

OUR HERO NEIGHBORS

A game of community, collaboration, and cooperation.

by Therapeutic Blasphemy Games
2nd Edition

Introduction

"Welcome to the neighborhood! This may not be like other places in Midcity, but we've got everything you need here. All you gotta do is ask. We take care of our own, you know what I'm saying?" — Mr. Wilkins, Apt. 403.

This is 219 W Feynman Ave in Breach Community of Midcity in the great state of..., USA. Folks 'round here mostly work hourly jobs, odds jobs, and entry level salary positions that don't seem to be elevating anything more than blood pressure.

Our Hero Neighbors is a GM-less cooperative roleplaying game. Players will need 2d6 (regular cube dice) and may want something to write things down on (notebook, tablet, smartphone, etc).

Getting Started

To start, players describe their character. Who are they and how long ago did they move into the apartment building? Do they live alone, with one or more roommates, a spouse, partner, kids?

Once all players have introduced their characters, go around the table again and have each player pick another player's character for their own to have a Bond with and describe that Bond. A Bond is a memorable moment in which the two characters had genuine connection that made them trust each other as neighbors. Each player should also pick another player's character to have a Wedge with

and describe that Wedge. A Wedge is a moment that caused tension and distrust between two characters that was never fully mended.

Note: A Bond and a Wedge should not be with the same person because a Wedge is an ongoing tension and a Bond is an ongoing neighborly relationship. However, through the course of play someone you had a Bond with may become someone you have a Wedge with because of something that happened and vice versa. Relationships can and should change over the course of the game.

Players should then choose a unique resource that everyone associates them with. Examples include: car, spare room, trained guard dog, great stereo set, computer skills, etc. No two characters should have the same resource. If two characters live together and the resource would be accessible to both (e.g. a spare room), then one character should have their own resource and for one reason or another never wants to mess with the spare room.

Playing the Game

Players should take turns rolling on the Weird Table to generate an incident. Each incident is a scene involving as many of the player characters as is desired, but at least the player who rolled and one other player should have their characters in the scene.

Players should resolve the scene through roleplay and can enlist the help of additional player characters when stuck as to how to make the scene progress or wrap up.

Once a scene ends, players involved should evaluate whether any Bonds or Wedges came into play during the scene. Were any

new Bonds formed? Were any new Wedges formed? If an already existing Wedge came into play during the scene and it wasn't mended, the player with that Wedge should make a tally or other notation indicating an increase in severity. At five tallies/notations, the character is Alienated and cannot appear in a scene with the character they have a Wedge with.

Alienated

Alienated characters cannot be in scenes with people who they've been alienated from. When the player playing the alienated character has their turn to roll dice, the player rolls on the Wicked Table instead of the Weird Table.

To mend an Alienated character's relationship with another character, they must have a third character act as mediator in the scene. For each scene where mediation happens between the Alienated character and the character they have a Wedge with, remove one tally/notation of Wedge. Alienated is removed once all the tallies/notations have been removed. If the mediator incorporates one or more unique resources (their own, the Alienated character's, and or the other character's) into the scene then remove two tallies/notations.

Resolving a Scene

Scenes can last as long as needed to tell a story, but should only be a snapshot rather than a three-act play. At the end of a scene, the Weird and Wicked Table happenstances may not resolve at, but moment between characters has ended even if left "unfinished" for dramatic purposes.

Only the player who rolled on the table that turn may decide when the scene ends, but

players should be sensitive and use consent when involving other players' characters in scenes as some scenes may be uncomfortable for some players. It is always a good idea to use safety tools when roleplaying. Players who don't want their characters in a scene for whatever reason should simply say, "pass on this scene" when asked to be a part of it.

Ending the Game

The game ends when all the characters have a Bond or Wedge with each other, or if more than half (rounding up) of the characters are Alienated from one another.

Have one final scene where each player describes what they think happens to their character in a few sentences. Who stays and who moves out? Who regrets the way things went down while they lived there and who feels better for having lived with there at that time? Note that this is not the moment to resolve a Wedge or form a Bond.

Be sure that everyone at the table is given the opportunity to process any lingering emotions that come up after play. It may not be obvious at first, so allow for the possibility that it may not be something that comes up at the table.

The Weird Table

The Weird Table is a table of possible happenstances that create tension in a scene. This is what brings (or perhaps forces) the characters together. Although in real life players might think, "I'd call the landlord for that" or "I'd get out, even if just temporarily;" assume that the landlord is just like many real landlords and isn't going to do anything and that getting out is impossible unless another character has a

spare room or something to provide that "out."

Roll twice: once with only one die to get the location, the second time with two dice to get the weird.

The (Location)

1. Kitchen
2. Bathroom
3. Bedroom
4. Living Room
5. Hallway
6. Back porch/fire escape

Weird (Happenstance)

1. The walls hum
2. Lights turn to disco balls
3. Floors cry when stepped on
4. Water splash when opened
5. Step through into neighbor's
6. Least favorite song erupts
7. Spotlight appears
8. Colors bleed onto everything
9. Everything is sepia toned
10. A sapling begins growing
11. An old friend/foe appears
12. Reeks of firewood smoke

The Wicked Table

Like the Weird Table, the Wicked Table is a series of possible happenstances that create tension in a scene. The difference is that the Wicked Table is decidedly more unpleasant than whimsical.

When using the Wicked Table players should roll twice: once with one die for the location, a second time with two dice for the happenstance.

The (Location)

1. Kitchen
2. Bathroom

3. Bedroom
4. Living Room
5. Hallway
6. Back porch/fire escape

Wicked (Happenstance)

1. The walls bleed
2. All food brought in rots
3. Infestation of poltergeists
4. Any paper catches fire
5. Floor now bottomless void
6. No light penetrates
7. Sirens go off entering
8. Something watches
9. Glass always breaks
10. All tech dies
11. Violence erupts
12. Reeks of death

NOTE: Players can and should reinterpret or re-roll to sidestep triggering or otherwise uncomfortable topics brought up by the table prompts. Always prioritize player comfort and fun over dramatic tension.

Commentary

When I made the original *Our Hero Neighbors*, it started out as a concept for teaching my then-mother-in-law what tabletop roleplaying games are. I tried to incorporate the things she values (cooperation, collaboration, and relationships).

The problem was that I was playing a lot of *Ironsworn* by Shawn Tomkin and listening to *Twilight Mirage* by Friends at the Table. The game I was playing combined with the game I was hearing others play meant that I was basically making a *Forged in the Dark*-lite game and that's mechanically not right for the tone of the game I wanted to build.

In building a new edition of the game I wanted to get away from just a straight "oh, I fixed a typo here and a mechanical issue there." This is more like Final Fantasy VII Remake than an updated version.

I wanted to make a game that had the same principles as the original, but I wanted to make it in a setting that felt more like the kind of place I'd live in: a city apartment.

My former mother-in-law lives in a very small town where people know each other and that's one way to understand community, but community can also be formed in urban settings among tenants of the same building. Hopefully, I created a game that demonstrates community exists wherever people live in proximity to each other and then some.

About

Therapeutic Blasphemy Games is the game design and development project of Jamie O'Duibhir, a Romantic Satanist minister based out of Minnesota. You can find more from Therapeutic Blasphemy Games at: <https://therapeuticblasphemygames.itch.io/>

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