

# ATOMICROBO

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME



**BRIAN  
CLEVINGER**

**MIKE  
OLSON**

**SCOTT  
WEGENER**

# ACTION! SCIENCE! ROBOTS! PUNCHING! MORE SCIENCE!

Are you ready for some **two-fisted science adventure**? Then it's time for the **Atomic Robo RPG**! Have you ever wanted to face down **global conspiracy** as an **immortal atomic robot** or **Carl Sagan**? The Atomic Robo RPG makes it possible.

The **Atomic Robo RPG** brings you the most explosive **Fate Core System** experience yet. This is **action science** like you've never seen it before, coming straight at you from the pages of the popular **Atomic Robo** comics by Brian Clevinger and Scott Wegener. Play as an Action Scientist or immortal robot, super-spy or pulp adventurer—or something stranger still from the hidden corners of super-science!

This is **multi-era, pick-up-and-play** gaming at its best: **get playing in ten minutes**, or take your time and make the most of **behind-the-scenes rules** for added **depth**. Hop into your Tesladyne jet and **travel the globe** in one time period, or battle **across the decades** as a cast of **scientifically talented** adventurers. **Face down demented dinosaurs**, **rogue government agents**, and **stolen Tesla-powered technologies**!

**Are you Action Scientist material?** Grab your gear and get ready for full-contact, high-octane, explosive **hypothesis testing**!

**REMAIN CALM. TRUST IN SCIENCE. THE ATOMIC ROBO RPG IS HERE!**



# FATE

CORE SYSTEM

EVIL HAT  
PRODUCTIONS



# ATOMIC ROBO

## THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

LEAD DEVELOPER & WRITER

*Mike Olson*

EDITING AND LAYOUT

*Jeremy Keller and Adam Jury*

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

*Brian Clevinger, Brian Engard, and Morgan Ellis*

ATOMIC ROBO COMIC CREATION

*Brian Clevinger, Scott Wegener, and Lee Black*

ART

*Scott Wegener*

PROOFREADER

*John Adamus*

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

*Fred Hicks*

MARKETING MANAGER

*Carrie Harris*

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

*Chris Hanrahan*

PROJECT MANAGER

*Sean Nittner*

BASED ON THE FATE CORE SYSTEM BY

*Leonard Balsera, Ryan Macklin, Brian Engard,  
Mike Olson, Fred Hicks, and Rob Donoghue*



**EVIL HAT**  
PRODUCTIONS



## SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to everyone who played and play-tested *Atomic Robo* at Big Bad Con, Dice House Games, Emerald City Comic Con, Gam3rcon, GenCon, Hammercon, Hyphen-Con, Labyrinth Games & Puzzles, NerdNYC, NerdSoCal, Origins Game Fair, San Diego Comic-Con, Strategicon, Villainous Lair Gaming, and Wasaubicon.

Equally special thanks to David S. Goodwin, for letting us use his Fate Triangle on pages 192 and 198.

Exponentially more-special thanks to my wife Jill, for her tireless support, and our sons, Ben and Will, for just being two great kids.

—MIKE

## PLAYTESTERS

Evil Hat Productions would like to thank our Action Playtesters!

### **Convention Playtest GMing Team:**

Andy Blanchard, Kristine Chester, Chris Czerniak, Morgan Ellis, Erik Frankhouse, Adam Rinehart, Judy Thomas.

Epic RPG Blog Crew (Ron Tilton, Sean Tilton, Ian Tilton), The Fandible.com Crew (Jesus Rodriguez, William Coffing, Angela Craft, David Donnelly, Daniel Rodriguez); David Wright + the gamers @ DWARF; The Thursday Knights; John Powell and Zoe Powell; Jeff Gondeck, Mark Miller, Mason Miller, Robert Lundgren; Ben McKenzie, Damien Wise, Nathan Hinks, Patrick O'Duffy, Scott Vandervalk; Joshua Kronengold (Agent Mneme), Lisa Padol (Dr. Cthulhupunk), Alden Strook; Gina Ricker, Jason "JiB" Tryon, Libby VanDerWerff, Matt Widmann, Mook Wilson, Patrick "Mouser" Rowley, Rob Sanderson, Scott Renkes, Todd VanDerWerff; Broham the Cat, Christina Campbell, Eric Cajiuat, James Tiberius Monte, Jason Paley, Jen Peters, Joshua Campbell, Max Peters, Michael Keating, Ray Mosco, Scott (Scooter) Crone; Brennan See, Brian Clevinger, David Brotman, Fischer Mollard, Jordan Neal, Rebecca Brotman, Scott Wegener, Travis Young; Brad Hockey, Michael Wright, Nathan Russell, Robert Lamborn, Rohan Stains; Brett Abbott, Ed Watts, James Wingate, Jeff Simpson, John Montrie, Todd Sudbrink; G & G Racine, Ronald "The Tourist That Should Not Be" Ayliffe Jr., Sean M. "Fun Tyrant" Dunstan; Anna Karl, Emlyn Freeman, Jeremy Krieger, Mindy Freeman, Molly McGuire, Sara Perez; George Barton, Joshua Lefneski, Nicholas McDaniel; Charles Roburn, Dave MacFarlane, Joe "Not Charles" Mason, Stirling Westrup, Susan Patrick; Ian Straughan, Mark Lewis, Randy Begel, Steven K. Watkins, Steven Mains; Albert Puginau, Eudald Bonmatí, Mateu Pastoret, Pau Martinell "Menecrates", Quim Ball. Ilosera, Rafel Fiol; Dylan Sonnet, Eric and Stephanie Franklin, John and Katy Boone; Jason M.A. Fuller, Jeffrey J.A. Fuller II, Laura Ely, Vanessa Markland; Joshua Versaevel, Melanie Huizingh, Mike de Jong, William Hart; Andy Wittmann, Chad Bucholz, Chris Turner, Nick Mork, Scott Wolski, Tim Getschow; Glenn Crawford, Greg Peevers, Joe DaSilva, Mai Lee, Steve Baker

## AN EVIL HAT PRODUCTIONS PUBLICATION

www.evilh.at.com

feedback@evilh.at.com

@EvilHatOfficial on Twitter

facebook.com/EvilHatProductions

## THE ATOMIC ROBO ROLEPLAYING GAME

Copyright © 2014

Brian Clevinger, Scott Wegener,  
and Evil Hat Productions, LLC.

All rights reserved.

This game is based on the Fate Core System and some elements of the Fate System Toolkit, both copyrighted by Evil Hat Productions. Fate Core and the Fate System Toolkit are available under the Open Gaming License and a Creative Commons Attribution license. For more details about the terms and requirements of these licenses, please visit [www.evilh.at.com](http://www.evilh.at.com) or [www.faterpg.com](http://www.faterpg.com).

First published in 2014 by  
Evil Hat Productions, LLC.  
10125 Colesville Rd #318,  
Silver Spring, MD 20901.

Atomic Robo is a trademark of Brian Clevinger and Scott Wegener, used with permission. All other product titles and logos are trademarks of Evil Hat Productions, LLC. All rights reserved.

Softcover ISBN: 978-1-61317-056-4  
Printed in the USA.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior express permission of the publisher.

That said, if you're doing it for personal use, knock yourself out. That's not only allowed, we encourage you to do it.

For those working at a copy shop and not at all sure if this means the person standing at your counter can make copies of this thing, they can. This is "express permission." Carry on.

This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible, impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this work are fictional. Any resemblance to real-world scientists or other real people is totally freaking awesome, and you know it. Any resemblance to global conspiracies, immortal atomic-powered robots, pulp heroes and villains, super-spies, action scientists, or power-mad insane sentient dinosaurs, on the other hand, is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER ONE: ROBO'S WORLD

1

<b>SCIENCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CONSPIRACIES</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>HISTORY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MAGIC</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>FACTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
Tesladyne	5
Majestic 12	5
Daedalus	6
Department	
Zero / DELPHI	6
Undead Edison	6
Helsingard	7
Big Science Inc. / Science Team Super	
Five	7
Most Perfect Science Division	7
Dr. Dinosaur	7
Automatic Learning Algorithm Network	8
<b>WORKING AT TESLADYNE</b>	<b>9</b>

## CHAPTER TWO: THE BASICS

11

<b>WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>PLAYERS AND GAMEMASTERS</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>THE CHARACTER SHEET</b>	<b>14</b>
Breaking It Down	14
<b>TAKING ACTION</b>	<b>16</b>
Rolling the Dice	16
The Ladder	16
Interpreting Results	17
<b>FATE POINTS</b>	<b>18</b>
Invoking an Aspect	18
Declaring a Story Detail	19
Compels	19
<b>START PLAYING!</b>	<b>21</b>

## CHAPTER THREE: MAKING CHARACTERS

23

<b>CHARACTER CREATION BASICS</b>	<b>24</b>
Three Modes	24
Trained, Focused, and Specialized Skills	24

Reinforced Skills	25
Aspects	26
Stunts and Mega-stunts	27
Stress and Consequences	27

## THE STANDARD MODES AND SKILLS

28

## E-Z NO-MATH CHARACTER CREATION: STEP BY STEP

30

Concept	30
Modes	30
Reinforced Skills	30
Stress boxes	31
Details	31

## WEIRD CHARACTER CREATION: STEP BY STEP

32

Concept	32
Modes	32
Reinforced Skills	33
Stress Boxes	33
Details	33

## IMPROVING SKILLS

34

E-Z No-Math Skill Improvement	34
1-2-3 Skill Improvement	34

## THE MIDDLE PATH:

### E-Z WEIRD CHARACTERS

35

Robot	35
-------	----

## CHAPTER FOUR: ASPECTS AND FATE POINTS

37

## TYPES OF ASPECTS

38

Game Aspects	38
Character Aspects	38
Situation Aspects	38
Consequences	39
Boosts	39
Experiences	39

## THE PURPOSE OF ASPECTS

41

Importance	41
Deciding When To Use Mechanics	41

## MAKING A GOOD ASPECT

42

Double-Edged	42
Say More Than One Thing	43
Clear Phrasing	43
If You Get Stuck	44



<b>ASPECTS IN ACTION</b>	<b>45</b>
Invoking Aspects	45
Compelling Aspects	47
Using Aspects for Roleplaying	51
Creating and Discovering New Aspects in Play	51
<b>THE FATE POINT ECONOMY</b>	<b>53</b>
Starting Fate Points	53
Spending Fate Points	53
Earning Fate Points	53
The GM and Fate Points	54

## CHAPTER FIVE: MODES, SKILLS, AND STUNTS

### 57

<b>MODES</b>	<b>58</b>
What Modes Are	58
What Modes Do	58
The Standard Modes	58
Weird Modes	59
<b>SKILLS</b>	<b>60</b>
What Skills Are	60
What Skills Do	60
Skill Actions and Applications	61
Standard Skill Descriptions	61
Science: It's Special	69
<b>GETTING WEIRD</b>	<b>70</b>
Making Weird Skills	70
Making Weird Modes	71
<b>STUNTS</b>	<b>73</b>
What Stunts Are	73
What Stunts Do	73
Building Stunts	73
<b>MEGA-STUNTS</b>	<b>76</b>
What Mega-stunts Are	76
Weaknesses and Costs	77
What Mega-stunts Do	78
Paying for Mega-stunts	80
Hardware as Mega-stunts	80
<b>STANDARD MODES</b>	<b>82</b>
Action!	82
Banter!	83
Intrigue!	84
Science!	85
<b>READY-MADE WEIRD MODES</b>	<b>86</b>
Beast	87
Dinosaur	87
Martial Artist	88
Mutant	88

Pilot	89
Psychokinetic	89
Reporter	90
Robot	90
Secret Agent	91
Soldier	91
Spirit	92
Telepath	92
Warbot	93

## CHAPTER SIX: OUTCOMES AND ACTIONS

### 95

Opposition	96
<b>THE FOUR OUTCOMES</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>THE FOUR ACTIONS</b>	<b>98</b>
Overcome	99
Create an Advantage	100
Attack	102
Defend	103

## CHAPTER SEVEN: CHALLENGES, CONTESTS, AND CONFLICTS

### 105

<b>CHALLENGES</b>	<b>106</b>
Advantages in a Challenge	108
Attacks in a Challenge	109
<b>CONTESTS</b>	<b>110</b>
Creating Advantages in a Contest	110
Attacks in a Contest	110
<b>CONFLICTS</b>	<b>112</b>
Setting the Scene	113
Establishing Sides	114
Turn Order	114
The Exchange	116
Resolving Attacks	117
Conceding the Conflict	123
Getting Taken Out	123
Weapon and Armor Ratings	124
Movement	125
Advantages in a Conflict	126
Other Actions in a Conflict	126
Ending a Conflict	128
<b>TEAMWORK</b>	<b>129</b>



## CHAPTER EIGHT: LET'S DO SOME SCIENCE

131

<b>BRAINSTORMS</b>	<b>132</b>
Running Brainstorms	132
You Got Your Action in My Science!	138
The GM's Role	139
<b>INVENTION</b>	<b>139</b>
Scientific Drama	139
From Concept to Reality	140

## CHAPTER NINE: RUNNING THE GAME

147

<b>WHAT YOU DO</b>	<b>148</b>
Start and End Scenes	148
Play the World and the NPCs	148
Judge the Use of the Rules	150
Give Them Things To Do	150
<b>WHAT TO DO DURING PLAY</b>	<b>151</b>
The First Law of Gamemastering	151
The Second Law of Gamemastering	152
When to Roll Dice	152
Making Failure Awesome	152
Setting Difficulties	153
Dealing with Extraordinary Success	154
Dealing with Time	155
Judging the Use of Skills and Stunts	160
Dealing with Conflicts and Other Weird Stuff	162
Dealing with Aspects	168
<b>CREATING THE OPPOSITION</b>	<b>171</b>
Take Only What You Need to Survive	171
The NPC Types	171
Nameless NPCs	171
Supporting NPCs	173
Main NPCs	175
Exceptional NPCs	175
<b>PLAYING THE OPPOSITION</b>	<b>176</b>
Right-sizing	176
Creating Advantages for NPCs	176
Change Venues of Conflict	177

## CHAPTER TEN: TELLING STORIES THE ATOMIC ROBO WAY

179

<b>SCENES</b>	<b>180</b>
Starting Scenes	180
Competence, Proactivity, Drama	181
Hit Their Aspects	183
Ending Scenes	183
<b>ISSUES</b>	<b>184</b>
To Be Continued	184

### ATOMIC ROBO IN FOUR EASY

#### STEPS

185

Discover the Conspiracy	185
Chase the Conspiracy	186
Defeated by the Conspiracy	187
Triumph over the Conspiracy	188
Keep It Moving	189

#### PROBLEMS

190

Aspects	190
History	191
Factions	192
Making New Factions	196
Putting It Together	199

#### STORY QUESTIONS

201

From Problem to Questions	201
---------------------------	-----

#### ESTABLISH THE OPPOSITION

203

#### PAGE ONE, PANEL ONE

204

#### THE VOLUME IN PLAY

204

#### TO BE CONCLUDED

205

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: ACROSS THE FOURTH DIMENSION

207

#### PRINCIPALS AND FLASHBACKS

208

#### WHY FLASH BACK?

208

#### FLASHBACK BASICS

209

Duration	209
----------	-----

Constants	209
-----------	-----

Immediacy	210
-----------	-----

#### ALTERING EXISTING

##### CHARACTERS

211

Concept aspect	211
----------------	-----

Modes	212
-------	-----

Skills	212
--------	-----

Everything Else	213
-----------------	-----

#### BRINGING IT BACK

213

Volume Aspect	213
---------------	-----

Milestones	213
------------	-----



## CHAPTER TWELVE: TESLADYNE INDUSTRIES 215

<b>THE RESOURCES MODE</b>	<b>216</b>
Armory	216
Intel	216
R&D	217
Transport	217
<b>TESLADYNE IN PLAY</b>	<b>218</b>
Resident Scientists	218
Borrowing Hardware	218
<b>TESLADYNE'S ASPECTS</b>	<b>220</b>
<b>TESLADYNE AND FATE POINTS</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>ADVANCING TESLADYNE</b>	<b>221</b>

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN: THE MARCH OF PROGRESS 223

<b>WHAT IS A CAMPAIGN?</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>ADVANCEMENT AND CHANGE</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>WHAT IS A MILESTONE?</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>MINOR MILESTONES:</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES:</b>	<b>226</b>
<b>MAJOR MILESTONES:</b>	<b>227</b>
Fallout	228
<b>ADVANCING TESLADYNE</b>	<b>229</b>
Tesladyne and Significant Milestones	229
Tesladyne and	
Collateral Consequences	229
Improving Tesladyne's Skills	230
Improving Tesladyne's Resources	230
<b>ADVANCING NPCs</b>	<b>232</b>

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN: TIMELINE 235

1800s: Century of Progress	236
1850: Helsingard Begins	236
1880s: The War of the Currents	236
1883: A Sky of Iron	236
1893: The Triumvirate	237
1895: Nemesis	237
1905: The Miracle Year	238
1908:	
The Shadow From Beyond Time	238
1916: Spacetime	239
1923: The Atomic Robot	239
1924: The Ghost of Rasputin	239

1926: The Shadow Returns	239
1930: Deadly Art of Science	240
1931: The Wizards Duel	240
1932: Chadwick's Discovery	240
1936: The Turing Machine	240
1937: Science City	241
1938: The Vril to Power	241
1939: The Genius of Bletchley Park	241
1940: Secret Weapon	241
1941: Flying Tigers	242
1942: Citizen Robo	242
1942: The Dogs of War	242
1943: Death of a Giant	242
1945: Operation Paperclip	243
1945: The Collapse of Science City	243
1947: MXII	243
1947: The Magic Spaceship	243
1949: The Fall of Forrestal	243
1953: Helsingard Takes Manhattan	244
1954: Obninsk Online	244
1955: Project Aquatone	244
1957: The Shadow Over Cloverdale	244
1961: Vostok 1	244
1951: The Flying	
She-Devils of the Pacific	244
1961: The Czar Bomb	245
1967: Zorth Revealed	245
1968: The Spear of Destiny	245
1969: Accolades and Honors	245
1969: A Giant Leap for Mankind	245
1962: Centralia, Pop. 2,104.	245
1970s: Better, Faster, Stronger	246
1970: Leaping Metal Dragon	246
1971: The Shadow Over Peru	246
1974: Hawking and the Royal Society	246
1974: A Viking on Mars	246
1984: The Mirrorshade Overdrive	247
1985: Helsingard in France	247
1990: The Ultimate Map	247
1993: Soldiers of Fortune	247
1996: The Survivor	247
1999: Other Strangeness	248
2000: Sex and the Cosmos	248
2005: Helsingard Unearthed	248
2007: There's a Pyramid in Egypt	248
2009: From Beyond	248
2011: The Ghost of Station X	249
2011: Robot of Interest	249
June 2013:	
The Savage Sword of Dr. Dinosaur	249
June 2013:	
Tesladyne Under Siege	249
March 2013:	
Centralia, Pop. All Gone!	249



# CHAPTER FIFTEEN: CHARACTER WRITEUPS 251

<b>KID ROBO</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>THE SHE-DEVILS OF THE PACIFIC</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>TEEN ROBO</b>	<b>253</b>	Captain Catherine	
<b>SPECIAL AGENT ROBO</b>	<b>254</b>	Marie "May" Carter	280
<b>ROBO THE VETERAN</b>	<b>255</b>	Hazel Lee	281
<b>JENKINS</b>	<b>256</b>	Lauren Finch	282
<b>THE FIGHTIN' SCIENTISTS OF TESLADYNE</b>	<b>257</b>	Valerya "Val" Akilinov	283
Bernard Fischer	257	<b>HELSENGARD</b>	<b>284</b>
Koa	258	Helsingard Warbot	285
Vikram Abasi	258	Helsingard Autosoldat	285
Ada Birch	259	<b>MAJESTIC 12</b>	<b>286</b>
Benjamin Smithfield	260	M12 Infantry	286
Bao Lang	260	Special Assets Unit (SAU)	286
Dean Louis	261	Project SAINT Unit 5 Boxbot	287
Robert Martin	262	<b>OTHER ROBOTS</b>	<b>287</b>
Phil Broughton	263	Standard-Issue Warbot	287
Julie Walker	264	Edison's Robot	288
Ira Stein	264	<b>WORLD WAR II BAD GUYS</b>	<b>289</b>
Curtis "Mac" MacDonald	265	SS-Obersturmbannführer	
John "Slim" Simmons	266	Otto Skorzeny	289
<b>THE MCALLISTERS</b>	<b>266</b>	Laufpanzer	290
Donovan "Jack Tarot" McAllister	266	Dr. Vanadis Valkyrie	291
Helen "Nightingale" McAllister	268	Valkyrie Brutes	291
<b>CELEBRATED SCIENTISTS OF THE 20TH CENTURY</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>GENETIC EXPERIMENTS AND OTHER STRANGENESS</b>	<b>291</b>
Thomas Edison	269	Vampire	291
Undead Edison	270	Dr. Dinosaur	292
Nikola Tesla	270	Dr. Shinka	294
Carl Sagan	272	Biomega Drones	295
Stephen Hawking	273	Biomega Kaiju Monster	295
<b>THE SPARROW</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>ALAN</b>	<b>297</b>
Sparrow I	274	<b>CHOKAITEN</b>	<b>298</b>
Sparrow II	275	Takeshi Hayoto	298
Sparrow III	276	Chokaiten Pilot	299
<b>BIG SCIENCE INC.</b>	<b>277</b>	Chokaiten Heavy Marines	299
Dr. Junji Yumeno	277	Admiral Goro Shimada	300
<b>SCIENCE TEAM SUPER FIVE</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>DENIZENS OF HOLLOW EARTH</b>	<b>301</b>
Guardian mode trios	278	Rock Person	301
Aggressive Guardian	278	Rock Monster	301
Charismatic Guardian	278	The Yonkers Devil	302
Tricky Guardian	279	<b>TESLADYNE</b>	<b>303</b>
Guardian Aspect Pairs	279	Tesla Heavy Industries	303
		Tesladyne Aerospace	303
		Tesladyne Industries Inc.	303
		<b>APPENDIX:</b>	
		<b>INSPIRATIONAL MEDIA</b>	<b>304</b>
		<b>INDEX</b>	<b>305</b>
		<b>CHARACTER SHEET</b>	<b>310</b>





# CHAPTER ONE: ROBO'S WORLD

The world of Atomic Robo is the kind of place where a nuclear powered robot was built by Nikola Tesla in the 1920s and no one thinks that's strange.

Then there was that pyramid supertank, executing a water-clock program that took 5,000 years to compute, that emerged from the Egyptian desert and attacked long-dead cities with its solar-powered death ray. And who could forget when the remnants of the secret Nazi space program nearly started World War 3 in the 1960s.

Then there's the really weird stuff like the Vampire Dimension and the time-traveling yet historically inaccurate velociraptor.

Look, these things just happen.

Believe it or not, though, Atomic Robo's world is basically just like ours. The main difference is that the dials for Science and Conspiracies are set a few notches higher.



# SCIENCE

Y'know how you can watch a documentary about archaeology, and it's a bunch of university professors and grad students carefully brushing dust from rocks? And then they learn something very important about pottery? Meanwhile Indiana Jones is also an archaeologist, but mostly he runs around shooting bad guys and having car chases?

Now apply the Indiana Jones model to every other field of study.

That's *Atomic Robo*.

Don't get us wrong. The real pursuit of *real science* is exciting. We've apparently found the Higgs Boson. We landed the Curiosity rover on Mars. The entire Internet exists. These are amazing feats!

But this is a game about *Action Science!* And, for better or worse, there are relatively few gunfights or chase scenes in real-world laboratories. We're not here to model the cerebral excitement of discovery and the new vistas of knowledge that unlocks. This is a game world filled with the visceral and cinematic excitement of adventure. **The role of science is to give your adventure bigger problems and to find crazier solutions for them.**

Whether you're an Action Scientist of Tesladyne, or a loner with weird ideas, or in the employ of a government agency that doesn't officially exist, science is going to be a part of your story. You don't have to be a scientist to interact with it, of course. There's nothing wrong with playing as a unit of Majestic 12 soldiers with no scientific training beyond knowing that guns shoot bullets. But M12 are the guys who opened up a portal to the Vampire Dimension just to see what was on the other side (spoiler: it was vampires), so you're still going to run into sci-fi problems.

# CONSPIRACIES

Top-secret government agencies. Mad scientists. Cults. Elite military units. Alternate dimensions. So-called super villains. Air pirates. That dinosaur from before. Atomic Robo's world is filled with individuals or groups forwarding agendas that work best when hidden in the cracks of history.

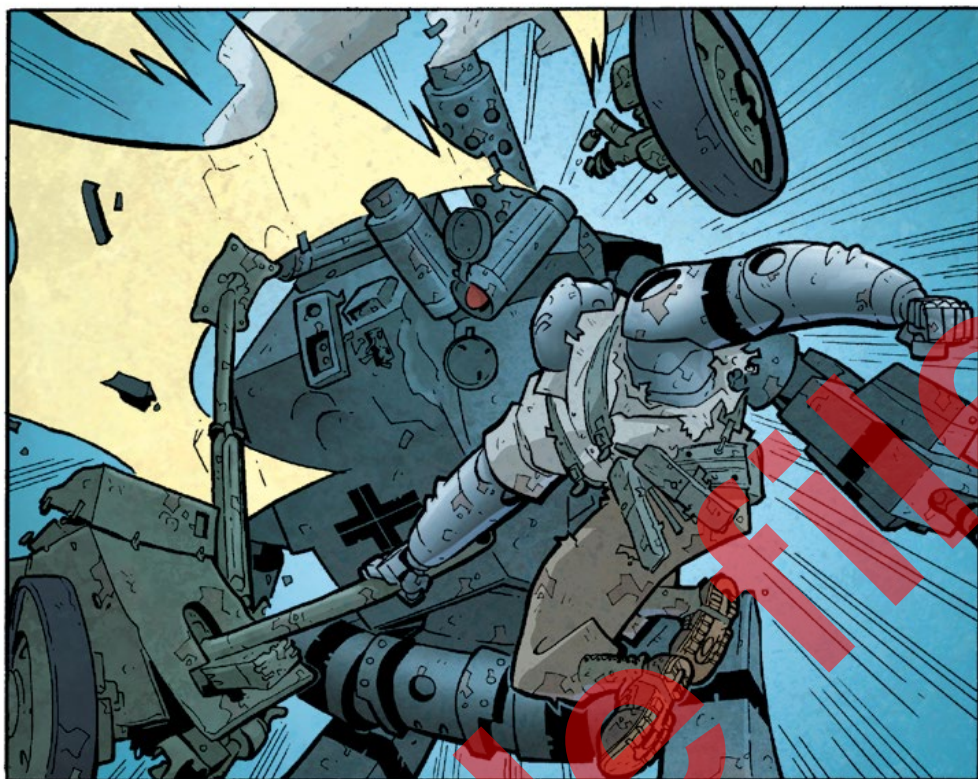
Sometimes these are people who seek to nudge the course of human affairs toward their own selfish goals. Sometimes they're the crumbling and warped remains of a larger gathering once united under a nobler cause. Sometimes they're just people who want to get away from their own lives. They have unlimited budgets and global reach. Or they're sects scraping by. Or the last of a dying breed. **The role of a conspiracy is to make your adventure part of a bigger world.**

You don't have to tie everything into a conspiracy, of course. You don't even need a conspiracy to show up at all! Sometimes things just happen. But an abandoned bunker becomes part of a larger narrative if it turns out to be a secret Project Daedalus research station. Or a forgotten clutch of Helsingard's Autosoldats.

There are two great tools for working conspiracies into your game on the fly:

- ▼ **They're secret!** Any corner, or shadow, or innocent flower shop can be turned into the facade of a conspiracy at the drop of a hat.
- ▼ **Splinter groups!** The larger and older a conspiracy is, the more factions might exist within it. These guys could get up to all kinds of stuff you wouldn't ordinarily associate with the parent group.





## HISTORY

Robo was activated in 1923. Helsingard was poised to overthrow Western Civilization in the 19th century. A lone Soviet nuclear scientist nearly siphoned the Earth's atmosphere into space in 1961. Alan Turing began an automatic intelligence experiment in 1950. The Sparrow legacy dates back to the Crusades. These are interesting facts, but they aren't a history on their own. **History is when interesting facts interact.**

This doesn't mean you need to tie your game back to a secret WW2 weapon program. But the doomsday weapons or dangerous new algorithms that populate your game don't occur spontaneously. They are the results of concerted human efforts. Who benefits from their development? Who benefits from their destruction? Who might seek to steal the tech? Why? How? When? An answer to any of these questions can lead to whole new adventures!

Don't worry about cramming every little gun and test tube with its own unique and intricately detailed history. No one cares. **Only things that are interesting to your game should have interesting**

**histories.** That means, at a minimum, the players' characters, their antagonists, and the unique gear/theories that bounce between them have histories. The best part? You don't need to know what they are or how they come together when you start! You and the other players will suggest ways to tie all those things into the broader scope of the setting's history through the actions, motivations, and goals of the players' characters and NPCs. Go out of your way to make those loose connections, to build on them, and run with the implications that follow!

History in your game can be as simple as neat backstories that you come up with before, between, and during play sessions. But you're encouraged to treat time as a fluid dimension. The past doesn't have to stay in the past. History is everywhere and it constantly exerts influence on the future—directly, indirectly, overtly, covertly. There's tons of room to play with history, whether by encouraging connections after the fact or jumping right into a historical era to find out how things came together by playing it.

# MAGIC

Nope!

Okay, *technically* the supernatural exists, but only as natural phenomenon not yet fully understood. For example, the ghost of Thomas Edison is floating around, but he's not actually a "ghost." He is the consciousness of Thomas Edison projected into the physical world via the "Odic medium," which may be an energy state or dimension. Undead Edison obeys the laws of physics, but he interacts with them in ways that aren't intuitive...and, yes, as it happens, he possesses properties we tend to associate with ghosts.

Still! Not a ghost!

And there are vampires. Kind of. They come from an alternative Earth and have more in common with viral strains than the bloodsucking creatures of lore.

The wolfmen of Dr. Vanadis Valkyrie look like werewolves, but they're genetic human-lupine hybrids.

There are people out there who think of themselves as wizards. Maybe they sincerely believe in magic. Maybe they *know* it's chicanery. But behind it all, every single time, they're working *within* the laws of physics. Just in ways that aren't immediately familiar or obvious.

Want to have supernatural style characters or antagonists? Go for it. Try to come up with a plausible sci-fi root for them, but don't sweat it if you can't! Remember, these things are poorly understood by definition. The rules already assume your power is derived via scientific principles; let the act of play reveal the details.

