Invention. If the total is less than the PTN, the Boy must continue working if he wishes to complete the Invention. Another check is made, representing another day's (or night's) work. If both of these rolls succeed, the scores are added to the previous total, and the new total is compared to the PTN.

Once the check total matches or beats the PTN and the Invention is complete, subtract the total number of days spent working from the Boy's current Laboratory rating. If the Boy aborted the project, the Invention remains incomplete and the Boy may continue it at any time he has the resources and desire to do so, but he still loses Laboratory equal to the days invested.

If at any time a roll fails, the Boy has suffered a disastrous setback, and cannot complete the Invention as it is currently designed. The Boy's player must make an immediate roll against Spine, treating his Spine rating as if it were one lower for every day spent working after the first. If this roll succeeds, the Boy may cannibalize his failed Invention, and loses no Laboratory. If the roll fails, the Invention is so much scrap and the materials are lost. The Boy's Laboratory rating is reduced by one for every day spent working on the Invention.

## BENCHMARKS

An Invention's numeric ratings mean something. Examples of the Power and Endurance ratings from real-world and popular science fiction objects include:

**Power 1:** A good bicycle, a dull knife, white school glue

**Power 3:** A modern PC, a solid and trustworthy car, epoxy adhesive, good handcuffs, a Swiss Army Knife

**Power 6:** Short-range light matter teleportation, an adhesive as strong as industrial welding, binding cords as strong as bridge cables, an iPhone, a MagLev train

**Power 9:** The Blue Gene supercomputer, the Large Hadron Collider, a fusion power plant

**Power 12:** An antimatter power plant, a cloning tank, a planet-girdling AI network

**Endurance 1:** A gallon of gas in a lawnmower, a leather jacket, an average laptop battery.

**Endurance 3:** A bulletproof vest, a D-cell battery

**Endurance 6:** An armored car, a self-winding watch, IBM Model M keyboard.

**Endurance 9:** Tank armor; an everburning lightbulb

**Endurance 12:** A nuclear supercarrier, unbreakable solar panels

Ideally, the player and GM will work together to determine what a given usefulness, strength, resilience or longevity mean in terms of ratings.

Control rating benchmarks can be given as follows:

**Control 1:** Using the device is hazardous to bystanders and the user himself. It can barely be controlled.

**Control 3:** The device will sometimes do what the designer wants, but accidents happen.

**Control 6:** The device functions as intended most of the time. Accidents are rare.

**Control 9:** The device functions marvelously. Accidents or glitches are unheard of.

**Control 12:** The device functions so well it practically operates itself. Accidents and glitches are pretty much impossible even when damaged.

These ratings and comparisons allow the Boy and the GM to figure out what the Invention can and cannot do. See *Using What You Make* (page 15) for more information.

## FIXING INVENTIONS

Inventions break. It's a fact of life as a Mad Science Boy. You can repair and tinker with normal devices without breaking a sweat, but your own Inventions are vastly more complex and require the tools and materials available in your lab.

Repairing an Invention is a simple process. The player of the Boy attempting to repair an Invention makes combined Creativity and Laboratory checks, the same as if he were in the process of building the Invention. The Project Target Number is equal to the total number of points of Power, Control and Endurance that the Boy wishes to restore to the Invention. As with creation rolls, each check represents one day's work. One point of Power, Control or Endurance is restored for every 1 point of the successful check.

When the PTN is met or exceeded, the device is completely repaired. The Boy spends a number of Laboratory points equal to the days spent working.

If the Boy wishes to completely repair the device, he must continue working on repairs until the PTN is met. If the boy decides to stop at any time, to avoid catastrophic failure, the Invention's new maximum Power, Control and Endurance are permanently reduced to the current totals and Laboratory points are spent as normal. If the Boy wishes to then increase the ratings later, he must move on to tweaking.

If at any time a repair roll fails, the device cannot be repaired with the materials and tools the Boy currently has. The device is reduced to the Power, Control and Endurance it had before the Boy tried to fix it. The boy loses Laboratory points equal the days spent working. The Boy cannot try to repair that particular Invention again until he gains at least one point of Laboratory, representing new materials and tools.

## TWEAKING INVENTIONS

Tweaking is a different process from creation and repair of Inventions. Every system, every piece, every possible side effect must be considered when the boy tinkers with an existing device. It is something that is done over the course of one day's (or night's) work. In game terms, it allows the Mad Science Boy to increase the Power, Control or Endurance of an Invention by one, for one period of work.

Before the Boy can make a roll to actually tweak the device, however, he must first make a Spine check to steel himself for what is to come. Tweaking can be quite dangerous. If the Boy fails the Spine check, he turns aside from the task for the day (or night) and can only come back to it the following day.

If the Boy succeeds with the Spine check, he may tweak the Invention. The required Project Target Number is equal to the total of the Invention's Power, Control and Endurance, plus one -- the more complex an Invention already is, the harder it gets to enhance it even further!

The Boy's player makes a combined Creativity and Laboratory roll. If the roll's total meets or exceeds the PTN, the Boy has successfully tweaked the Invention and may add one to either its Power, Control or Endurance. The Boy loses one point from his Laboratory rating.

If the roll is successful, but does not meet the PTN, the Boy must make another Spine check to continue. This Spine check is made before each combined Creativity and Laboratory roll, as the Mad Science Boy gathers his courage for further work. If the Boy fails the Spine check at any time, or decides to stop, he backs off from what he was doing and the Invention is left as it was. The Boy loses no points from Laboratory.

If any Creativity or Laboratory roll fails, at any time, the Boy makes a critical error and the device is

utterly ruined. No Laboratory points are lost.

## DOCTOR... WHO?

You know somebody's going to try it.

The one thing *Mad Science Boys* advises against letting players do is building time travel devices. While time travel is an exciting possibility, it also is a nightmare to adjudicate, and once one player's Boy does it, they'll all want to do it. The GM is advised to make time travel impossible, at least on purpose. Time travel accidents could make for an interesting side story, but great care must be taken with the consequences of such a journey.

## USING WHAT YOU MAKE

The point of Inventions is to make things easier for the Mad Science Boy. They are his tools and his weapons. Inventions do not affect the Boy's personal abilities, so non-weapon tools affect the diceless portions of play most often. Weapon inventions, however, factor directly into the most exciting portions of a game of *Mad Science Boys* -- rumbling with the alien menace.

A tool's ratings in Power, Control and Endurance should give the Boy's player and the gamemaster an idea of what the Invention can accomplish. A Boy can use an Invention in ways it was not originally intended through Creativity rolls, but in the main, it's all in how the Boy's player describes the tool's usage and the GM's decision on what the results will be.

Weapon inventions (which include defenses) use their Power, Control and Endurance in combat. A Mad Science Boy can't fight without Inventions -- he has no combat training with real guns, for example. If the Inventions a Boy is using to fight the aliens are broken, the Boy risks being defeated and captured, becoming a slave to the evil powers forevermore.

## FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

The final and perhaps most important consideration of *Mad Science Boys* is combat against the invading aliens and their minions. Using their superscience inventions against brainwashed jocks, cloned cops and soldiers, robotic terrors and timebombs is what Mad Science Boys are ultimately all about.

Combat in *Mad Science Boys* combines both diceless and diced mechanics. There are no "rounds" or constructed segments. The Gamemaster asks each Boy's player what their Boys will do. Once this question is answered, the Gamemaster narrates the results, based on common sense, drama and the Inventions the Boys are using. When a Boy performs the action desired by his player, or if circumstances change, the GM will simply ask the player, "What next?"

The important things to remember are the innate capabilities of Mad Science Boys, their need for secrecy, and the consequences of the things they do. Blasting bad guys with super heat rays is all well and good, but what if those bad guys are only brainwashed, and not replacement clones? Is the Boy willing to commit and handle the consequences of what the law would call murder? And what about collateral damage to buildings, cars and property? Boys must be very careful indeed, especially as their Inventions get more powerful.

No Mad Science Boy remains unharmed forever, no matter how well he fights. Depending on what happens, the Boy could be injured, or his Inventions could be damaged. Invention Endurance will help withstand damage, depending on how high the rating is. Armor Inventions especially take the damage from hits instead of their inventors. Boys themselves are merely human in stamina, however, and not as resilient as many. If something should happen to them, they will suffer bruises, cuts, broken bones, bleeding and possibly -- in the most extreme cases -- unconsciousness or even death. *Mad Science Boys* is supposed to be played for fun, so the worst that usually happens to a Boy is he blacks out and wakes up at home or an Ally's house, hurting but otherwise okay. However, those wishing for more serious games can include more realistic consequences if they wish.

Teamwork between Boys can overcome obstacles a single Boy with even powerful Inventions might not be able to defeat. One Boy using his Ultrabond Restraint Web to hold down an enemy while a second lets loose with his Hypersonic Blaster on it is much more effective than either might be alone. Despite their ambitions, even Heroic and Villainous Boys can work together against a mutual enemy -- and the aliens and their minions are certainly that.

Dice are used only in certain situations. If the Boy's player wishes to use an Invention in a way it was not originally intended, he has to make a Creativity roll for his Boy. When the tide turns against the Boys and all

looks hopeless, the Boys will make Spine checks to see if they stick it out or flee for their lives. If they wish to demoralize their enemies with brilliant and blistering speeches, they must make Oratory checks; success means the enemies will react more with fear and awe than they would ordinarily. Boys can also inspire one another with Oratory checks; one Boy may make such a check and, if successful, encourage another Boy to greater success.

Ultimately, combat in *Mad Science Boys* should be fast, furious and fun. GMs and players are encouraged to use their *own* creativity at all times.

## EDGE CASES AND JUDGEMENT CALLS

This document can't cover everything, even as general as some of its rules and advice are. The GM is encouraged to make a decision any time a question arises, and everyone playing can talk about it later. Creative use of Attributes, Assets and Inventions is not just recommended, it's the essence of the game.

## EXPERIENCE

Like everyone, Mad Science Boys grow, learn and change over time. These life lessons are represented by experience points.

Boys earn experience from defeating enemies, uncovering alien plots, making new and more powerful inventions, and achieving Goals. These are what matters to a Mad Science Boy, and increase his power. Experience point awards will be up to the Gamemaster for the most part. Some guidelines are:

**+1 point:** Uncovering a new alien plot in your town, defeating a minor alien minion, creating an all-new Invention with a PTN of 15 or more, achieving a one-point Goal.

**+3 points:** Uncovering an alien plot that threatens a major city, defeating a significant alien minion, creating an all-new Invention with a PTN of 21 or more, achieving a three-point Goal.

**+6 points:** Defeating a major and powerful alien minion, uncovering a plot that threatens the Eastern Seaboard, creating an all-new Invention with a PTN of 27 or more, achieving a six-point Goal.

Experience points are spent to increase Attributes and Assets, and can also be spent to give a maximum success on a roll. The cost to raise Attributes and Assets is as follows:

**Attributes:** Current rating x5

**Assets:** Current rating x4

An Attribute or Asset may only be raised by one point at a time. The Boy must wait a number of sessions equal to the new rating of the Attribute or Asset before raising it again. The Boy may raise another Attribute or Asset in that time if he has the experience points to spend.

On any roll against an Attribute or Asset, the Mad Science Boy's player may spend a number of experience points equal to the Attribute or Asset in question. This guarantees a maximum success. This may be done for either portion of a combined roll, but not both.

## LOVE, EXCITING AND NEW

Overcoming all the obstacles, beating all the odds and finally winning the heart of the girl of your dreams is beyond a mere experience award. For a Mad Science Boy, it is to touch heaven.

It's also something that requires effort to maintain.

If, after significant roleplay and story development, the Mad Science Boy is able to attain the love of his special girl, several things happen. First, the Boy experiences a change in his ability to relate to normal people. With her help, he becomes better able to speak with and understand average folks, with commensurate greater success in his attempts to deal with them.

Second, the boy gains his strongest Ally of all. At no time will his Allies Asset drop below 6. He may not trade, sell or otherwise voluntarily drop Allies below that rating. While a girlfriend might not be able to do everything, a properly-treated one will always be willing to try.

Third, the girl becomes a time investment. A relationship requires work, and the Boy will need to remember that. He will need to show the girl proper affection, which includes paying attention to her and not his lab every so often.

Lastly, the Boy's new girlfriend becomes a target. Those who want to harm the Mad Science Boy will

attempt to harm, use or kidnap her. If she is kidnapped, the Boy must attempt to rescue her at all costs. If she is harmed, he will be able to think of nothing but protecting her, possibly driving her to distraction. If she is threatened, the Boy will want to go after the varlots immediately. All these things are expected. If the Boy behaves differently, acting as if the girl doesn't matter, he may just lose his girlfriend and the benefits she brings.

In addition, if the Boy ever mistreats her, ignores her, uses her, lies to her and is discovered, cheats on her (somehow) or hurts her in some other major way, the Boy will of course suffer the consequences of an irate girlfriend and likely a breakup.

***FIN***

# MAD SCIENCE BOYS

Name:  
Age Category:  
Orientation:  
Background

Code Name:  
Costume:

The Girl of Your Dreams

## Statistics

Creativity

Laboratory

Oratory

Resources

Spine

Allies

## Inventions

Name:  
Power:  
Control:  
Endurance:

Description:

Name:  
Power:  
Control:  
Endurance:

Description:

Name:  
Power:  
Control:  
Endurance:

Description: