

Powerless

by David Cleaver

Introduction

Powerless is a game where the players take on the roles of the supporting characters that make a super being into a super hero.

What you'll need

Powerless is best played with 2-4 players. You will need about 13 of the six sided dice that can be picked up at your local supermarket. Pencil and paper are a must, unless all the players have a great memory.

Creating Characters

The first thing that you need to do is create characters.

The Hero

Start by creating the hero. This is done by the group agreeing on answers to the following questions:

- What are the hero's powers?
- Where did he get those powers?
- Does he have an alter-ego? Describe the alter-ego?

Write down your answers to these questions in the middle of a piece of paper. Now name the hero, and write that above your answers to the questions.

Now under the answers write heroism and confidence. Each of these values start at 1.

The Player Characters

Now place the paper in the center of the table. Each player now takes a turn making a character. On your turn write a name for your character on the character sheet. Leave some room between the name and the bottom of the page. Under the character's name write how they are connected to the hero. For example, I'm his aunt, He loves me, I love him, We love each other, etc. Now write about three traits under the characters name. You can always add more at any time.

Scenes

Powerless works on a turn basis. On your turn you narrate a scene that has your character and the hero in it. You can choose to narrate a Confidence scene or a Danger scene. During your turn the other players provide support by awarding bonus dice, providing suggestions, and sometimes playing the hero.

Confidence Scenes

Confidence scenes are used to try to raise the confidence of the hero. You begin a confidence scene by narrating a scene that contains no immediate threats. You might be walking through the park, having dinner, conversing at a party, etc. The hero can be in full superhero gear or disguised as his alter-ego.

You also need to narrate the actions and/or discussions that boost the hero's confidence. This can involve the hero overhearing a conversation, an offhand comment, or a direct conversation with the super. If you are going to have a conversation with the hero designate or take a volunteer from the other players to enact the hero's half of the dialog.

At this point the other players should award you dice equal to the current confidence level of the hero. Also they can award you up to 3 bonus dice for incorporating a new or existing trait into your narration, incorporating one of their suggestions, or if they think you've narrated something that is particularly entertaining or poignant.

Now roll your dice. Each five or six you roll increases the hero's confidence by 1, if it is less than his heroism + 2. Narrate how this outcome comes about in the scene.

Danger Scenes

Danger scenes are used to try to raise the heroism of the hero. You begin a danger scene by narrating a scene in which your character is in danger. Perhaps you've been captured by a super-villain, your plane is about to crash, or you are trapped in a building about to explode. Narrate as much or as little of the scene as you like up to the point where the hero is about to save you.

At this point the other players should award you dice equal to the hero's heroism score. Also they can award you up to 3 bonus dice for incorporating a new or existing trait into your narration, incorporating one of their suggestions, or if they think you've narrated something that is particularly entertaining or poignant.

Now roll your dice. If you roll any fives or sixes, then the hero rescues you. Increase the hero's heroism by one and narrate how the hero rescues you. If you roll a one without rolling a five or six, then you're dead. Write deceased next to your name, decrease the hero's confidence by four points, and narrate how the hero failed to save you and you died. If neither of these happens, then you were saved by some other means. Decrease the hero's confidence by two and narrate how you escape without the hero's help.

Death

Death is not all bad. The only thing that death prevents is the creation of Danger scenes for the character. You can't really get into trouble when you're dead. You can still have Confidence scenes. You can appear in dreams, flashbacks, or whatever else you want.

However, if all of the player characters die, then the game is over. Everyone should collaborate on how the hero loses his heroism and what he becomes.

Positive Endings

When the hero's heroism score reaches 10, then the game ends. Everyone should collaborate to decide what kind of hero the group has created.