

WISDOM FROM THE WASTELANDS

Issue #7: Planar Creatures & Concepts



By Derek Holland and the Skirmisher Game Development Group

One mutation that could greatly influence a campaign setting and its population is *plane shift*. Once a planar gate is opened, anything that comes through will affect the *Mutant Future* world. New arrivals could include seeds, spores, eggs, creatures, diseases, energy, technology, or even changes in the laws of physics. This issue provides a few example creatures, mutations, and energies from alternate realities.

Broken Seal

No. Enc.: 1 (0)
 Alignment: Chaotic
 Movement: Swim 90' (30')
 Armor Class: 6
 Hit Dice: 4
 Attacks: 1 (touch)
 Damage: 4d6
 Save: L2
 Morale: 12
 Hoard Class: None

Broken Seals are strange creatures which are the size and rough shape of the eponymous sea mammal but appear to be made from melting rubber and dripping with an acidic mucus. After passing through a planar gate, the creature will be in obvious agony and lash out at everything nearby. Broken Seals cannot survive contact with air for very long and each round of exposure inflicts 1d6 points of damage as the creatures rapidly dry out. In fact, they cannot even move on land, and just flop in place. Even if Broken Seals are in water (either fresh or salt), their bodies still dry out, but they can survive for much longer and only take 1d6 points of damage per hour. They swim fairly well but still thrash from the pain, which slows them considerably.

Broken Seals are a threat to anything that touches them,



as their corrosive slime is sticky and hazardous and can be removed only with alcohol and contained by neovulcanium. When Broken Seals die, their corpses dissolve the ground they lie on, eventually creating holes that can be as much as 100 yards deep. Scavengers, even bacteria, do not consume the corpses, which take a long time to finally break down. Despite — or, rather because of — their hazardous nature, Broken Seals are more common in the *Mutant Future* world than one might think, and their acid is popular with some groups of mutants, which transport the creatures to this plane so they can harvest the seals' acid to use as a weapon (3d6 damage). Such mutants make no effort to keep the Broken Seals alive and take the acid once the creatures are dead.

Mutations: *dermal acid sap (variant), epidermal susceptibility, special.*

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This publication is dedicated to providing useful information, game content, and ideas to players of modern, science fiction, and post-apocalyptic table-top and role-playing games in general and to fans of Goblinoid Games' *Mutant Future* RPG in particular. The material contained herein are compatible with it and any others that use the "Basic" system introduced in the most popular role-playing games of the early 1970s and are easily adaptable to many other games (especially successor systems, to include those covered by the Open Game License).

Broom of Doom

No. Enc.: 1 (0)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: Fly 150' (50')
Armor Class: 5
Hit Dice: 25
Attacks: Special
Damage: Special
Save: L15
Morale: 12
Hoard Class: XII

Brooms of Doom (BoD) are huge creatures that appear as 75'-diameter balls covered with straw-colored hair up to 150' long. The hair hangs down and is used to capture prey; any creature below the BoD and within reach of the hair is attacked and must save versus poison at -6. Those failing are paralyzed for 2d4 hours, more than enough time for the BoD to draw them up for consumption. BoD compact themselves into 10'-diameter spheres when resting and in this form they can fit through a *plane shift* gate. BoD do not have to deal with flying predators on their home world and their inability to defend their sides or tops is a weakness that keeps them from expanding into a top-level predator. Also, their hair burns very easily, so any fire damage they take is increased by 50%.

Mutations: *frailty (fire), toxic weapon, webbing (new).*

Hairy Star

No. Enc.: 1 (0)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 150' (50')
Armor Class: 7
Hit Dice: 9
Attacks: 1 (bite)
Damage: 3d4
Save: L5
Morale: 7
Hoard Class: None

These strange creatures appear similar to brittlestars or a form of mobile sea lily but are gigantic and their 30'-diameter bodies covered with six-dozen heavily-furred arms colored in vivid schemes of purples, reds, and yellows. At the end of each arm, Hairy Stars have eyespots that can detect movement, but little else (*vision impairment*). The majority of the creatures' sensory organs are located on their undersides, along with a dozen small, weak tentacles and a beak, well-suited for finding and gathering food. On their home world, Hairy Stars feed on insects and other small creatures in the soil, but on this plane they are reduced to eating stones with chemical compositions similar to their food, an accommodation which barely sustains them. In fact, most Hairy Stars starve to death within a week of arriving. Creatures that attack or pester a Hairy Star will be bitten but, should the attacker prove a grave threat, the Hairy Star will drop a still-wiggling arm and attempt to escape. These bites

are a serious danger because the stars' saliva contains a very unusual toxin that will cause any victim failing a save versus poison to slowly transform into an ooze over 1d4 weeks (use gray ooze or black pudding stats based on the size of the victim).

Mutations: *aberrant form (xenochemistry) (new), vision impairment (drawback), toxic weapon.*

Kettle

No. Enc.: d4 (0)
Alignment: Neutral
Movement: 180' (60')
Armor Class: 4
Hit Dice: 5
Attacks: 4 (tools)
Damage: d4/d4/d4/d4
Save: L5
Morale: 10
Hoard Class: Special

Kettles are living clockwork machines that come from a steampunk plane. The laws of physics allow their continued existence in the *Mutant Future* world, and Kettles have even adapted to thrive among this plane's junkpiles. Each creature is an individual, and each has a very unique appearance; most Kettles are made of wood and metal, but they can be made of anything from flesh to ice to stone. Despite this varied material composition, the energy powering Kettles makes them all identical mechanically (i.e., in game terms), and the creatures do not suffer penalties related to their makeup (e.g., an ice Kettle will not take extra damage from fire). When destroyed, this energy leaves the Kettle, which then collapses into a pile of its constituent, normal, materials.

Kettles have become a serious danger to this world. It seems the transfer from their home plane corrupted their minds and, while they were originally created to repair



machinery, they now can think of nothing beyond reproduction. Kettles are sapient but, if not building an “offspring,” they become agitated, violently tearing up everything nearby. As any object, building, or entity can be used to make a Kettle, the creatures are never far from raw materials. Once constructed, the new Kettle needs only a transfer of the parent’s energy to become active.

Mutations: *special.*

Zander

No. Enc.: 1 (0)
 Alignment: Neutral
 Movement: 120' (40')
 Climb 90' (30')
 Armor Class: 5
 Hit Dice: 6
 Attacks: 1 (slam)
 Damage: 4d4
 Save: L3
 Morale: 10
 Hoard Class: None

Zanders are arboreal hunters that look like 12'-long spines or tusks, 8-15" in diameter, and covered in small tentacles. The species is named for Zander, the first human slain by this creature, although there are other names for it, including tree-spear, gut spike, and skull spike. Zanders have adapted to life in this universe fairly well, although they are extremely solitary and mark their hunting grounds with odors to keep each other out (because the marking smells like grease or motor oil, it also lures in gearhead scavengers). The largest territories can be several dozen square miles but dangerous trees or a lack of them usually mean this area is much smaller.

These carnivorous creatures hunt by dropping from above, spearing their prey and releasing 1d4+1 finger-sized barbs into the victim. These barbs work like bee stingers, being difficult to remove from the flesh, and constantly releasing a class 4 poison for the first eight rounds it is embedded. After a Zander hits, it moves away from its prey, allowing the poison to kill and minimizing danger to itself. Should the victim move, each barb also inflicts 1d2 points of damage per round of activity. Because Zanders only have 20 barbs to use per day, they do not use more on a creature already barbed and poisoned. Once a victim is dead, the zander consumes it with tiny mouths hidden at its base, then climbs back into the trees using its tentacles. Zanders are popular trophy creatures with some mutant tribes, so more of them will be released into the *Mutant Future* world for the foreseeable future.

Mutations: *toxic weapon.*

NEW MUTATIONS

Aberrant Form (Xenochemistry) (D)

This mutation first appeared in the Skirmisher Publishing LLC sourcebook *Creatures of the Wastelands* and can be found online on a section of the Skirmisher Forum dedicated to this publication, at <http://skirmisher.com/node/437>.



Alter Flavor

The mutant can alter the flavor of any object it touches. The effects are permanent and can remove a food’s bad taste or disguise toxic substances.

Chemical Gland

The mutant has a new organ allowing it to produce one substance. This material could be industrial (e.g., glue), medicinal (e.g. stim-shot A), toxic, or just about anything else, and the GM and player must work together to decide which substance is created. The number of doses produced per day equals three plus the mutant’s Willpower score modifier, with a minimum of one dose.

Chemical Gland, Adaptive

This functions as a normal *chemical gland* except that the substance produced by this chemical gland can be changed once per week. This process requires that the mutant have been exposed to the substance in question.

Filter Food

The mutant’s mouth has been altered so that it can only feed on very small animals, seeds, spores, and the like. The fungal spores ever-present in the air means the mutant will not starve to death but, unless a good source of food is discovered, the mutant will weaken, suffering a -2 Strength penalty (or a -2 to hit penalty for monsters), and only able to move at half its standard movement rate.

Filter Light

The mutant’s eyes are altered, able to select what kinds of

light it will see. This means the mutant is immune to physical illusions (although mental illusions still work), glare, and blinding attacks. If the mutant is surprised, it can be blinded but receives a +6 bonus on its saving throw.

Filter Sound

The mutant's ears have been altered so that it can select what kinds of sound it can hear. It is immune to non-damaging sonic attacks, and has a +2 save bonus versus damaging sonic attacks.

Imprint Data

The mutant can store memories or emotions on objects. Up to one hour of memories can be stored per 10 pounds. The imprinted information can be read by anyone who touches the object and wills it to reveal the stored memory. The object will lose the memories or emotion after one week.

Induce Mutation

With a touch, the mutant can cause a mutation or drawback in others, the effect lasting one day. The mutation or drawback in question is rolled or selected when this mutation is obtained. Some MLs may want to restrict it to the mutant's existing mutations and drawbacks but that is not required.

Inflict Pain

The mutant's touch causes agony. Those struck must save versus death or suffer debilitating pain for 2d4 rounds, which inflicts a -6 penalty to hit, +6 penalty to AC, and -50% penalty on technology rolls.

Mental Phantasm, Species Specific

The mutant produces illusions that only affects others members of its race. These images are usually used as a form of communication that other species cannot detect, but some species use this power to prey on their own kind. In all other ways, treat this ability as the *mental phantasm* mutation found in the *Mutant Future* core rulebook.

Modify Mutation, Others

With a touch, the mutant possessing this power can alter another's mutations. This can mean modifying a save related to the affected mutation by +/-2, making some cosmetic changes, or slightly mitigating a drawback. The target can make a save versus poison to avoid an undesired change. This mutation can be used three times per day and the result lasts for one hour.

Modify Mutation, Self

This power allows a character to manipulate another one of his mutations, which must be selected or rolled for when this mutation is obtained. The mutant is able to affect an applicable save, if any, by +/-2; increase or decrease damage by three points per die; modify a poison's intensity by two levels in either direction (or allow the mutant to have two different kinds of poison); or slightly mitigate a drawback for up to eight hours per day.

Restore Life

The mutant can bring back the dead for a short time, temporarily restoring the target character's life, personality, and intelligence (rather than merely animating them). The brain and whatever contains it (e.g., a head) must be intact. The recipient will be alive until the head is destroyed, or 36 hours have passed. A dead character can be restored only once with this power (although some other might be employed thereafter). There is no save against this effect.

Summon Ghost

The mutant can bring forth a dead creature's memories as a phantom. The figure can be seen and heard for an hour, during which time the mutant is free to question it and the "ghost" will answer to the best of its ability and knowledge. The mutant must touch some of the creature's remains, which can be anything from a corpse to ashes. After fading, the ghost cannot be brought back again by this mutant, although others with the power can each bring back the same person one time. In some rare communities, remains of dead leaders are kept available so that they can be contacted for advice during times of dire need.

Unique Sense, Cosmic

This mind-bending new form of *unique sense* allows the possessor to see the fabric of the universe. The mutant is able to detect everything within 30' but is unable to do anything while using the sense (usually a third eye). Over time, using this mutation erodes the mutant's sanity and a save versus death is needed every tenth use. Failure means the mutant becomes catatonic or falls into a coma, permanent conditions unless the mutant is healed by a telepath (who may go into a coma himself, depending on the memories he must confront).

View Descendants

This mutation provides a glimpse of the future — sort of. By touching any living creature, and activating this power, the mutant is able to see all the entity's possible descendants for 10 generations, and their major accomplishments, if any. Rulers use this mutation to control their living legacy by selecting those of their brood most likely to survive and thrive.

Webbing

The mutant produces silk in a caterpillar-like manner (i.e., from the mouth). Up to 25' of rope can be produced per day, a process taking about 10 minutes. The silk line is not sticky but can be used to make traps, like any other string or rope. The webbing decays in three months.

Wormhole

The mutant can open a 10'x10' hole in space-time connecting any two points within 300 miles of each other. Some mutants use this mutation to crush opponents (e.g., by bringing orbital junk to earth), while others use it for transport. The power can be used once per day and the wormhole remains open for 10 rounds.

NEW ENERGIES

When characters use the *plane shift* mutation to open gates to other universes, strange energies are sometimes released into the *Mutant Future* world, causing bizarre phenomena. Sometimes these result from the effect of actual energies, while other times they occur when different physical laws from other universes bleed into the *Mutant Future* reality.

Animator

This form of energy mutates and/or animates machines; even scrapped robots can be warped and brought to life. Roll d4+2 times on the physical mutations chart to see what powers the affected machines gain. Generally, this energy radiating from a gate affects all machines within 200'. Active, intelligent machines can save versus stun to avoid this effect.

Biocide

This energy kills living things. It may target a single species, those with a specific mutation or trait, or have a much broader effect. Some variations cause damage (1d4 to 5d20 points of damage per round), while others simply destroy (save versus death). The typical range for this effect is 50'.

Brain Twister

Some energies alter the behavior of creatures within the field. In game terms, this could mean an alignment change or gaining a mental drawback. The typical range is 100'. A save versus death negates the effect while a particular gate is open. If another gate spilling this energy is opened, everyone in range must save again.

Gravity Ripples

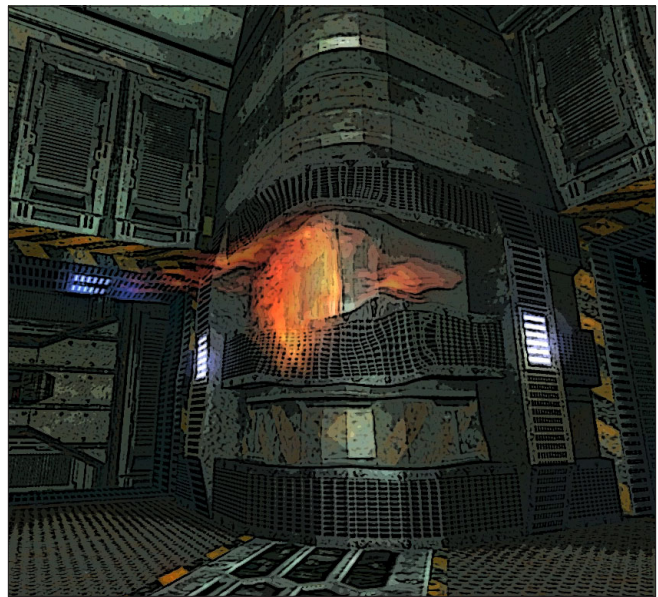
Every round the gate is open, the gravity within 1,000' of it changes. Roll 1d20 to determine the exact effects. On 1-10, the number of gravities (Gs) the area increases by the number rolled. On 11-20, the local gravity decreases to 9/10ths, 8/10ths, etc., with a 20 producing a result of 0 G. Some gates produce the same gravity effect every time they are opened but, for some unknown reason, ripples are more common, requiring a roll for effect each time a gate is created.

Magic

Almost any spell from any game or other source (e.g., film, novel, game) can be replicated with planar energies.

Mental Parasites

These creatures are made of energy and can only exist within a biological creature or a machine — any machine, including those without computers (i.e., even a see-saw could have a parasite, albeit a very bored one). When they arrive through a gate, most parasites have only a few minutes to find a host. Each “species” has unique requirements and characteristics: some parasite forms must have a host to themselves, while other forms can share a host with thousands of the same creature; some types could spread through touch, short range through air, wires, or even radio waves, while others reproduce; some are intelligent and care for their hosts' well-being, others are analogous to viruses.



Time Slip

Those within 25' of this gate are thrown into some other time — which could be forward or backward and anywhere from a few minutes to a billion years. Some mutants who have access to these time streams can use them as a form of escape. Mutant Lords are encouraged to deal with time paradoxes in their own fashion.

Transformation

This effect can be anything: growing a wart, morphing into a mental parasite, becoming pure energy (which may or may not have the same effect as the initial energy). The mutation charts are handy guides for possible transformations, but they can also be limiting, so consider using them as basic examples or inspiration for other changes.

Translocation

Those within 25' of these energies are thrown to another location, which could be anywhere within or even outside the universe (although most locations are limited to a few hundred miles).

Transmutation Field

A wide variety of energies can cause transmutations, somehow changing one element or substance to another (like a polymorph spell that affects elements or molecules, rather than whole objects). The changes might be immediate or take centuries, there can be intermediary forms, or there can be energies that the elements absorb or release. In some cases, certain elemental mixtures (like living creatures) are immune to being changed, but in most instances these are just as vulnerable as another material that contains that element or substance. This change usually kills or weakens the affected creatures (e.g., a tree hit with energy that transmutes carbon into iron will result in a dead metal tree that has some other elements mixed in with the iron). The transmutation can also produce atoms with familiar weights but different characteristics (i.e., alien elements not on the periodic table).

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