

MONSTER OF THE WEEK EXTRA: MORE WEIRDNESS

As written, *Monster of the Week* doesn't exactly fit *The X-Files*, *Fringe*, or *Warehouse 13*. Those are all big inspirations, aside from being cool shows, so I've always had the intention of working out how to fit them in. The following rules are a (only slightly playtested) draft of how to do so.

If you try them, please let me know how it goes – email me at michael.sands@genericgames.co.nz.

The changes are to two sections of the rules. It will also make the game a bit more focused on the investigation side of mysteries, and less on combat, so keep that in mind when creating hunters. Hunters that are less combat-focused like the Crooked, Flake, Mundane, Professional, and Spooky will work best.

FIRST CHANGE: THE BASIC WEIRD MOVE

Instead of all hunters getting the **use magic** basic move, each hunter picks from a selection of weird basic moves, as appropriate to their concept.

Not all the new weird moves will suit every game, so you'll need to think about which ones make sense to include.

SECOND CHANGE: WEIRD PHENOMENA

Weird **Phenomena** are a new main threat type the Keeper may use when creating mysteries: the **Phenomenon**. This is a strange danger that must be investigated, understood, and somehow mitigated before it causes more trouble. This has some new rules about creating a weird phenomenon mystery, and new moves for the phenomenon threat type.

THANKS FOR PLAYTESTING AND FEEDBACK

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ALTERNATIVE WEIRD BASIC MOVES

Use magic is no longer a basic move for all hunters. Instead, all hunters get the basic move **How Are You Weird?** Any hunter playbook moves that change how you would normally **Use Magic** now apply to the new move (if it doesn't directly apply, come up with an appropriate adjustment with the agreement of your group).

CASTING SPELLS WITHOUT "USE MAGIC"

Hunters who do not have **use magic** as their weird move must treat any spell as **big magic**. The Keeper may wish to pick requirements towards the lighter end of the spectrum if the spell's effects will be at the level of **use magic**.

Big magic still works the same, but you may adjust the requirements so that they have a more "weird science" style when appropriate.

YOUR GAME'S MYTHOLOGY

As with all custom moves, you should consider how it works with your world's mythology. Many of these moves make certain things true in your world.

For instance, if a hunter chooses **past lives** then it becomes true that some people are reincarnated and can remember their previous lives.

Perhaps some of these options aren't appropriate, or some might be rare. Consider that along with your concept as you pick which one is right for your hunter, and check that the whole group is on board with your choice.

HOW ARE YOU WEIRD?

Choose one of the following as your basic move for Weird:

- **Empath** (see below).
- **Illuminated** (see below).
- **No limits** (see below).
- **Past lives** (see below).
- **Sensitive** (see below).
- **Telekinesis** (see below).
- **Trust your gut** (see below).
- **Use magic** (as in vanilla *Monster of the Week*).
- **Weird science** (see below).

DEFAULT WEIRD MOVES

If nothing in particular seems appropriate, use:

- **Trust your gut** or **no limits** for a relatively mundane hunter.
- **Weird science** for a curious, scientific minded hunter.
- **Sensitive** or **empath** for those with psychic potential.
- Or **use magic** for anyone else.

These defaults are the moves with the smallest implications for your game's mythology.

THE NEW WEIRD MOVES

EMPATH

When you open up your brain to a person who is right there in front of you, roll +Weird.

You can use **empath** on anything with emotions (e.g. animals or monsters), but the less human they are, the less safe it is for you.

- On a 10 or more, you gain a clear impression of their current emotional state and intentions. Take +1 forward when acting on this knowledge.
- On a 7-9, you gain a hazy impression of their current emotional state and intentions.
- On a 6 or less, your brain is overwhelmed with emotions.

Advanced Empath. When you advance your **empath** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, you get an impression as for 10 or more, plus you may ask one follow up question that the Keeper will answer honestly.

ILLUMINATED

You have become enlightened, and sometimes receive information telepathically from the Secret Masters.

The Secret Masters are the benevolent, enlightened conspiracy fighting to make global (or even universal) society perfect – at least, that’s what they told you.

When you send a message telepathically to the Secret Masters, roll +Weird.

- On a 10 or more, the Secret Masters reveal a key fact, clue, or technique that will help you.
- On a 7-9, the Secret Masters need you to complete a task for them. Once it is done, they reveal a key fact, clue, or technique that will help you.
- On a 6 or less, the Secret Masters’ reply is terrible, garbled, or somehow wrong.

Advanced Illuminated. When you advance your **illuminated** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, the Secret Masters reveal a key fact, clue, or technique that will help you. You may ask one follow up question that the Keeper will answer honestly.

NO LIMITS

When you need to push your physical body past its limits, roll +Weird.

- On a 10 or more, your body obeys your will, to the limits of physical possibility.
- On a 7-9, you do it but choose one consequence: suffer 1-harm, take -1 forward, or you need to rest right now.
- On a 6 or less, something goes horribly wrong.

Advanced No Limits. If you advance your **no limits** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, you can continue to ignore your body’s limits for 30 seconds.

For the purposes of this move, “physical possibility” means “conceivably possible for some human.” For example:

Physically Possible

Lift an SUV
Jump over a truck
Punch through a brick wall

Not Physically Possible

Lift a skyscraper
Fly
Punch a blast of energy at a foe

PAST LIVES

When you open up your brain to your previous incarnations hoping to discover something, roll +Weird.

- On a 10 or more, a past life has something useful to offer. Ask the Keeper two of the questions below.
- On a 7-9, a past life has a little experience. Ask the Keeper one of the questions below.
- On a 6 or less, a past life takes over for a while.

Advanced Past Lives. If you advance your **past lives** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, a past life knows exactly what you were after. Ask the Keeper one of the questions below, and one free form question. Gain +1 ongoing acting on the answers.

Past Lives questions:

- What did a past life discover about _____?
- How did a past life deal with _____?
- What important hidden secrets can a past life show me the way to?
- What did a past life learn to late to help them?
- What can specific past life _____ tell me?

SENSITIVE

When you open up your brain to the local psychic environment, roll +Weird.

Although you will find out something important, it's not necessarily going to relate to your current concerns and the mystery you are investigating right now.

- On a 10 or more, you gain a definite impression (a vision, tangible aura, overheard thought, etc) about something here that is important.
- On a 7-9, you gain a hazy impression about something here that is important.
- On a 6 or less, your brain is in contact with something dangerous.

Advanced Sensitive. When you advance your **sensitive** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, you get an impression as for 10 or more, plus you may ask one follow up question that the Keeper will answer honestly.

TRUST YOUR GUT

When you consult your instincts about what to do next, roll +Weird.

Note that your gut *will* point you somewhere important, but it does not care about your concerns right now. The current mystery is just one important thing amongst many for your hunter.

- On a 10 or more, the Keeper will tell where you should go. Wherever that is, it will be important. You get +1 ongoing while you are following this lead.
- On a 7-9, the Keeper will tell you a general direction to go. Take +1 forward as you explore that.
- On a 6 or less, your instincts lead you into danger.

Advanced Trust Your Gut. If you advance your **trust your gut** basic move, add this:

- On a 12 or more in addition to the usual 10+ result, the Keeper will tell you one thing you intuitively know is important.

TELEKINESIS

When you move something with your mind, despite the pain, roll +Weird.

- On a 10 or more, you move it. Choose two options and mark 1-harm.
- On a 7-9, you move it, but it hurts. Choose one option and mark 2-harm.
- On a 6 or less, something goes horribly wrong.

Telekinesis options (anything not picked is not true):

- Something is held fast.
- Something is hurt (2-harm smash).
- Something catches fire.
- You can move something bigger than a person.
- Suffer 1 less harm.

Advanced Telekinesis. When you advance your **telekinesis** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, you may also choose from the advanced options.

Advanced telekinesis options:

- Something explodes (3-harm fire area messy)
- Something implodes (3-harm crush)
- Lots of stuff is flying under your control.
- You have perfect, fine control over exactly what happens.

WEIRD SCIENCE

When you want to create or adapt a device to analyse or deal with a strange phenomenon, say what it will do and roll +Weird.

- On a 10 or more, you pick one requirement.
- On a 7-9, you pick one requirement and the Keeper picks another.
- On a 6 or less, something goes horribly wrong.

Weird science requirements:

- It needs a rare and/or weird material.
- It won't be very reliable.
- It requires huge amounts of power or fuel.
- It will take a long time to get it working.
- I won't work exactly as you intended.
- You'll need help (beyond the hunters on your team) to finish it.

Advanced Weird Science. When you advance your **weird science** move, add this:

- On a 12 or more, you gain +1 ongoing when operating the device.

PHENOMENA

Mystery creation goes the same as normal *Monster of the Week* games for monster-centred mysteries.

For phenomenon mysteries, planning is slightly different. Instead of starting with a monster, start with the main source of weirdness. A phenomenon needs the following details:

- A description of what's going on.
- A phenomenon type and motivation.
- What effects it has on hunters (and other bystanders) who get too close.
- What its weakness is (this works differently to monster weaknesses).
- Custom moves for its effects (optional but recommended).

These are the possible phenomenon types:

- **Alien** (motivation: to be unfathomable).
- **Artifact** (motivation: to grant someone more power than they can handle).
- **Biohazard** (motivation: to harm all that ventures within).
- **Biohazard** (motivation: to infect, harm, and spread).
- **Bubble** (motivation: to keep inside things inside, and outside things outside).
- **Conspiracy** (motivation: to keep secrets and create confusion).
- **Corruption** (motivation: to change the laws of the universe).
- **Experiment** (motivation: to unleash dangers).
- **Mutagen** (motivation: to transform creatures and people).
- **Panic** (motivation: to make people act irrationally).
- **Teratogen** (motivation: to make creatures and people into monsters).

Create custom moves for a phenomenon the same way you would for a monster, based on your concept and what it might be able to do. Every phenomenon should have at least one custom move to describe what it does.

Weaknesses for a phenomenon are not what allows it be defeated or killed, but instead the secrets or discoveries that will allow the hunters to mitigate, undo, or prevent what it wants to do. In general, create one weakness that allows the hunters to *stop the phenomenon* (or to stop its bad effects) and, if applicable, another that allows them to *cure those who were affected*.

For example: The phenomenon is a time loop (type: Bubble) that has a town stuck repeating one afternoon, and prevents anyone from leaving. It is caused by strange crystals that were discovered in the mine that is the town's main industry. The phenomenon's weakness is that it

must be able to radiate energy to create the effect – if the crystals are contained (by returning them to the mine, placing them in a special containment device, or something like that) then the effect will stop.

You should create a countdown for the mystery as normal. However, rather than thinking about a monster's plan and how it will get worse, you should think about how the phenomenon will become more and more dangerous as it grows without constraint.

Other threats for the mystery should be created, too. There will be bystanders and places as usual, and often minions (including people taking advantage of, or believing they control, the phenomenon). There could even be monsters created by the phenomenon, that need to be defeated in the usual ways.

PHENOMENA THREAT MOVES

These are the threat moves a phenomenon can use during the mystery:

- Hint at its effects.
- Show its effects directly and undeniably.
- Break the world's laws.
- Increase or decrease in size or intensity.
- Create some new weirdness.
- Harm or destroy someone or something.
- React unexpectedly.
- Escape from containment.
- Hold something in place.
- Grant an unnatural ability.
- Hinder movement.
- Subvert a bystander's motivation.

Because phenomena are more varied in their motivations and powers than monsters, you should rely more on custom moves for each phenomenon. Note down a few things for each that cover specific things it might do. These may well overlap with the general phenomenon moves, but it will help you to have specifics for your phenomenon.

For example, the time loop example above might have:

- If you try to leave the time loop area, you find yourself back in town with a short block of missing time.
- The crystals cause a weird subsonic buzzing feeling when you are near them.
- At 8:23pm, the time resets to 12:16pm of the same day.

- Only those who entered the town after the crystals began looping time can perceive the multiple loops. Those who were there at the start just live the same afternoon over and over without noticing or remembering previous loops.

A MINI-SUPPLEMENT FOR MONSTER OF THE WEEK

By Michael Sands.

Revised version: 16 January 2017.

Find out more at <http://www.genericgames.co.nz/motw/>.

