

Our Hero Neighbors

A Game of Community, Collaboration, and Cooperation

by Therapeutic Blasphemy Games

Summary

You play as neighbors in Smalltown, USA. You encounter strange occurrences and challenges that will test your resolve as a community and reward cooperation and collaboration. Each character picks two strengths and a special move they can select to add both mechanical and narrative flavor. All you need is six-sided dice (d6), an imagination, and some friends to play with.

Strengths

Physicality - you have trained your body to be a tool at your disposal. This does not necessarily mean you are strong, but that your body is capable of extraordinary feats.

Empathy - You have an incredible emotional intelligence that allows you to understand the feelings of others and proverbially put yourself in their shoes.

Conversation - You have a way with words; a way of hearing and being heard when speaking.

Technicality - You have a knack for machines. Whether it's computers or mechanical devices, you have knowledge of the specificities of technology.

Survival - You have knowledge and experience in the natural world. You can navigate trails, identify poisonous plants, and overcome naturally occurring obstacles.

Resourceful - You know a little bit about a lot of things and use this knowledge to creatively solve problems that come your way.

Each player should write down which two strengths their character has. When the GM asks you to make a roll with the character strength that you have checkmarked, add +1 to the die roll result. Each character has a special move that further distinguishes one character from the next. Each session of play is called an event and what transpires will shape the relationships that neighbors have with each other.

Neighborhood Bonds

Each character should pick one other character who they have a bond with. Whenever a character needs help from a neighbor, the character they've chosen to have a bond with can offer to help. Helping allows characters to reroll an undesirable result and take the higher of the two die results.

Events can have positive and negative consequences for neighborly relations. At the end of each event, the GM and players decide which bonds were forged by the event and which were broken. Players and the GM may remove as many bonds as they want given the narrative, but may only add one additional bond after each event (e.g. after your first play session you can have up to two bonds, after two play sessions you can have three bonds). Only by overcoming the challenges of an event can characters create and maintain more than one bond. Players do not need to use all the bonds available to them.

Special Moves

Conduit - You may not get along with every neighbor, but that doesn't stop you from talking with everyone. You can communicate the needs of one neighbor with another neighbor allowing them to help when they would otherwise be unable to due to a lack of awareness.

Caregiver - You have the skills to care for yourself or other neighbors who have been injured during an event. Reduce the harm from a bad outcome by one level.

Courageous - You face your fears and prevent harm to yourself or a neighbor. This does not turn a bad outcome into a good one, but mitigates the harm as a consequence of the bad outcome

Transporter - You have the resources available to get people and things from one place to another in a timely manner.

Researcher - You are talented at digging into a subject and learning as much as possible. Whether looking things up online or visiting your local library, you gather information that can make the difference. You can ask the GM for insights that may help resolve a challenge.

Observant - You notice all the details about your area and can pick up on things that are out of place.

Teacher - You have a talent and skill for education. You or a neighbor can change their special move once per event. If you change your own special move from teacher to something else, you will not be able to switch it back.

Host - You have the resources to provide refuge from impending danger for you and your neighbors.

Challenges

This game is centered on cooperation and collaboration. It is decidedly not a combat role-playing game. Although combat may happen, it is useful to describe things that occur during an event as “challenges” to better encapsulate the broad scope of interpersonal, natural, and supernatural situations that neighbors may face together. It is also important that while solving problems with violence works in a high fantasy or science fiction game, this game is about neighbors and their community. The mechanics of the game are designed to assist the players and the GM in telling a narrative about the lives of neighbors who face these challenges.

A character who attempts to face a challenge must decide which of their attributes they are going to use to overcome the challenge and roll a d6. The GM helps the players interpret how the dice roll results fit into the narrative. Bad dice rolls should never be used as a punishment, but rather a complication that neighbors encounter when trying to face a challenge. A devastating failure maybe serve as the rallying cry for neighbors to come together and solve the problem before more people are harmed.

On a 6, **Resounding Success** - You succeed at your attempted solution with no substantial complications.

On a 5, **Mixed Success** - You succeed at your attempted solution, but you also encounter a complication while doing so.

On a 4, **Costly Success** - You succeed at your attempted solution, but at great cost to you. Suffer one level of harm.

On a 3, **Minor Failure** - You do not manage to resolve the problem. In attempting to resolve the challenge you create a new complication.

On a 2, **Costly Failure** - You do not manage to resolve the problem and the resulting consequences cause you to suffer one level of harm.

On a 1, **Devastating Failure** - Your attempt at a solution backfires and you suffer two levels of harm.

Harm

Harm comes in many different forms and isn't limited to physical injury. It could be emotional, financial, structural (e.g. house burns down would be a level 2), or something else. Likewise, a caregiver may not be something quite as literal as a doctor, nurse, or other medical care provider. A caregiver may be someone who organizes a fundraiser or knows a specialist in a specific kind of medical care from out of town.

The difference between one level of harm and a second level of harm is that one level of harm clears or resolves itself at the end of an event. Having a second level of harm means the harm

was severe enough that it does not resolve at the end of the event and carries over into the next session of play. A second level of harm may be the basis for the next event as neighbors band together to resolve it.

Some first level harms may stack to become second level harms either because they were unattended while still a first level or because something happened to compound the harm. Players and the GM should work together to describe this narratively.

For the GM

The Game Master (“GM”) is a key role in many tabletop roleplaying games. In this game, it is the GMs responsibility to fill out the community to make it seem alive and vibrant. For reoccurring people of the community that the players interact with, it may be helpful to write down what their two strengths are. In general, don’t give non-player characters (“NPCs”) that you control special moves unless it is particularly difficult individual that the players must face in a challenge.

Feel empowered to make an event full of mundane or supernatural challenges. Perhaps the event starts with a mundane challenge and ends in a cosmic horror challenge. Think of challenges like acts in a play and limit them to three. An event could be as short as one challenge if play sessions need to be kept short.

Example

Challenge 1 (Mundane): It’s 1971 in Smalltown, USA and everyone is being asked to seal their homes for a DDT treatment. The neighbors must band together to prepare for this.

Challenge 2 (Mundane/Supernatural): Even after the treatment has ended, people in the community report seeing large clouds of mist or fog. The neighbors must investigate what is happening.

Challenge 3 (Cosmic): A portal to another dimension with creatures that feed off of noxious chemicals in DDT has opened and they’ve come seeking more DDT. The neighbors must find a way to deal with the interdimensional interlopers.

You might also decide that this takes place in an alternate universe where history happened differently. Maybe it’s in the distant future and the USA no longer exists. Whatever the case may be, make sure that you and your players know enough to create satisfying narratives for the action that takes place.

A 2022 Retrospective

In 2019, *Our Hero Neighbors* was only meant as a Chanukkah gift that showcased what TTRPGs can look like in a way that was more approachable thematically than that big dragon game. Since then the game has been part of the Bundle for Racial Justice and Equality and played on an actual-play podcast, Direcast. There's even a French translation in the works, though that it is still tentative. And of course, in 2021 *Our Hero Neighbors* 2nd Edition was released.

Our Hero Neighbors is essentially a Forged in the Dark game though it is far more rules-lite, a Forged in the Lite, if you will. It wasn't made using the SRD and therefore is not marketed as a Forged in the Dark game. It is entirely unique from *Our Hero Neighbors 2nd Edition* in mechanics and therefore this fresh coat of paint does not make OHN2E irrelevant. *Our Hero Neighbors* is also a game designed to have a GM whereas OHN2E is not.

Thematically, *Our Hero Neighbors* is about small towns and building community whereas OHN2E is about urban dwellings and building community. They offer two different perspectives on building community from relative vantage points. OHN2E is decidedly more cosmic horror by default than this one. Some people might enjoy one game but not the other. That is fine.

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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