

PYRAMID



Issue 3/45 July '12

MONSTERS

INHUMAN OPTIONS

by Jason "PK" Levine

THE SAD LOST GOD
by Matt Riggsby

HALF ALIVE
by Michele Armellini

THE FORMATION
by J. Edward Tremlett

ZOMBIE PREDATORS
by David L. Pulver

THE WILD HUNT
by Christopher R. Rice

A CORRUPT SYSTEM
by Bekki Leddon

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-2645



CONTENTS

IN THIS ISSUE

FROM THE EDITOR 3

INHUMAN OPTIONS 4
by Jason "PK" Levine

THE SAD LOST GOD 8
by Matt Riggsby

EIDETIC MEMORY: ZOMBIE PREDATORS . . 11
by David L. Pulver

HALF ALIVE 15
by Michele Armellini

THE FORMATION 18
by J. Edward Tremlett

THE WILD HUNT..... 23
by Christopher R. Rice

A CORRUPT SYSTEM 30
by Bekki Leddon

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE:
ON EVIL AND INTEGERS 33
by Steven Marsh, *Pyramid* Editor

ODDS AND ENDS 35

ABOUT GURPS..... 36

Whoever said the most fearsome monsters are those that lurk within the human soul has never been split in twain by a mummy. This issue of *Pyramid* is devoted to things that go bump in the night . . . or that make more horrifying sounds!

GURPS Monster Hunters offers possibilities for monstrous heroes who fight for humanity. These *Inhuman Options* are expanded by series' designer and **GURPS** Assistant Line Editor Jason "PK" Levine. Use the four **GURPS** templates provided for **Monster Hunters** or any campaign where someone wants to play a ghost, mummy, or noble fae!

Not all ancient entities faded into oblivion. *The Sad Lost God* – described by **GURPS Locations: Hellsgate** author Matt Riggsby – seeks to regain power by gathering believers. As the number of people who consider him real grows, so too do his powers. This feature includes campaign suggestions and **GURPS** stats for this up-and-coming deity.

David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Banestorm: Abydos** – exposes the "truth" behind contrails, public-water fluoridation, and the secret federal project designed to prevent a zombie apocalypse in this month's *Eidetic Memory*. It'd be a perfect plan if it weren't for the *Zombie Predators* (**GURPS** stats provided).

Wanted: Brave heroes to aid misunderstood monster to be more than *Half Alive*. Michele Armellini (author of **GURPS WWII: Grim Legions**) explores a tragic tale of magic gone bad – and its resultant monstrosity. Suitable for **GURPS Banestorm** or any other fantasy setting, this feature includes **GURPS** stats for the fearsome fiend.

Humanity has dealt with parasites since the dawn of time – but these crystalline parasites from outer space are something else entirely! What does *The Formation* want with Earth? Find out in this systemless article that describes the entities' history, development, transmission, and more.

Are you prepared to face *The Wild Hunt*? You will be, with this feature that builds off this issue's new options for **GURPS Monster Hunters**. Herein is revealed the strengths and weaknesses of the powerful and dreaded fae, plus **GURPS** monster stats for six new types of creatures with ties to the plane of Faerie.

What if you were enmeshed in a conspiracy your entire life, and never knew it? Discover humanity's hidden puppeteer . . . before it discovers *you*, and makes you part of *A Corrupt System*.

This month's *Random Thought Table* examines the quality and quantity of evilness, and how you can adjust old monster ideas to new heights of wickedness. Rounding out the issue is an assortment of *Odds and Ends* sure to get your spine tingling.

Whether you're looking for new horrific heroic options, exploring sinister towers, or working to keep the streets safe, this issue of *Pyramid* is sure to have the *fright* stuff.

Article Colors

Each article is color-coded to help you find your favorite sections.

- Pale Blue*: In This Issue
- Brown*: In Every Issue (letters, humor, editorial, etc.)
- Dark Blue*: **GURPS** Features
- Purple*: Systemless Features

COVER ART

Michael Whelan

Editor-in-Chief ■ STEVE JACKSON
e23 Manager ■ STEVEN MARSH
GURPS Line Editor ■ SEAN PUNCH
Assistant **GURPS** Line Editor ■
JASON "PK" LEVINE

Art Director ■ SAMUEL MITSCHKE
Assistant Art Director ■ BRIDGET WESTERMAN
Production Artist ■ NIKOLA VRTIS
Prepress Checker ■ MONICA STEPHENS

Chief Operating Officer ■ PHILIP REED
Marketing Director ■ MONICA VALENTINELLI
Director of Sales ■ ROSS JEPSON
Page Design ■ PHIL REED and
JUSTIN DE WITT

FROM THE EDITOR

MONSTERS, MONSTERS EVERYWHERE

From a certain point of view, there are two kinds of campaigns: those that have monsters in them and those that haven't dealt with any monsters *yet*. The campaigns that haven't had a monstrous visitation yet can buck that trend at any time. Provided there's room for even an inch of weirdness, credible threats can creep in from the corner. Of course, this doesn't preclude the possibility of entirely *mundane* "monsters" – such as a computer that's run amok (pp. 30-32).

Meanwhile, those campaigns that *do* have monsters can always use more. If it's a truism that nearly all successful gaming worlds have magic in them, then "also has monsters" is a corollary only one notch below that. Plus, once you start adding monsters, it's so much fun to keep introducing *new* ones.

It's in that spirit of constantly keeping the shadows sinister that this issue exists. Whether you're looking to expand *GURPS Monster Hunters* into new directions, add something

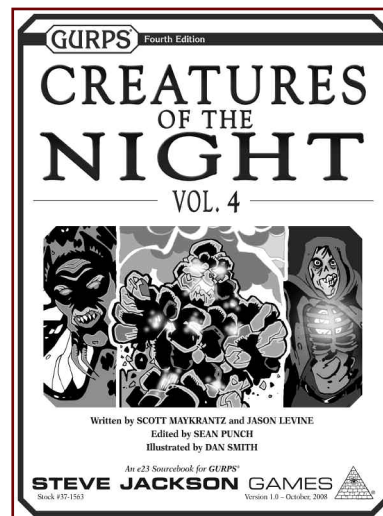
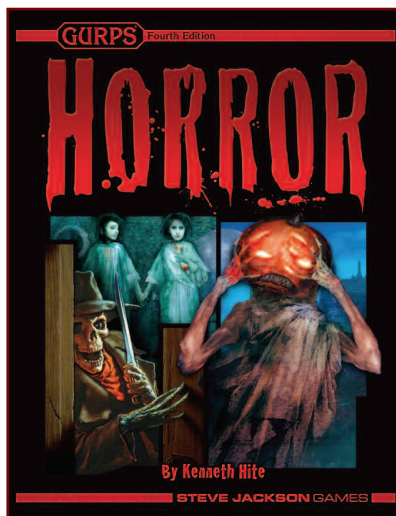
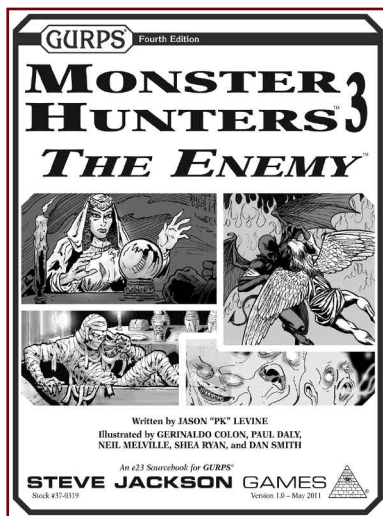
slathering to a fantasy world, or infect a space station with dark and dangerous beings, you should be able to find something in this issue to sate your appetite.

Even more importantly, the critters herein hopefully will provide inspiration for you to devise derivations and deviants for your own dinner-table denizens. After all, when it comes to creating credible threats for the heroes of your campaign, you know better than anyone which buttons to press . . .

WRITE HERE, WRITE NOW

Speaking of pressing buttons, did something in this issue trigger your "terrific" toggle? Or did something herein make you think we should give up the monster mash? Let us know how we're doing at keeping our monsters in order privately pyramid@sjgames.com, or deliver your daring ideas online at forums.sjgames.com.

Don't forget that we always encourage would-be word-smiths to try their hand at writing for us. Information for how to contribute is online at sjgames.com/pyramid/writing.html.



Pyramid, *GURPS*, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. e23 and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. *Pyramid* is copyright © 2012 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. All rights reserved.

Submission of your photos, letters, humor, captions, and marginalia constitutes permission to Steve Jackson Games Incorporated to use them in all media. All such submissions become the property of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated and will not be returned.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the authors' rights is appreciated.

INHUMAN OPTIONS

BY JASON “PK” LEVINE

Fiction is full of monsters who’ve renounced their wicked ways to become some of the fiercest champions for Good. Monster-hunting books, shows, and films are full of renegade angels and atoning vampires, demons, and lycanthropes. But there’s room for some less-common creatures as well!

In a *Monster Hunters* game, the templates below add to the options found in Chapter 5 of *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions*. Any inhuman PC (or anyone with the monstrous lens from *GURPS Monster Hunters 4: Sidekicks*) may now choose to be a changeling, ghost, mummy, or seelie. Note that everything said in *Champions* (p. 49) and *Why Aren’t I This Tough?* (*GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy*, p. 3) applies here; these are inhumans who’ve traded monstrous ferocity for rational behavior and Doing the Right Thing.

For every *other* game, these templates can be used for anything from playable PCs through dangerous NPCs to mindless monsters ready to slaughter. Use the seelie in a fantasy game in place of standard elves, tweak the ghost’s Dread into one of “electric fields” to make it an incorporeal alien race in a sci-fi game, or unleash *all* of them on the party in a horror game! Note that, due to a quirk of *Monster Hunters*, none have been given Unaging [15]; in most other settings, this will be a necessity, raising each template to 215 points.

*There was no woman like her –
she had the most bewitching eyes.
They were rich brown like chestnuts,
her lips red like pressed wine . . .
She was like a changeling sprite
or fairy from the forest wide.*

– *The Black Miner*,
in *Black Diamond*

FAE WEAKNESSES

Two of the templates below, the changeling and seelie, are fae. Much like demon or outcast angel champions, these fae have renounced their connection to the spirit world of Faerie –

giving up many of their normal inherent advantages, yet keeping many of their weaknesses.

Glamour

All fae seem beautiful and striking, but this is a lie. In truth, each is remarkably plain in appearance. This is represented with the Glamour limitation on certain advantages. Anyone looking directly at the fae (not just a passing glance) may make a Will-4 roll to see and hear the fae’s true self, ignoring the effects of the advantage being used. For glamoured Appearance or Voice, this is not a big deal – the fae merely seems less appealing to the resistant person, who may wonder why his friends are so enraptured by this stranger. With glamoured Invisibility or Morph, the fae must be especially cautious, with a backup plan in case he’s recognized!

Iron

Fae take double damage from weapons made of iron – but not iron *alloys* such as steel – and are thus uncomfortable around iron in general. In a modern game, iron weapons are *rare*. In a game where iron weapons are more common, the fae’s Weakness doubles in value, reducing each template to 190 points; the GM should let the player spend the extra 10 points freely. See *Iron Weapons* (p. 5) for costs and details.

Name

Every fae guards his True Name jealously, even from close friends, because once a foe has invoked it (by stating it to the fae), that fae cannot directly or indirectly take action to harm that foe. This even includes asking friends to do it or explaining what the problem is so they know to do it themselves! Fortunately, there is no simple way to acquire this information; the GM should thus make this a very rare occurrence unless the fae champion is especially careless.

If the fae takes action that *inadvertently* results in the foe’s death, he is absolved, but the GM should be *very* harsh in adjudicating this. If he feels that the fae intentionally bent or broke this rule, the player receives no bonus character points for the adventure. The GM is *also* encouraged to turn karma (in the form of Unluckiness or Weirdness Magnet) against the PC until he feels that the scales have balanced.

There are exceptions. The foe may always “unname” the fae, in which case the fae is free to act as if his True Name had never been invoked; this is typically done as a sign of trust.

As well, if the foe requests or gives permission to take an action that results in his harm, the fae is absolved.

Example: Moran (a vampire) has invoked the True Name of Jenna (a seelie champion): “Ananda.” He then blackmails her, threatening to tell everyone her True Name unless she burns down Representative Grayson’s house. Jenna does some research, and discovers that Grayson (via his holding company) bought up most of the slum property in town, *including* the house Moran is currently squatting in. Jenna is then happy to “burn down Grayson’s house” – it just happens to be the one with Moran inside!

Iron Weapons

Use the following modifiers for iron weapons. Note that, despite their low cost, iron weapons will be rare in a modern game! See *Iron* (p. 4) for more on such weapons in low-tech campaigns.

Iron (Melee Weapon): Double damage against fae (or only +50% damage if combined with Silver-Coated). Gives +2 to odds of breakage. Cannot be combined with Fine, Silver, Titanium, or Very Fine. Any weapon: +0 CF.

Iron (Arrow or Bolt): Double damage against fae. +4 CF.

Iron (Ammo Payload Option):* Double damage against fae. +2 CF.

* Hand-loaded; see *Champions* (p. 63).

CHANGELING

200 points

You are a trickster fae, able to cloud the minds of those around you into seeing you as you are not. You normally appear as a more-beautiful version of yourself, but with a second of thought, you can instead copy the appearance of any other person – or simply remove your “appearance” altogether, becoming invisible! This is a glamour (p. 4), however, which means you cannot trust it completely.

While most changelings are dangerously capricious (and often downright murderous), you’ve managed to keep hold of that part of your personality. Still, you tend to act before thinking, and hate passing up opportunities to mock an enemy. Your natural combination of stealth, intelligence, and magical aptitude allow you a wide variety of roles in the party.

Attribute Modifiers: DX+1 [20]; IQ+2 [40].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Basic Speed-0.25 [-5].

Advantages: Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome; Glamour, Will-4, -10%) [3]*; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Invisibility (Glamour, Will-4, -10%; Reduced Time 1, +20%; Switchable, +10%) [9]*; Magery 0 [5]; Morph (Cosmetic, -50%; Glamour, Will-4, -10%; Reduced Time 5, +100%) [140]*.

Disadvantages: Curious (15) [-2]; Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name) [-5]; Impulsiveness (12) [-10]; Trickster (12) [-15]; Vulnerability (Iron×2) [-10].

Features: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Sterile; Taboo Trait (Appearance or Voice without the Glamour limitation).

* Appearance, Invisibility, and Morph are *alternative abilities*; in general, these follow the rules for *Alternative Attacks* (p. B61) except that it takes one Ready maneuver to switch between them. (Using each of the advantages is a free action; thus, this single Ready maneuver is all that’s required.)

GHOST

200 points

You died . . . but let’s not dwell on the past! For whatever reason, you stuck around, and that’s working out pretty well for you. You’re fully self-aware and realize what you are. However, you must choose a single -5-point Compulsive Behavior, Delusion, or Obsession related to your death. For example, if a

werewolf mauled you to death, you might have Obsession (Remove all werewolves from the world) (15) [-5].

Normally, you are invisible and insubstantial. However, you do leave a distinct cold spot wherever you travel, in about a one-yard radius; anyone you pass over may make a Per roll to realize something weird just happened. You may become visible with a single Ready maneuver, and maintain this indefinitely; it takes another Ready maneuver to switch back. You may become tangible with a single Ready maneuver, but this costs you 1 FP per second! (You switch back at the beginning of any turn in which you stop paying this FP.) The two are not linked – you can be visible yet intangible, solidified yet invisible, and so on. In *all* forms, you may speak and make noise freely.

When visible, you can pass as a normal person, though your cold spot remains, and you don’t cast a shadow; these issues give you -3 to reactions and gives others +3 to realize what you are. You look as you did when you were alive (decide on the age and particulars during character creation). You normally have one “outfit” that you wear, but you may change between two or three alternates, choosing from the clothes you had in life. Or you may materialize and put on *actual* clothes, but this becomes exhausting quickly!

Your greatest weakness is to exorcisms. You cannot approach within 11 yards of anyone who succeeds at an Exorcism skill roll to drive you away. If the person continues the ritual, use the rules on p. B193; if he wins the Quick Contest, you are *permanently* unable to approach the area, person, or thing upon which the exorcism was performed.

Many ghosts become casters, as magic can cross over between the ethereal plane and the real world at only -3. Your ability to move unseen and intangibly makes you an excellent scout as well.

Attribute Modifier: ST-1 [-10].

Secondary Characteristic Modifier: HP+1 [2].

Advantages: Spirit [248]*.

Disadvantages: Dread (Exorcism; 11 yards) [-20]; Supernatural Feature (Cold Spot, see description; No Shadow) [-15].

- Choose a -5-point Compulsive Behavior, Delusion, or Obsession related to your death (see description).

Features: Affected by True Faith and Path of Undead (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Sterile.

* Modified to remove Unaging (for a net -15 points) and so that Invisibility is Switchable instead of Usually On (for a net +2 points).

*“Was he one of the people? Was he a fairy or something?
I don’t believe in fairies.”*

*“Of course you don’t believe in fairies. You’re fifteen. You think
I believed in fairies at fifteen? Took me until I was at least a
hundred and forty. Hundred and fifty, maybe.”*

– Neil Gaiman, *The Sandman, Vol. 6:
Fables and Reflections*

MUMMY

200 points

You are one of the rarest forms of undead. Your body was preserved back in ancient times, and given a funerary amulet that empowered you as a guardian of the dead. What happened to wake you up? Perhaps thieves desecrated the tomb – or dark forces threatened the souls of those you guarded. No matter the reason, you have since exercised your free will to set off on your own.

Mummies are highly resistant to being harmed. The powerful preservation you underwent makes your body effectively homogenous (and thus nearly immune to bullets) and makes it very hard to kill you. However, this is all dependent upon that amulet. Foes who wish to remove it from you can attempt to unhook the clasp from behind (takes four seconds, or two with a successful roll against DX-5, DX-based Lockpicking, or Pick-pocket at +1) or grab it (-5 to hit) and yank it off your head. The latter requires a Quick Contest of ST – or an uncontested DX roll if both of your arms are occupied and you are thus unable to resist. Without the amulet, you’re far easier to harm and kill; as well, if you don’t recover it within a month, you’ll start slowly crumbling to dust!

You normally look like a perfectly normal human being. However, you can switch into a potent “spirit form.” You must choose one such spirit form (at the time of character creation); the locust swarm and scarab are provided below, or the GM may approve any other 170-point template. Switching takes one second, after which the spirit-form template replaces your normal mummy template. Alternatively, you may remain in

human form while choosing to reveal just a “taste” of your spirit form (e.g., your eyes roll back and locusts come out, or your eyes turn into multifaceted scarab eyes); this causes everyone who can see you to make a Fright Check, though it’s tiring enough that you can only do it once per hour. (The GM should let experienced mummies buy off Takes Recharge with bonus character points.)

While enemy mummies have access to a potent “mummy’s curse,” you have voluntarily relinquished that. Using such a curse is the beginning of a slippery slope to the dark side. Instead, your powerful physical attributes make you an excellent front-line fighter; you can take hits that no one else in the party could possibly survive.

Attribute Modifier: ST+3 [30]; DX+1 [20]; HT+1 [10].

Secondary Characteristic Modifier: Basic Speed-0.50 [-10].

Advantages: Alternate Form (Absorptive Change*, Heavy Encumbrance, +20%; Reduced Time 4, +80%) [30]; Doesn’t Breathe [20]; Doesn’t Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn’t Sleep [20]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; Amulet†, -55%) [18]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Eyes) [10]; Terror (Visual; Takes Recharge, One hour, -30%) [21]; Unkillable 1 (Amulet†, -55%) [23].

Disadvantages: Dependency (Funerary Amulet; Monthly) [-30]; Overconfidence (15) [-2].

Features: Affected by True Faith and Path of Undead (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Cannot use holy items; Neither has nor uses FP; Sterile.

* You absorb worn and carried items (up to your Heavy Encumbrance level) into your body when you change into your spirit form; they reappear when you change back. If carrying more than this, the GM decides what stays behind.

† The amulet is unbreakable, but comprises Can Be Stolen (-30%; see description for details) and Unique (-25%).

Doesn’t Eat or Drink

The ghost and mummy are the only inhumans to date with Doesn’t Eat or Drink. The primary effect of this advantage is the immunity to starvation and dehydration. However, to be fair, it should also affect *Personal Cash* and *Wealth* (both *Champions*, p. 53), which include food costs – from groceries for humans to pig blood for vampires. Thus, Doesn’t Eat or Drink optionally increases monthly income from \$2,000 to \$2,150; the GM may ignore this if it’s too much detail.

Mummy (Locust Form)

170 points

You are a humanoid composed of a swarm of locusts. You are at -6 to use normal weapons, but you can “punch” or swarm over your foes. Your ST is at a net -5, but you retain full HP, and you are even harder to hurt with anything other than area-effect attacks.

Attribute Modifier: ST-2 [-20]; DX+1 [20]; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifier: HP+5 [10]; Basic Speed-0.50 [-10].
Advantages: Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; Flight [40]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Amulet, -55%; Body of Swarm*, +40%) [85]; Injury Tolerance (No Eyes) [5]; Unkillable 1 (Amulet, -55%) [23].
Disadvantages: Bad Grip 3 [-15]; Dependency (Funerary Amulet; Monthly) [-30]; Ham-Fisted 2 [-10]; Overconfidence (15) [-2]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15].
Quirk: Distinctive, "buzzing" speech. [-1].
Features: As for mummy template.

* Your body is a swarm of insects, which can sting for thrust crushing damage and is dispersed (effectively unconscious and unable to act) by injury equal to your HP. You can flow through screens, grates, or clothing in two seconds – or through armor chinks or keyholes in five seconds.

Mummy (Scarab Form)

170 points

You are a giant scarab beetle. With your armored shell (DR 5) and ability to tunnel quickly and accurately through the ground, you can surprise foes and slice them to pieces with your sharp mandibles.

Attribute Modifier: ST+3 [18]*; DX+1 [12]*; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifier: Basic Speed-0.50 [-10].
Advantages: Absolute Direction [5]; Doesn't Breathe [20]; Doesn't Eat or Drink [10]; Doesn't Sleep [20]; DR 5 (Amulet, -55%) [12]; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground) [20]; Extra Legs (Six Legs) [10]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous; Amulet, -55%) [18]; Injury Tolerance (No Blood, No Eyes) [10]; Sharp Teeth [1]; Tunneling (Move 4) [50]; Unkillable 1 (Amulet, -55%) [23].
Disadvantages: Dependency (Funerary Amulet; Monthly) [-30]; Horizontal [-10]; No Fine Manipulators [-30]; Overconfidence (15) [-2]; Social Stigma (Monster) [-15].
Quirk: Cannot Float; Distinctive, "creaking" speech. [-2].
Features: As for mummy template.

* Includes -40% for No Fine Manipulators.

SEELIE

200 points

You are a dashing, noble fae – you were likely a member of the Court back home. But this world is so much more exciting! The humans are slow, a bit dull, and have such horrible senses . . . *noblesse oblige* means you simply *must* step in and help.

In action, you are a swashbuckler. You move in quickly, take unnecessary risks, duck everything the enemy throws at you, and dispatch them all with finesse and aplomb. Then you woo the damsel (or dude) in distress before driving off into the night together. After all, that's how fairy tales work, and that's why you're here, right?

Attribute Modifiers: DX+3 [60]; IQ+2 [40]; HT+1 [10].
Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Per+1 [5].
Advantages: Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome; Glamour*, Will-4, -10%) [15]; Danger Sense [15]; Daredevil [15];

Dark Vision [25]; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards [30]; Magery 0 [5]; Penetrating Voice [1]; Ultrahearing [5]; Voice (Glamour*, Will-4, -10%) [9].

Disadvantages: Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name) [-5]; Impulsiveness (12) [-10]; Odious Personal Habit (Show-off) [-5]; Overconfidence (12) [-5]; Vulnerability (Ironx2) [-10].

Features: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Sterile; Taboo Trait (Appearance or Voice without the Glamour limitation).

* See p. 4.

*“Don't stop there.
I suppose there are also,
what, vampires and
werewolves and zombies?”*

*“Of course there are.
Although you mostly
find zombies farther
south, where the voodoo
priests are.”*

*“What about mummies?
Do they only hang around
Egypt?”*

*“Don't be ridiculous. No
one believes in mummies.”*

*– Cassandra Clare,
City of Bones*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Jason “PK” Levine is the Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor and creator of the *GURPS Monster Hunters* series. He currently lives in northwestern Georgia, which puts him an estimated 666 miles from the latest zombie breakout in Miami. He spends his days with his beautiful wife and menagerie of critters, hand-loading rounds of iron, silver, and wooden ammo while stockpiling what he's sure will be the currency after the end times: roleplaying books.

THE SAD LOST GOD

BY MATT RIGGSBY

Before the world was created, there were the gods. When the world was young, they lived in and over it, hearing prayers and handing out blessings or curses as they saw fit. Most have faded away. They are not necessarily *dead* as mortals inevitably become, but they are no longer active in the world. However, at least one remains behind. He is greatly weakened, watching the world passing him by and pining for his lost years of glory, but he *cannot* die. And that can be a big problem for *Monster Hunters*.

*Dr. Temperance "Bones" Brennan:
There are no such things as zombies.
Just an island superstition.*

*Dr. Jonah Amayo: And now you've
managed to insult an entire culture
and their belief system.*

– *Bones* #4.21

THE LOST GOD

The lost god was once a minor deity worshiped by a few tribes and early cities in the Old World in the centuries around the dawn of civilization (best guess is a small region located between the Dead Sea and Afghanistan). He found himself on the losing side of a squabble with more powerful gods and was subjected to what was supposed to be an eternity of captivity and torment. In time, though, his captors wore out or were destroyed, and their masters lost interest one way or another, allowing him to escape. By the time he did, the mud-walled towns where he was once worshiped had vanished. He had been forgotten, and the world had likewise become completely unrecognizable to him. He has spent the past millennia wandering through a world he's never come to completely understand, pining for his days of glory.

Like many gods, he's very human in some ways. Intellectually, he has broad experience but is no more fundamentally wise or clever than mortals, so he can be misled and duped. Physically, he can be intoxicated (and otherwise drugged) and hurt. Emotionally, he's subject to the pull of a full range of human passions and needs. Indeed, thousands of years of

reminiscing about his days of being the object of worship have left him, for lack of a better word, needy. He has become depressed without the constant attention of others, and wants that more than anything else. Indeed, as a god, it's about the only thing he can't make for himself.

It's that ambition as much as anything else that makes him dangerous. No matter how polite or even genuinely friendly he might be at times, he's nevertheless self-centered and fixated on being worshiped. Under the right circumstances, he could get the power to force things his way.

ST: 40 **HP:** 40 **Speed:** 7.50
DX: 15 **Will:** 13 **Move:** 7
IQ: 13 **Per:** 13 **Weight:** 160 lbs.
HT: 15 **FP:** 40 **SM:** 0

Dodge: 10 **Parry:** 11 **Block:** 11
DR: 1

Javelin (16): 4d+2 imp; Reach 1. Can be thrown: Acc 3; Range 60/100; Bulk -4.

Shortsword (16): 4d+1 imp *or* 7d-1 cut; Reach 1.

Punch (16): 4d+1 cr; Reach C.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Affliction (Destiny); Affliction (Divine Curse); Chummy; Control (Anything) 1; Create (Anything) 1; Doesn't Breathe; Doesn't Eat or Drink; Doesn't Sleep; Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 4); Jealousy; Recovery; Regeneration (Very Fast); Pressure Support 3; Temperature Tolerance 5; True Faith; Vacuum Support.
● See *Notes* for additional details on afflictions, immortality, and other powers.

Skills: Brawling-16; Dancing-13; Driver (Chariot)-13; Hidden Lore (any)-8; History (any)-9; Leadership-12; Poetry-11; Public Speaking-12; Shield-16; Shortsword-16; Spear-16; Thrown Weapon (Spear)-16. ● Skill levels already include penalties for worldly unfamiliarity, TL, etc.

Notes

The lost god *can* eat and drink, and enjoys doing so, but he doesn't have to. He must breathe in order to speak, but suffers no ill effects if he does not. He also has special durability: He cannot die and stops taking damage at -5xHT. He takes 1/4 injury from *all* attacks that penetrate his DR (round up, minimum 1 HP). He never suffers from permanent crippling damage, and will regrow lost body parts (per the Regrowth advantage) if they are destroyed, but not if parts are removed but not destroyed. If not damaged themselves, severed parts heal on their own and become functional if reattached.

His other physical abilities are severely limited, but not completely gone. Most notably, he can smite his enemies. The damage he does with muscle-powered weapons is based on his full ST and is not limited by the ST of the weapon itself. Where it provides an advantage, his attacks count as holy.

His powers related to the supernatural are still significant. He is completely immune to all supernatural abilities other than divine effects except those he chooses to subject himself to, and he may cancel their effect on him at any time. He may also dispel any magical effect on anyone else. This requires him to touch the subject and Concentrate (or, if it is insubstantial, be in its presence). His True Faith requires no symbols or rituals, nor does he have to adhere to any code to retain his ability; his presence alone is sufficient to send spirits fleeing.

He has some power to grant good or bad fortune, though he has limited control over its nature. Once a day, he has the ability to afflict any mortal with Destiny, as either an advantage or disadvantage, or a Divine Curse, with a value of up to 10/-10 points. He can only do this once per target; he can't afflict someone with multiple curses. He may also use the Healing advantage once a day, with no success roll required. Each use of his power requires him to touch the subject and Concentrate; there is no roll to succeed or for resistance. He can remove curses and Destinies he placed himself, but not by other divine sources, at will.

Finally, he has residual powers to alter reality. He effectively has a Modular Ability that gives him Control 1 or Create 1 for *any* element (though only one at a time) – up to 10 lbs. of inanimate solid or liquid matter, or up to one square yard of gas. Control lets him reshape, move, and manipulate the element; this requires a touch and a successful IQ roll. Create lets him temporarily *make* matter; this costs 2 FP and requires a successful IQ roll. The creation normally lasts for 10 seconds, but once per day he can make it *permanent*; he may do this no more than six days in a row.

THE POWER OF BELIEF

Just as worshipers may gain abilities and other benefits from their god, this god receives power from those who believe in him. Although he prefers followers who worship and adore him, he'll settle for fear.

The lost god acquires power based on the number of believers he has. By "believers," any mortal who is aware of him and regards him as a real, living god counts.

For example, a scholar who comes across his name on an ancient clay tablet might be aware of him on some level, but would view him as an essentially fictional character, so he wouldn't count. Likewise, someone who has met the lost god but doesn't think that he's a deity, possibly considering him to be at least a bit insane (if he hasn't seen a demonstration of powers) or a powerful but conceited entity (if he has) also doesn't count.

A worshiper of a rival deity, who believes the lost god to be a clear and present danger and never offers a prayer or sacrifice to him would still count as a believer. Monster hunters might fall into that category as well. Worshipers – who may be loosely defined as any mortals who pray to him from time to time, offer sacrifices, invoke him in private rituals such as weddings or blessings of newborns, or otherwise honor him as a deity with modest regularity – count *double*.

The lost god's powers increase based on the *square root* of the number of believers he has. He can grant up to 10 points worth of the Blessed advantage on a number of individuals up to that number, though he can also only bless one new person per day. Likewise, his level of Control and Create increase to the square root of his believers; because both traits increase quadratically, just assume he can affect (worshippers×10) lbs. of solid/liquid or a (worshippers)-yard radius of gas. Other powers (such as shapeshifting, clairvoyance, weather control, and increased ST and HP) may manifest at higher levels of belief as well.

What does God need with a starship?

– James Kirk, in *Star Trek V: The Final Frontier*

ANGELS AND DEMONS

Though one might expect a god to be from Heaven, and he's certainly been there (though it has been a very long time), the lost god is nevertheless tied to the earth. He cannot be summoned or banished.

Should they encounter him, both angels and demons immediately recognize the lost god's divinity, but it doesn't make them like him any better. Both generally react to him uneasily. Demons perceive him as a significant threat who is better avoided. Angels are very put out by his ambiguous status – he's a god, but he's the *wrong* god. They have the sneaking suspicion that if things were a little different, they'd be taking orders from him. For his part, the lost god suspects that who or whatever runs Heaven is someone very much like one of his old peers who has gotten above himself and now claims to be an even higher power. Naturally, that doesn't make him happy at all.

OFFSPRING

There's one other way the lost god is disquietingly human: fertility. Over the years, he's lost count of how many children he's sired by human women. Though mortal, his children aren't entirely human. Some have remarkable abilities – strength, speed, durability, magical or psychic powers, unusually acute and penetrating senses. Others are simply monsters. The lost god may be the source of countless opponents in a *Monster Hunters* campaign without ever once appearing himself.

IN THE CAMPAIGN

The lost god isn't the most formidable combatant monster hunters are likely to face. He's immensely strong, but he's still a long way from moving mountains and hurling thunderbolts, and he doesn't have much in the way of special attacks or immediately useful magical powers. The main problem is that he is hard to hurt and literally impossible to kill, which is something of a hardship for adventurers whose job is killing things.

It's certainly possible to *neutralize* the lost god. For example, he could be dumped into an active volcano, sealed in a block of concrete and dropped into the Marianas Trench, or dismembered and the parts neatly packaged and sent to the four corners of the world. However, any method of dealing with him is ultimately temporary, even if he'll next face off against the hunters' great-grandchildren. An eruption could eject the god back into the world, a concrete block could be broken open by misadventure or recovered by cultists, and dismembered parts could be recovered and reassembled. Any monster hunters who take on the lost god will have to deal with knowing that no matter what they do, he could always come back.

As It Was In the Beginning

The most obvious way to introduce the lost god into a campaign is to have him working to regain his previous exalted status. He works from the shadows, finding worshipers among religious seekers, renegade scholars, madmen, and the easily impressed. His goal is to gather power, in any form. This may mean a multi-faceted conspiracy to influence governments and powerful individuals, or simply a grab for magical artifacts that supplement his own greatly diminished abilities. His cult isn't immediately dangerous; they're ruthless and willing to kill or die in order to achieve their goals, but they don't set out to slaughter people. However, their end goal is the enslavement of humanity.

Dupe

The lost god's emotional vulnerability makes him a potential puppet in other people's schemes. A sufficiently clever and charismatic cult leader could be playing on his vanity, using him as a tool, feeding the god incomplete or falsified information about the world and promising him power and worshipers while sending cultists out on missions for his own benefit. (Worldly wealth and power? Breeding experiments to produce a demigod army? Or is he trying to influence a *different* god?) The god is hardly less dangerous in this case than if he were running the cult himself, but here he's more of a tragic figure, and possibly one hunters could negotiate with rather than have to try to eliminate.

“ . . . They First Drive Mad ”

The lost god's emotional issues may have driven him over the edge of madness. His goal is the same: become adored and worshiped again. However, his thoughts are jumbled and his actions near random. He's almost indistinguishable from any other madman save for the surprising number of blessings and curses around him. Some cultists may flock him and follow his pronouncements, regarding his madness as the product of divine thought beyond human comprehension. Others may attempt to manipulate him. And the hunters have their work cut out for them trying to find the god before he wanders off into anonymity again.

Lost Pantheon

The lost god needn't be the only one. There may be a number of remnants of old pantheons wandering the Earth, each looking to regain what he once had or trying to live in denial of the loss.

Other lost gods can use similar stats to those listed above, though some gods may retain more of their old abilities than others. For example, a messenger god may have increased Speed or a god of war may have better combat skills, or perhaps Tactics and Strategy.

However, their personalities are likely to be fairly similar, focused in some way on their power and popularity (or lack thereof). While they ultimately all want to be around and supported by others, not a one of them works well with others. Related gods can force themselves to work together out of familial obligation, but for others, short-term alliances are the best anyone can hope for.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Matt Riggsby once explored the hidden secrets of vanished civilizations. He now works for a company that claims it makes perfectly ordinary medical devices, but who knows what their laboratories really hold? His allies in the struggle include a sorceress, his suspiciously charismatic offspring, and several dogs on guard against all threats, real and imagined.

It's not about making sense. It's about believing in something, and letting that belief be real enough to change your life. It's about faith. You don't fix faith, River. It fixes you.

– Shepherd Book, in Firefly #1.4

EIDETIC MEMORY

ZOMBIE PREDATORS

BY DAVID L. PULVER

My last paranormal modern-day action-horror campaign involved gonzo journalists battling monsters and exposing the truth: a weird hybrid between Hunter S. Thompson, *The X-Files*, and *Kolchak: The Night Stalker*. During this brief but energetic campaign, the intrepid truth-seekers – equipped with guns, keyboards, and cameras, and fortified by copious amounts of hard drugs and harder liquor – attempted to expose the shadowy conspiracies of the Men in Black. This they managed while avoiding being killed and/or eaten by sundry alien monsters, zombies, rampaging robot lawnmowers, or local sheriffs. The people had a right to know!

Eventually, one of our intrepid journalists wiped the undead gore off his face and sobered up long enough to ask the question: If so many zombies are around, and the government is so incompetent at stopping them before our heroes showed up, why hasn't there been a full zombie apocalypse? What is the government doing to protect us from this threat, and – as our cynical word-hounds would always ask – how have they screwed it up?

The epic search for answers would lead to the revelation of a monster hitherto unknown to the public, as well as further layers of men-in-black incompetence and cover-ups. The truth begins in the skies over America . . .

See p. 14 for the endnotes and in-campaign resources referenced in this column.

THE TRAIL OF THE CHEMTRAIL

Flying aircraft often leave condensation trails (or “contrails”) in the sky due to water vapor in their engine exhaust or changes in air pressure over the wingtips or wing. These are perfectly normal, but observers in the United States have reported mysterious multiple contrails that might not have such an innocent explanation. These sky trails seem to linger for longer periods, have unusual grid patterns, and appear where normal air traffic is rare.

Some conspiracy theorists believe they are not innocent condensation events but are actually chemical trails (or “chemtrails”) caused by the high-altitude spraying of biochemical

agents by covert quasi-governmental agencies. People allegedly exposed to chemtrails have developed respiratory illnesses or reported unusual behavior. Despite official denials of their existence, conspiracy theories have grown up to explain the nature and purpose behind chemtrails. These theories include weather-control experiments, bio-chemical warfare tests, or even population control. Few of these have come near the *real* truth . . . the government's complicity in the transformation of American citizens into mutant monsters as part of a bungled biological defense program to protect America from a zombie apocalypse.

CHEMTRAIL MUTANT ZOMBIE KILLERS

The United States' Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA; see p. 12) is secretly at the frontline of efforts to contain paranormal catastrophes. One of the worst of these potential catastrophes is the risk that any of the many localized infectious zombie outbreaks that have occurred since the 1960s could ultimately escalate into a total zombie apocalypse that devours civilization.

As the federal agency charged with disaster-mitigation activities, FEMA is engaged in various efforts to quietly prevent this crisis from happening, including coordination with other agencies, such as Centers for Disease Control. This also allows the CDC to maintain official deniability regarding their own involvement in the effort to deal with the spread of zombie-creating viruses.

One approach that FEMA and its allies in the CDC and the U.S. Army have taken to counter this looming undead Armageddon is Project Indigo Zephyr. This is the controlled mass spraying of a mix of exotic Army-developed chemical agents and antidotes intended to reduce the risk of zombie resurrection (see *Aerosol AZV-ANK*, p. 13). These include both anti-necrokinetic (ANK) chemical agents derived from anti-psi drug research intended to retard psychic element of reanimation, and the more controversial use of live attenuated zombie virus (AZV), a weakened cocktail of zombie para-viral toxins that was originally found in mutant cockroaches that just wouldn't stay dead.¹

FEMA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is a federal agency presently under the United States Department of Homeland Security. Founded in 1978-1979 it exists to coordinate the response of disasters that might overwhelm state and local authorities after a State of Emergency is declared, or where such a disaster involves federal land, buildings, or other assets.

Another part of FEMA's job is pre-disaster mitigation programs. These include public projects to help train local emergency response teams or identify flood risks – and also secret programs like the classified Zombie Mitigation Project that manages the chemtrails, assists state and local authorities in containing zombie outbreaks, and houses the emergency force of Anthro-Necrophagic Mutants.

The present director of FEMA's Office of Zombie Mitigation is Arnold Bonestrom, a former CDC zombie virus expert.

According to obscure U.S. Army documents recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act spraying a threatened region with AZV-ANK chemicals is proven to cut the expansion rate of an initial-stage infectious zombie outbreak by 50%.² Individuals who have inhaled or absorbed these chemicals into their skin also have moderate degree of survivability even in the event of actual bite by an infectious zombie.

The Army documents reveal that covert testing on human subjects (soldiers that were exposed during military tests in the 1960s) demonstrated that diluted liquid ANK and AZV were harmless to non-zombies but highly effective against zombies when properly used. Solutions of ANK and later AZV were covertly deployed in garden sprinklers in high-risk graveyards, and at Army waste-disposal facilities that experimented with zombie virus.

In 1979, the newly formed FEMA took over the Army program. The agency experimented with introducing it into some urban-center water supplies under the guise of fluoridation treatments (which proved unsuccessful), and in vulnerable high-school and shopping-center water fountains following the localized zombie mall outbreak of the previous year.

However, liquid AZV-ANK was difficult to deploy outside of these areas. The obvious next step was the widespread deployment of an airborne agent, aerosol ANK-AZV, and this is where the problems began. The initial catalyst for this was a series of so-called redneck-zombie attacks in the 1980s, which revealed a very real threat to rural areas. The initiation of the aerial Project Indigo Zephyr began in 1987 and accelerated sharply in the 1990s under the Clinton administration as part of a deliberate and covert effort to protect America's rural heartland from the walking dead. The program's scope has accelerated significantly in the last decade as the increase in the observed number of contrail grid patterns indicates.²

Despite its benign purpose, this chemtrail spray program has long been controversial among those lawmakers and bureaucrats who know of it. Buried in murky government reports is the revelation that, as early as 1999, the CDC began receiving reports of human mental disorders centered in areas that had been sprayed repeatedly with AZV-ANK compounds. These included disturbing incidents of grave robbing, grave desecration, and cannibalism. In one typical incident, a farmer reported

having experienced a growing and eventually uncontrollable craving to feast on dead bodies, eventually secretly disinterring fresh corpses from a local graveyard.

Initially, no obvious link between AZV-ANK chemtrails and the rise in "rural ghoulish syndrome" (RGS) incidents could be proven. It was known that high exposure to the chemtrail sprays could cause minor respiratory issues in a subset of the population, but this was deemed relatively harmless. The true risks of AZV-ANK exposure did not come out until the Montana Jefferson County Zombie Outbreak of 2002. This was a fairly typical low-level infectious zombie event except for the fact that it occurred in a county that had been sprayed with chemtrail agents a few months before, which were believed to have helped contain it. What was bizarre about the incident was that witnesses, including surviving law enforcement and members of the FEMA team, twice observed crazed cannibalistic attacks initiated not just by zombies on humans, as expected, but also by *humans on zombies*.

A small number of humans in the affected area had apparently gone berserk and began tearing up shambling, infectious zombies with their bare hands and teeth, then feasting on the bodies. During the FEMA containment operation, these attackers – clearly directly exposed to zombie contamination – were contained and euthanized.

However, their autopsies showed very high levels of AZV antibodies and ANK chemicals in their bodies, sufficient to indicate they could not have been zombified. The FEMA pathologists also discovered various physiological anomalies in their bodies. Investigators found that at least one of the deceased individuals had a secret cannibalism habit, with bones and other human remains found in and about his house.

Various theories were put forward, such as the zombies having been unfortunate enough to encounter a group of inbred redneck cannibals. But it was no isolated event. In the next several months, FEMA anti-zombie teams responding in chemtrail-sprayed areas encountered more of these "zombie predators." This time they took a more humane approach. They learned that, after the outbreak ended, any surviving zombie predators who had finished gorging themselves on zombie flesh would snap out of their berserker rage and return to a near-normal human condition. Nevertheless, they continued to experience some cravings for human flesh, demonstrated unusual mutant-like traits (such as preternaturally sharp fangs and nails), and had difficulty keeping down any meat other than rotted human flesh. All had massive AZV-ANK levels in their blood.

The exposed individuals were confined to special FEMA camps where a lengthy series of experiments were performed on them to determine the cause of their behavior.

Since development of the vaccine in 1911, the zombie threat has been greatly reduced.

– Federal Vampire & Zombie Agency, "The Science of Zombies," fvza.org

These experiments also sought to find out why the majority of individuals exposed to the chemtrails or AZV-ANK liquid had not been affected in this fashion.

Extensive testing revealed the combination of the two biochemical agents plus a binding agent used to create the chem-trail aerosol produced an unforeseen reaction in a minority of humans. The cause was a rare sequence of recessive genes found in only 1 in 216 human beings. The AZV-ANK activated these genes, inducing a mutation-like transformation somewhat similar to the zombie virus itself, but, as a dry FEMA report described it, of a "slightly more socially benign nature." This minority were transformed over a period of weeks or months into what the agency dubbed anthro-necrophagic mutants, or mutant necrophages for short.³ Amateur monster hunters and FEMA combat-team operatives who have met them during their own zombie hunts refer to them as cannibal zombie predators.

MUTANT NECROPHAGE ("ZOMBIE PREDATOR")

Genetically susceptible humans who were exposed to ANK-AZV chemtrails gradually find their bodies altering over a period of 1-6 months. The attenuated zombie virus apparently triggers recessive ghoulish genes and activates a mutagenic effect. The humans thus transform into the natural enemy of the zombie: corpse-eating necrophages.

The primary visual symptoms include the gradual development of a vaguely canine cast to the face resulting from lengthening of teeth and the jaw (the "Pickman Look" as one literary-minded FEMA official described it). This is accompanied by the growth and strengthening of ordinary fingernails into sharp claws, and an increase in physical strength, speed, and healing ability. A more serious symptom is a slow but steady rejection of normal forms of nutrition in favor of

a craving for rotting meat, and, as the condition develops, for decomposing human flesh. Eventually, the mutant necrophage will find that *only* the taste of decomposing human flesh will be palatable, anything else causing nausea.

Necrophages are, however, no mere cannibals. For a start, they have no desire for the flesh of the *living*; a non-zombie corpse normally has to have rotted for at least three hours before it seems appealing. More important, while a mutant necrophage finds the corpses of its own race smell and taste *edible*, he is driven into a berserk hunger by the smell of any form of zombie, especially the infectious brain-eating cannibal variety. Typical necrophages will react to the smell or sight of a zombie the same way a starving wolf would to a sheep. They will growl and attack, attempting to bring down the zombie, tear its flesh from its body with their claws and fangs and devour it.

Quicker than an ordinary zombie and possessed of natural weapons, a necrophage is a natural predator for the undead! The few scientists who have studied them have determined that the dormant necrophage gene complex apparently originated several thousand years ago, perhaps during a great zombie outbreak that occurred in Africa. Some para-archeologists believe this was the cause of the fall of the kingdom of Great Zimbabwe.⁴

Mutant Necrophage

24 points

Use this template for a typical zombie predator.

Attribute Modifiers: ST+5 [50]; HT+1 [10].

Secondary Characteristic Modifiers: Basic Speed +1.00 [20].

Advantages: Acute Taste and Smell 2 [4]; Claws (Sharp) [5]; Extra Attack (Trigger, Only when smelling zombies, -40%) [15]; Immunity to Zombie Virus or Transformation [5]; Rapid Healing [5]; Resistant to Disease (+8) [5]; Teeth (Sharp) [1].

Aerosol AZV-ANK

"Azvank," as FEMA teams refer to it, is the active ingredient of the compound that is sprayed over areas where FEMA has some reason to suspect a zombie outbreak might occur. Exactly how they determine what area to spray is not known. It likely involves lots of complex CDC epidemiological studies, satellite observation, charts, and expensive computer time.

The compound is an area-effect contact agent that can be deployed via sprays, gas grenades, etc. It has several effects.

First, anyone exposed to it within the last week becomes somewhat more resistant to infectious zombies. If a HT roll is allowed to resist, it gives +3 HT. If using the rules in *GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy*, it adds +3 to Zombification Resistance.

Second, fresh corpses directly exposed to it will not rise as zombies. Infectious zombies exposed to its spray take 1d corrosive damage per second.

Third, a zombie clawing its way out of a graveyard through soil that has been thoroughly sprayed with

AZV-ANK in the last month or so must make a HT roll. Failure means it collapses into rot before leaving the ground. This generally has the effect of halving the initial number of corpses who make up a given first-stage zombie outbreak.

Fourth, a tiny minority of the population has a gene sequence that is triggered by direct exposure. Roll 3d, once, on first exposure. On an 18, the person has the recessive gene that makes him vulnerable. If so, a failed HT roll will begin the transformation into a mutant necrophage, which will occur over 1d months. During this period, should the proto-necrophage smell the rotting flesh of an actual zombie, the transformation will be immediately accelerated. In 1d seconds, his body contorts, and he feels terrible pain and hunger. The metamorphosis is complete when he sprouts the claws and fangs of a full-fledged zombie predator!

Azvank is manufactured by a variety of biochemical companies in North America, usually under the cover of being a strong pesticide. On the black market, a spray tank with 20 doses is \$1,000.

Disadvantages: Berserk (Battle Rage, +50%; Trigger, Only when smelling zombies, -40%) (6) [-22]; Enemy (FEMA) (9) [-30]; Restricted Diet (Rotting human flesh) [-20]; Uncontrollable Appetite (Rotting zombie flesh) (9) [-23]; Unnatural Features (Canine cast to face) [-1].

CONTINUED SPRAYING BY FEMA AND THE DELIBERATE CREATION OF ZOMBIE PREDATORS!

A disinterested observer might be forgiven for thinking that, after discovering they were causing a growing number of rural citizens to develop monstrous traits and a craving for rotting flesh, the government would terminate its chemtrail program. That has yet to happen.

Attempts to find an alternative to the chemical compounds used in zombie-suppression operations have so far proven unsuccessful. The fact is that the chemtrail sprays *do* reduce the severity of zombie outbreaks; if not for them, a zombie apocalypse might have already gone viral instead of being localized. Moreover, predation by the necrophages themselves – who will be driven to launch berserk attacks against any zombies they encounter – have sometimes made a difference in defeating small zombie outbreaks.

FEMA is sensitive to the possible risks that necrophage mutations pose to public health (since some necrophages might kill humans and leave the corpses to rot, and then eat the bodies when they can't find zombies). To this end, the agency has been working with the CDC and county mental-health authorities to identify people with the necrophage recessive gene who may have been exposed to chemtrails and who are undergoing the mutation. FEMA arranges for the altered individuals to be declared mentally ill (which is usually easy given their growing urges for feasting on human flesh) and transferred to special care facilities. Ostensibly, these facilities are mental hospitals that specialize in treatment of unusual disorders.

That is another government lie.

The Cannibal Camps and FEMA's Secret Mutant Army

The government operates a variety of apparently abandoned facilities surrounded by barbed wire that are conveniently located in out-of-the-way places next to railway lines. Most of these are empty military bases or old warehouse complexes dating back to World War II or Cold War civil defense programs. Some are periodically refurbished with new generators, locks, plastic coffins, or other property upgrades. Conspiracy theorists believe they are intended for incarceration of troublesome citizens by FEMA in the event of a declaration of martial law, or possibly the creation of a single One World Government. The truth is worse!

While many of these facilities are just innocent storehouses, FEMA have allocated a number of these camps for use as holding areas for possibly contaminated individuals in the event of a zombie-virus outbreak. Three of these camps (located in different areas of the country) have now been activated to deal

with the necrophage problem. Mutant necrophages are held inside the buildings and fed a controlled diet of human remains. The bodies are mostly acquired from derelicts who would otherwise have been buried in pauper's graves or people who thought they were donating their bodies to science.⁵

Over the last few years, FEMA now has more than 2,600 of these mutant necrophages – men, women, and even children – and their numbers are growing. FEMA's intent is to keep them in these “cannibal camps” until they are needed as a last-ditch countermeasure in the event of a mass zombie apocalypse in a major city. In such a contingency, FEMA black vans or helicopters will deliver them into the perimeter of the event where the mutants are expected to scent the zombies and attack. Classified computer studies show that the release of 500+ zombie predators as a pack could destroy several times their number of slow-moving brain eaters, all without loss of any “normal” human life. If this was performed early enough in a mass outbreak, a zombie apocalypse might be averted.

Although the majority of mutant necrophages are being held incommunicado as insurance against such an event, a few dozen of them have been recruited into special FEMA search-and-destroy teams deployed against local zombie outbreaks. These exceptional necrophages have proven amenable to discipline, have hunting or military backgrounds, and show unusual self-control. Thus, a FEMA-affiliated group of monster hunters might contain a zombie predator. Some of these are said to be equipped with explosive collars that will detonate if they turn against humans or try to leave the team.

NOTES

1. *Low Levels of “Safe” Zombie Virus Allegedly Found in Montana Chemtrail Sample* (The Montana Illuminator, November 2, 2011).
2. *FM-3-21-Z, Bio-Chemical Accident Contamination Control* (Headquarters of the Department of the Army, March 23, 1980).
3. *Some Issues on the Remediation of Side Effects of Airborne AZV Dispersion* (General Accounting Office, March 4, 2011).
4. Bent-Rhodes, Theodora. “Zombie Apocalypse as a Primary Mechanism for the Decline of the African Kingdom of Zimbabwe” (Journal of the European Para-Archeological Society, London, 1989).
5. Wesson, Lysander. “FEMA Camps: The Real Sickening Truth” (Tanstaafl in a Brown Paper Bag #221, April, 2009).

ABOUT THE COLUMNIST

David L. Pulver is a Canadian freelance author. An avid SF fan, he began roleplaying in junior high with the newly released *Basic Dungeons & Dragons*. Upon graduating from university, he decided to become a game designer. Since then, David has written over 70 roleplaying game books, and he has worked as a staff writer, editor, and line developer for Steve Jackson Games and Guardians of Order. He is best known for creating *Transhuman Space*, co-authoring the *Big Eyes, Small Mouth* anime RPG, and writing countless *GURPS* books, including the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*, *GURPS Ultra-Tech*, and the *GURPS Spaceships* series.

HALF ALIVE

BY MICHELE ARMELLINI

A half-ruined tower, whose owner was an enchantress. Tales about an undead presence haunting the charred ruins. Valiant knights bent on freeing the population from this monstrous threat.

It seems standard fare for a fantasy setting, especially *Banestorm*. However, while the monster is real, everything else is not as it seems.

*I'm almost alive, and I need you to try
And save me.*

– *Secondhand Serenade,
“Half Alive”*

LIFE

Harald Jonasson lived two lives before his current state of “half-life.” First, he was a boy in a family-run traveling show. They performed circus numbers, theater, songs, and dance, at fairs and pilgrimage days throughout northwestern Megalos. Harald had his mother’s grace and looks, and his father’s flair and talent. He could fill a stage all by himself. He also took part in acrobatic numbers or simple knife-throwing drills. Given that they were always struggling, he also knew some shadier tricks to make ends meet.

At 21, he was a young, handsome showman. That was probably why Lady Eusalya noticed him, while she was slumming in Mehan. The Lady – better known as the Enchantress of Caran – was an unmarried noblewoman and a maker of magical items. She was a wealthy collector of fine specimens: paintings, sculptures, and secondarily, young companions. She would grow tired of them after some time, parting from them with a severance gift.

Harald thought he would invest a season or two in what he saw as a job. While unconventional, he thought it still was entertainment business. The Lady claimed she would use her connections to land him a job in some prominent troupe – he would perform for the nobility. So he accepted and moved to the Tower of the Enchantress, in the fiefdom of Caran, 20 miles from Mehan.

What neither he nor the Lady had expected was that she would fall in love with him. He didn’t love her, but he cared for her. The Lady educated him, to make him a better companion, and he acquired a taste for the things she liked. He learned little about magic, though, because for Eusalya, that would have meant talking shop.

Two years ago, Harald fell ill. The Lady called mundane doctors and magic healers, to no avail. He would relapse. Lady Eusalya, in her desperation, made use of less and less reputable magic. Six months ago, Harald died. The Lady was ready, and the best resurrectionist she could hire revived Harald. Unfortunately, in a week, he was worse than ever. Harald, having been in pain for months, asked the woman to let him go; she refused.

FIRE

Harald does not know what ritual was attempted when he died again. What he remembers of that night is that the top floor of the tower, containing the laboratory and library, was on fire, and that the flames had enveloped his Lady, too. He carried her downstairs, but she died the following day. A portentous rainstorm saved the lower floors.

Harald had been badly burned himself. He made it through the first month after the fire only because of all of the Lady’s servants, one had not fled. The stubborn, faithful Meg, an old woman, took care of him.

But he did not heal. The ritual had clearly backfired. The subject should have died, again.

HALF LIFE

Today, Harald stays in the tower. It turned out that Lady Eusalya had penned a last will, making him her heir. She had no relatives. Most magical items were destroyed in the fire, but Harald is able to use the coins in her remarkable treasure. Additionally, the peasants of Caran still bring their rents in kind to the tower, although more and more reluctantly. However, for Harald to succeed the Enchantress as the fiefholder of Caran would require the approval of Duke Thomas of Mehan, which is extremely unlikely, especially considering the power of the Church in that duchy.

The person whom the local farmers call “the undead monster” would just like to be left alone in the Tower. If the Duke bestows Caran to some minor nobleman, however, the latter will evict the monster. What’s more, Baron Thegonnac of Smallford is lobbying the duke. He’s come up with family documents evidencing a distant relationship with Lady Eusalya, and he claims he’s the rightful heir (the documents may well be a forgery). He’s also scheming to present the duke with a *fait accompli*. He has tasked some of his knights to get rid of Harald, so that he can tell Duke Thomas that he’s already in control of Caran.

The Church and the local villagers will certainly support such a move, because, well, Harald *is* a monster – only, he’s not undead. He’s half alive.

TRAPPED BETWEEN PLANES

Harald doesn't know how the unknown spell cast on him by a mysterious wizard should have worked, nor does he understand the details of his existence.

The magical effect that backfired trapped Harald's essence (as well as his body) between two planes, or realities. In one of them he's, unfortunately, dead. In the other, he's still alive. The effects are weird.

He's not like any of the undead that plague Yirth. He's no zombie; he hasn't come back from death. He is – however inconceivable it seems – only half alive. So he is in putrefaction, but that appalling process has not ended as it naturally should. If he were undead, he'd have no use for air, food, water, and sleep; on the contrary, he needs them, although very little of all of that. Likewise, a ghost wouldn't be affected by an ordinary blade; Harald's decaying body can be wounded, and those wounds do not heal naturally (although magic could patch him up, if he found a healer willing to do that).

Harald's predicament is based on some form of magical effect. If he moved to a region with no mana, he'd wither away. Yrthian mages are likely to think of him as a banestorm that is at the same time ongoing and congealed in a person. A scientist from modern-day Earth would come up with the famous thought experiment called "Schrodinger's Cat." However, if

Harald was studied by a scientist from an Infinite Worlds background, he might be seen as a walking reality shard (see *GURPS Infinite Worlds*, p. 76). This may give way to various developments (see below).

FACING HARALD

While this former entertainer is no vampire, encountering him may still be daunting. Between his Appearance and his Bad Smell, he starts with -7 to reaction rolls, and that only grows worse as other details are noticed. When a hapless visitor sees him clearly, the viewer also has to roll a Fright Check. Something of his between-planes nature is perceivable and unbearable.

Coming closer to him means entering the swirling dark haze that surrounds him. Harald calls them the "tendrils of death," but actually it might be a trans-planar seepage, from some place better not visited. It often stuns those who stand within two yards from him, and makes them feel weak – their ST goes down (this penalty lowers their BL and damage, too). Harald cannot switch this off in order to have friendly contacts with anyone. The effect only takes place through contact with the skin of a living being; ironically, a zombie would not be affected.

Harald Jonasson the Half-Alive Monster (180 Points)

Harald is a monstrous-looking human with skin like a jigsaw – some areas showing black burns, while others, decaying flesh. He has no hair and no eyebrows. He has incongruous blue eyes in deep black eye sockets. His gait is graceful, yet something wrong is with it. He is surrounded by what looks like a black, swirling haze.

ST 12 [20]; **DX** 12 [40]; **IQ** 11 [20]; **HT** 12 [20].
Damage 1d-1/1d+2; BL 29 lbs.; HP 12 [0]; Will 12 [5]; Per 11 [0]; FP 12 [0].
Basic Speed 6.00 [0]; Basic Move 6 [0]; Dodge 9.
6'1"; 165 lbs.

Social Background

TL: 3 [0].
CF: Megalan [0].
Languages: English (Native) [0]; Latin (None/Broken) [1].

Advantages

Affliction 1 (HT; Accessibility, Living subjects, -10%; Always On, -10%; Area Effect, 2 yards, +50%; Attribute Penalty, ST-4, +20%; Aura, +80%; Contact Agent, +150%; Melee Attack, Reach C, -30%; Stunning, +10%) [36]; Detect Magic [10]; Doesn't Breathe (Oxygen Storage, 300x) [18]; Flexibility [5]; High Pain Threshold [10]; Less Sleep 4 [8]; Reduced Consumption 4 [8]; Resistant to Metabolic Hazards (+8) [15]; Status 1 [0*]; Sterile [0]; Terror (Will; Always On, -20%) [24]; Wealth (Wealthy) [20].

Disadvantages

Appearance (Monstrous) [-20]; Bad Smell [-10]; Chronic Depression (15) [-7]; Dependency (Mana; Daily) [-15]; Enemy (Baron Thegonnec and his knights; Hunter; 6 or less) [-10]; Frightens Animals [-10]; Ham-Fisted 1 [-5]; Lifebane [-10]; Phobia (Fires) (12) [-5]; Social Disease [-5]; Unhealing (Partial) [-20].

Quirks: Always wears a hooded cape; Attentive; Hates mirrors; No body heat. [-4]

Skills

Acrobatics (H) DX [4]-12; Acting (A) IQ [0]-11†; Area Knowledge (Northern Megalos) (E) IQ [1]-11; Connoisseur (Visual Arts) (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Dancing (A) DX+2 [8]-14; Escape (H) DX+1 [1]-13‡; Fast-Talk (A) IQ [2]-11; Filch (A) DX [2]-12; Games (Chess) (E) IQ [1]-11; Knife (E) DX [1]-12; Literature (Megalan Drama) (H) IQ-2 [1]-9; Musical Instrument (Lute) (H) IQ-1 [2]-10; Occultism (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Performance (A) IQ+2 [8]-13; Savoir-Faire (Megalan) (E) IQ [1]-11; Singing (E) HT+1 [2]-13; Sleight of Hand (H) DX-4 [2]-8§; Streetwise (A) IQ-1 [1]-10; Thrown Weapon (Knife) (E) DX+1 [2]-13.

* Default from Wealth.

† Default from Performance.

‡ Includes +3 from Flexibility.

§ Includes -3 from Ham-Fisted.

EVERYDAY HALF-LIFE IN THE TOWER

When Harald doesn't simply stay in bed, overcome by depression, he tries to return to normality. Unfortunately, he's no wizard, and he hasn't managed to hire one yet. Worse, the task seems impossible. Even so, he sifts through the remains of the library and laboratory, looking for clues. He has learned something from the books he could retrieve, but most are gone, and others are in languages he doesn't know.

Meg, the old servant, is his only link with the world. She's the one who deals with the villagers and their growing hostility. Apparently, Meg suffers little from seeing and approaching Harald. Maybe the reason why the Enchantress found her a useful servant is that she's Unfazeable. She cooks for both of them, and she tries to run the tower, which is of course too much work for her.

That is indeed a huge building. The ground floor has no openings save a few slits, and it hosts the kitchen and the servants' quarters. The tower is accessed by means of an outer stairway leading to a small guardroom on the first floor; the rest of that floor is taken up by the hall. The second floor contains the Lady's bedroom, a smaller living room, and other bedrooms. Above that, the tower is in ruins.

In the kitchen are stairs going down into the cellar. There is a walled archway there. Harald remembers that Lady Eusalya used to say that that room was her father's vault, and that it was better left undisturbed. He doesn't think it would have anything that might help him to return fully alive.

A DISAGREEABLE ACCIDENT

Some time ago, Baron Thegonnec sent Sir David (his right-hand man), together with some other knights and men-at-arms, to try to evict "the usurper." However, part of the stairway that leads into the tower is wooden and can be lifted; Harald had done just that, after Meg had warned him of horsemen arriving.

The monster appeared at the door, leaving the knights down in the courtyard. He initially kept his calm and his heavy, hooded cape, thus hiding his face and hands. When the knights wouldn't take no for an answer, he showed himself, in hopes they would just run away. Some did, but one of them threw a hatchet at him, barely missing him. He reacted with a trick he had ready; he dropped a jug that the Enchantress had prepared for such occurrences. A cloud of brimstone-smelling smoke rose from it, and that was enough to convince the remaining men to flee.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Any of the following might happen.

The Knights Are Back

Baron Thegonnec isn't going to give up. His men will now try to use stealth and magic, since they think they face undead wizardry. Harald himself, well aware of his actual weaknesses, may think he needs some muscle, too. Adventurers, especially if they master arcane powers, might be hired by either side. Or contacted by both, thus being expected to choose.

A Stroll to the Village

Meg went down to village yesterday and hasn't come back. Harald decides that he has to leave the tower and go look for her. Maybe this is a trap, organized by the knights or the villagers. Or it isn't, but the villagers still react with panic and hate toward the monster walking among them.

A slim possibility exists that the village elder understands Harald means no harm to his people. The PCs might just happen to be there, or they are part of the scheme to lure out Harald.

The Mysterious Wizard

Harald finds clues that the wizard who tried something unprecedented survived the fire and fled. Maybe that man can help Harald. So he hires the heroes to find the wizard. Or maybe he goes with them, and traveling with this monster will be an adventure in itself. The adventurers might be in not just for the money, but because they're interested in the spell or the mage, who might be a powerful necromancer.

Crusade

The Church in Mehan is informed about the situation, and they plan to exploit it to weaken the duke's position. How dare the duke tolerate such an abomination in one of his fiefs? Preachers whip up mobs. If a crusade scours Caran of this necromancy, then the duke might feel obliged to turn the tower into an abbey. The whole affair could grow out of proportion. The adventurers might work for the Church, the duke, or the monster.

Recruiters From Where?

Parachronic Laboratories in an Infinite Worlds campaign have detected a trans-reality disturbance – and that's Harald. The PCs are sent to study him, possibly deal with him, and maybe take him back as a guinea pig. Or they might recruit him, since his in-between state could be exploited by the Patrol.

The Mages' Guild

Yirthian mages may be interested in the curiosity represented by Harald. They send emissaries to strike a deal with him, or to capture him.

The Old Enemy

Lady Eusalya's father was a necromancer. He had something powerful and dangerous locked in his vault. He also had a patient enemy – who was afraid of the Enchantress but now thinks it's time to strike.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michele Armellini lives in Udine, Italy, with his very understanding wife, Silvia. He makes a living out of foreign languages, but he loves dabbling with and studying the obscure and the uncanny – and trying to convert them into game mechanics! Apart from things he has published in Italian, he has written for *Pyramid*, and he is the author of **GURPS WWII: Grim Legions**. He is also the author or co-author (with Hans-Christian Vortisch) of several other e23 products: **GURPS WWII: Their Finest Hour**, **GURPS WWII: Doomed White Eagle**, and **GURPS WWII: Michael's Army**.

THE FORMATION

CRYSTALLINE PARASITES FROM OUTER SPACE!

BY J. EDWARD TREMLETT

Joe Grieland: 27, Fry Cook; Portland, Oregon; missing since April 15, 2005.

Joe hadn't been to work for a week, and wasn't answering his phone, so I was worried. Last time I saw him, he was complaining of really bad headaches, so I wanted to make sure he was okay.

He didn't answer the door, but I knew he kept the back door unlocked, so I went in. His house smelled like an electrical fire, and there was half-eaten food everywhere. He'd filled up his weekly "to do" pad on the refrigerator – "see doctor," "get painkiller." As it went along, the words were replaced with weird squiggles I didn't recognize.

I could hear something moving in the basement. I called out to him, and heard someone walking up. Then he opened the door and walked toward me. For a moment, I was going to ask him where he got that cool Halloween makeup. The huge, orange crystals coming out of his head and eyes must have taken forever.

But it wasn't makeup. It wasn't Joe, either – not anymore. His movement was all wrong. It wasn't him.

He slashed at me with his fingernails, which were really sharp. He ripped me a good one across my chest, and all I could think to do was throw an open can of spaghetti sauce at him and run.

The cops say there's no one there now. I don't know where he might have gone, but I have a feeling I'll be seeing him again soon.

*See, I'm having headaches, too – bad ones, along with nose-bleeds, and this weird sensation of something **moving** in my head. That and I'm seeing things in my dreams that don't make sense, but don't scare me, either.*

*I should be scared, but I'm **not**. Isn't that weird?*

Parasites seem an omnipresent part of life on Earth. Nature is rife with examples of how a tiny, little thing can subvert another animal's biological processes to suit its own needs. Perhaps the most pernicious and gruesome parasites are the species that not only turn another creature into their breeding ground, but actively enlist that creature's aid in doing so.

But not all such parasites active on Earth come from this planet. The universe at large is positively teeming with all manner of hostile lifeforms, some of which are quite eager to make a meal of man. Among the variety of life out in the cosmos, some possess quite exotic means of transmission and replication.

Moreover, they are quite capable of overriding the human sense of self-preservation, the better for their hosts to suit their needs.

One such xeno-parasite is the crystalline intelligence known as the Formation. This far-traveling mineral smut transmits itself through a poisonous electronic signal that, when picked up by sympathetic receiving devices – like cellular phones – can slowly turn the human mind and body into crystal. Before long, the infected victim becomes an infectious victimizer, working to spread the disease – to his own world and then beyond.

This generic article gives the story of the dreaded Formation, which could make for a truly frightening foe in a horror campaign. It gives details on how it works, how it came to be, and what it will do when it arrives. It also provides ideas for use within the current era, as well as other times when the primary means of infection has not been invented yet.

THE CRYSTAL INVASION

The "Orange Crown" condition was first noted in early 2005. Numerous people in Portland, Oregon, began to complain of severe, pulsing headaches and nosebleeds, as well as auditory hallucinations. Then the patients started dropping out of sight and not returning follow-up calls. One doctor contacted federal authorities in case a new plague was in progress, but what the Center for Disease Control found was much worse.

It transpired that all victims were customers of a particular cellular-phone provider in the Portland area. This apparently exposed them to some strange signals – seemingly unique to these phones – that turned their neurons into organic crystal, starting from the auditory nerves and working its way in. This caused headaches as their brain impulses went from bioelectric to piezoelectric. As more of their brains transformed, other effects occurred: frequent bleeding from the ears and nose; the replacement of their spoken and written language with unknown words and indecipherable symbols; and strange dreams of alien worlds covered in slithering, orange crystals.

The point of no return seemed to be about a month after infection, when the irises changed color (becoming a bright, florescent orange), and the fingernails became sharp, tough, and orange at the tips. At that point, the patients either lost all ability to communicate verbally, or chose not to.

All recognizably human body language was likewise lost, and they attempted escape, often employing brutal means to do so. They seemed to prefer slashing with their fingernails, and anyone who was wounded in such a way soon became a patient themselves.

One victim of this secondary form of infection was placed in an observation room and watched. He went through the same patterns of headaches, dreams, and bleeding as the previous patients, only twice as fast. A day after his eyes turned orange, fast-growing, spiky crystal growths began to break through his skull in random spots, forming a strange “crown” of phosphorescent orange. The eyes were pushed from their sockets by similar growths, but the seeming handicap did not stop the patient from being able to see his observers’ movements.

After two more weeks, the entire body was dotted with spiky growths of crystal, and the skull from the nose up was a spiked, crystalline parody of the human head and face. The patient’s movements became slow and labored, and it eventually froze into a strange, standing position, seemingly incapable of movement. An *in situ* vivisection revealed the crystals had entirely suffused the skeleton-muscular structure, and that – with the exception of the still-working heart and lungs – all other organs had withered away to near-nothing.

That was years ago. Every so often, the CDC receives word that someone’s exhibited symptoms like what the initial victims suffered, and they swoop in to contain the patients in the hopes of stopping another outbreak. Such new victims are rarely attacked by someone with orange eyes; more often, they receive a bizarre call on their cell phone in a language they didn’t understand, and then began to suffer headaches and strange dreams.

Standing orders are to quarantine the patients in small, specially made, transparent boxes. There they are kept as comfortable as possible, and provided with unlimited pen and paper in the hopes that enough data can be gathered to make strides toward deciphering the language. Once their eyes go orange,

and they start trying to break out, the now-inhuman patients are euthanized through fast-acting poison gas. They are then autopsied to learn more about the gross physical changes caused by the infection.

The CDC was pulverizing the crystals after the autopsy, but after a terrible accident involving a spilled container of the crystals – causing several infections by simply *inhaling* the stuff – they now wrap the remains in plastic, and weld the package into a steel box. Those boxes are then shipped to a quarantine facility in Eugene, and placed in a downstairs vault.

Upstairs, teams of anthropologists and linguists pour over the paper and recordings of the patients’ strange, new language to try and decipher it. If they’re right, this is the first time a disease has ever tried to communicate with humans, however haltingly. If someone can figure out how to talk *back*, several important questions might be answered – especially “where did you come from” and “what do you want.”

SEEDING AND GROWTH

Anything can pick up the deadly signal, provided it’s able to receive that one, special frequency the Formation broadcasts on. Anyone struck by it has only a 25% chance per single exposure of being infected, as the human brain isn’t especially made to be turned into rock candy. Once infected in this fashion, the average human has a month before he becomes a monster; those who are, in turn, infected by the claws of a human host transform in *half* that time.

Over that month, those stricken suffer frequent, pounding headaches only slightly contained by painkillers. These come in tandem with nosebleeds and, in the last two weeks, slight bleeding from the ears. They also start to have dreams of great, moving landscapes of orange crystal, sometimes as early as the initial infection. After a short time, these dreams are no longer troubling, but somehow soothing.

As early as the first week, the victims start failing to understand and communicate in their native language.

The Song of the Crystal Planets

What the disease wants is simple: to take over all higher biological entities on this planet, and then send another infection out into space. As for where it comes from, that’s a longer, more fantastic tale.

Eons ago, in another galaxy, the question as to how easily one could conquer the universe was solved through the Formation. All the crystals’ creators had to do was to send a loaded signal to a planet, and then sit back and wait for the signal’s victims to turn. Before long, those victims would work to change others, both through blood-borne transmissions and repetition of the signal. Finally, once the world was all but crippled, the creators could take it over, employing heavy sonic weaponry to destroy their “soldiers.”

The Formation’s creators didn’t count on how strong their creation’s infection signals were. The waves traveled far through space, sometimes reaching other worlds with enough strength to infect new victims. Worse, some outward-bound colonization and research ships were

infected, and were condemned to float endlessly through the dark reaches of space. These ghost ships are still broadcasting the siren call of the Formation. Occasionally, they expel long range probes programmed to send the signal.

This is how the monsters came to Earth: an ancient, alien machine flew by the planet, blindly taking advantage of a differently designed model of cellular phone. Thankfully, it did not get caught in the planet’s gravitational field, and the Formation’s initial bloom was brief enough to be partially contained. Nonetheless, the danger still exists.

In secret places throughout the Pacific Northwest are great, orange lattices of crystal that were once human beings. These Transmitters (see *Crystal Radio*, p. 20) are constantly broadcasting the infection signal. It’s only a matter of time before another poor soul hears more than they’d care to on their new cell phone, radio, or other audio device.

Spoken and written vocabulary develops holes, which are filled by alien-sounding words and symbols. When someone says or writes those lost words to them, they no longer understand, but *do* understand if shown the alien symbols (it's proven impossible thus far to precisely replicate the sounds). They also start using words and symbols that, so far as anyone can tell, have no direct analogues with anything Earthly.

Toward the end of the month, the patients' irises turn orange. CRT scans and X-rays show that the patient's brain is at least a quarter crystallized, and that the skull and neck are slowly becoming suffused with lattices of crystal. The skeletal lattices quickly spread down the vertebrae, into the rib cage and shoulder blades, and down the arms to the tips of the fingers. There, sharp crystal "claws" push forward from the flanges, erupting under the fingernails.

Once the brain has begun to show significant crystallization, the patient gains the ability to telepathically communicate with anyone who has been infected within 10 miles, or much further if aided (see *Crystal Radio*, below). These conversations – carried out in the new language – answer all the patient's questions, and bevel all remaining worries away. As of that moment, wholly orange irises or not, the patient is a part of the Formation, exhibiting a massive loss of personality and humanity. Writing may continue, though it is mostly symbols with no known referents, and is more akin to a diary or "to do" list than a means of communication.

At some point, usually a week after the eyes go orange, the crystallization begins to ramp up – cannibalizing the host at a faster rate – and ignores the confines of the body. Spikes of orange crystal start to erupt from the skull in random, jagged protrusions, eventually sliding out the eyes, ears, and nostrils. As noted in the CDC's one successful capture (*The Crystal Invasion*, pp. 18-19), the apparent loss of sensory organs does not in any way diminish the host's sight, smell, or hearing.

By the end of the month, the subject's entire skeleton is laced with the crystal. The skin, skull, and brains above the nose are entirely replaced by the orange, alien mineral, and the body is studded with random, spiky outcroppings of the stuff. All edges of the crystal are sharp enough to cut skin,

and have a 25% of causing infection if they make contact with the bloodstream.

During the latter parts of this process, the host no longer needs to eat, as his body continues to be cannibalized by the crystals to fuel their growth. How long it takes before the muscle sheaths share the fate of the hosts' organs and skeletal systems, and the stricken human becomes an orange, crystal statue, depends entirely on that person's circumstances. If the host is one of many, then he may be called upon to become part of the Transmitter (*Crystal Radio*, above); he will assume a position with other hosts, and begin to rapidly crystallize. However, if the host is the only surviving member of the outbreak, that state of being could be kept off for months while trying to arrange another mass infection.

PATTERNS AND HABITS

Once the hosts become a mental part of the Formation, they begin to obey their basic programming. Their aim is simple: increase infection. The means by which they do this can vary.

In the case of an initial outbreak, such as what took place in Oregon in 2005, the first hosts to develop telepathic abilities become the "anchor" for the group. Their goal is to find a quiet, lonely place where they can create a Transmitter from their own bodies. The others are either to join them in the search, or begin to infect others so as to have better protection for the anchor's activities.

In cases where the outbreak is secondary or later, the hosts are eventually contacted by the pre-existing anchors and brought into the Formation. Their general duty is to eventually meet up with them, though they may be instructed to lie in wait until they're "stronger" – more developed – before doing so. Such developing hosts tend to cluster together in small groups, waiting until their skulls erupt to leave and find the anchor.

Most members of the Formation are out "recruiting" in an ever-widening spiral pattern, outwards from the Transmitter. They do not prefer to attack in public or take on large groups, as this may decrease their chances of success, and increase the likelihood that the authorities will intervene. As such, they vastly prefer to ambush individuals in close quarters. Only in the latter stages of an invasion would they be likely to march down the streets and cause panic.

The hosts attack with a combination of bludgeoning with their fists, and infectious slashing with their claws. Generally, they prefer to use their claw attack, but they often beat down victims who are strong or skilled enough to fight back, and *then* use their claws. Their increased body weight doubles their punching, kicking, and body-slam damage. Their claws do damage comparable to a boxcutter.

Any successful claw attacks that draw blood carry the infection. As with the infection signal, the average adult human has a 25% chance of contracting the disease in this fashion, but those infected in this manner generally change in half the time as those who are infected by the signal. Why the blood-borne pathogen works faster is not understood, but once the crystals are in the bloodstream, hacking off the cut limb is useless, and trying to suck out the poison just exposes the victim's would-be savior to possible infection.

Crystal Radio

A Transmitter is a collection of 25 average-sized hosts, fused together in a strange, intricate shape. This configuration allows them to endlessly pulse the infection signal for a radius of 50 miles. It also permits them to telepathically connect members of the Formation to one another over a radius of 500 miles.

More Transmitters within that radius simply increase coverage area for both signal and telepathy. However, once at least 50% of a planet has coverage, the Transmitters can work together to send the infection signal out into space. A planet the size of Earth could send a stable signal as far as Andromeda, though it would take a few years to get there.

The Transmitter is the nexus of all host activity. It will be well-hidden, and ridiculously well-guarded by hosts whose only purpose is to stand still and wait for interlopers to infect or kill. The infected are almost always corralled somewhere near the transmitter and guarded until they turn.

The members of the Formation are three times as hardy as humans, and they take only 25% damage from bullets. Fire and bladed weapons injure only their organic parts. The best way to deal with them, save for explosives, is with blunt physical damage: attacking with iron bars, rocks, bricks, or other heavy, solid weapons will crack and chip the crystal matrix. It's also possible to destroy them with sonic weapons turned to their precise frequency, but such devices are rarely handheld and combat ready.

*We don't like what we don't
understand,
In fact it scares us
And this monster is mysterious at
least!*

*Bring your guns, bring your knives,
Save your children and your wives,
We'll save our village and our lives,
We'll kill the Beast!*

*– The villagers' chorus,
Beauty and the Beast (1991)*

ORIENTATIONS AND POLYMORPHISM

The Formation is easily suited for a modern-day horror or weird-science campaign. They can work as a one-off body-horror scare; as a moving, infectious hazard in a “zombie” outbreak-style scenario; or as some well-meaning scientist's poor choice of extraterrestrial contact partners. In a science-fiction campaign, explorers or colonists could run across the infection signal, or encounter worlds or seemingly derelict ships where it's already struck. Likewise, a hitherto-undiscovered alien race could actually be victims of the Formation.

The PCs can be brought into contact with these creatures through a number of angles. They could be federal investigators looking into the outbreak, or tying up its loose ends, or scientists trying to investigate the phenomenon, perhaps to decipher the symbols or collect samples. Monster hunters could be on the warpath, and Black Ops could be on the job. It's also possible to have the friends and family of a victim trying to locate a lost soul, and finding far more than they bargained for.

The one problem in using these creatures in any other time or setting than the modern era is the distinct lack of cellular phones. However, this issue can be overcome through various means.

Atomic Horror: The Wrath of the Crystal Monkey!

In 1955, Doctor Ramsey T. Grantworthy, of the remote, self-contained, and top-secret Floodland Research Center of New Mexico, invented the Radio-Matter Transmitter. The device was designed to turn matter into radio waves, transmit it across a distance, and then reassemble it. Trials with solids

and liquids worked perfectly, so he tried it with a monkey, and, to the good doctor's glee, the experiment was a success.

However, while arranging for further simian trials, Grantworthy noticed the monkey seemed a little off. It suffered nosebleeds, didn't sleep well, and became increasingly irritable. Two weeks later, an accident while feeding led to a merry chase around Floodland's extensive campus, looking for the beast. Several guards and janitors were clawed and bitten by the thing before it was tranquilized by an angry, savaged guard.

The subsequent autopsy showed that the beast's journey through the RMT had apparently changed its cellular structure; large portions of its cerebral and skeletal structure had turned into orange crystal, including its claws. This led a terrified Grantworthy to temporarily shut down the project. He quickly quarantine the still-alive primate, carefully watching its degeneration into a crystal statue. He then went back to working on the RMT, to see if he could figure out what had gone wrong, not realizing that his otherwise-functional device had merely used the same frequency as a certain, malicious alien signal.

Two weeks after that, the infected Floodland staff members' telepathy turned on. Using the now-hyperintelligent simian as their anchor, they began to coordinate efforts to quietly take over the research center. Using regulation sunglasses to mask their orange eyes, they carefully pricked and jabbed their way through most of the nonresearch staff. Once those men had turned, they started boxing in the research staff, so they would have no idea that the complex was being turned into an alien beachhead under their noses.

That was a month ago, and the newly infected are at the same state as the initially infected. As their gross physical deformities can just barely be hidden under sunglasses and caps, they have decided to take over the base within a few days. They will liberate the monkey, corral or kill the research staff, and claim they have been given orders to lockdown the base – tying up civil and governmental authorities for some time.

Once that's done, they can assemble a Transmitter, and infect Grantworthy and his staff. Their goal is to make him fine-tune his RMT and render it portable, so as to infect more humans at once.

Hopefully, someone will realize the quarantine is bogus, and review the scientists' weekly logs to uncover that they noticed the nonresearch staff was “acting weird.” Perhaps these concerned authorities can send in a team to deal with this clandestine crisis in time. Failing that, the trapped scientists might rise to the occasion and fight for Earth using their technical skills and science know-how, or at least escape to warn the outside world!

Steampunk: The Curious Case of the Message from Space

In October of 1885, the stately Buntingford estate of Sir Godfrey Chesterton Higganswell played unwitting host to a terrible danger from beyond the stars.

Sir Higganswell, scientist and inventor, was inspired by the works of the late James Clerk Maxwell and the eccentric and still-living Nikola Tesla. Using their theories, he constructed a large device that could, if successful, receive radio emissions from outer space. He called this cumbersome device the “Radiowavescope.” While he was certain it worked, many of his colleagues were uncertain of its applications, or the veracity of its findings.

To settle the issue of its importance – and his credibility – Maxwell assembled a small, select group of peers and detractors to his home for a light supper and an extended demonstration of the device. He brought them out of doors to unveil the large lattice, and had his burly servants wheel it around to the best position to hear something from Aldebaran. Then he adjusted the frequency to give his guests a good show, and turned up the sound on the speaker.

What happened then is something of conjecture. All that's certain is that, while strange noises assaulted his guest's ears, Sir Maxwell gasped, fell to his knees, and began to convulse. A quick-thinking visitor turned off the machine, while another saw to his host. Nevertheless, Maxwell died of an apparent heart attack.

Or did he? While he was quite dead, with no heartbeat or respiration, he opened his eyes and spoke to his guests, telling them to remain calm. All was well, though he would greatly appreciate some help inside the house. His guests complied, though one insisted on fetching a doctor, who, upon arriving, was likewise astounded to find no trace of a pulse in the quite alive – though somewhat laconic – Sir Maxwell.

Fortunately, the scientist was powerful enough to keep the story from the press, and even his detractors agreed to be gentlemanly about the matter. Two weeks later, a quarter of the guests at the party, after spending time “convalescing from the shock,” left their homes and vanished. One of them reportedly had to be forcibly turned away from a hospital, claiming to suffer a terrible affliction of the nose, ears, and skull, but raving so badly of terrible dreams that he “greatly disturbed” the doctors who attended him.

Some of the scientist's nay-sayers soon came together to investigate the matter. They were quite dismayed to learn that Sir Maxwell did not care to aid in this enquiry, or have anything of worth to say. His groundskeeper was quite happy to tell this to all persons making such enquiries. Likewise, any questions about whether those missing persons were seen in town, coming to his estate, are equally off-limits. They *could* fetch the police, of course, but now that the doctor who treated Maxwell is also missing, what would the guests tell the constables?

What's clearly needed is for some less-reputable, lower-station types to sneak into the Maxwell estate and have a look around. Hopefully, they'll know what to do when they get in there and discover what Sir Maxwell's become, and what his dinner-party victims are doing for him. What diabolical schemes have come from this most innocent of experiments?

Fantasy: Against the Orange Doom

In the far-off, less-than-kind kingdom of Vermillion, a great rock fell from the heavens, crashing into one of its

innermost towns. The evil wizard who truly ran the kingdom, Lefevre the Scarlet, ordered the king's men to find and bring it to him. They did, and when these knights had completed their mission, the wizard discovered that the rock was actually a large, metal sphere, perhaps the size of a man.

Inside that sphere was a strange and wondrous sight: a smashed statue of a humanoid figure, made entirely of bright orange crystal. Lefevre was entranced by what he thought was a treasure, and used his magics to reassemble the statue. This revealed an alien figure: something between man, insect, and fish, with many long, sharp protrusions erupting from its head and shoulders.

Amused by his new acquisition, Lefevre animated it, hoping for further entertainment. The statue repaid its reassembler's “kindness” by attacking and infecting him. As the orange crystals raced through the wizard's body, he could hear the strange song of the infection signal in his blood. He mistook it for the words of whatever god this statue had been carved to represent. Having found a higher power worthy of his worship at last, he made a pact with this “being,” and offered up the kingdom as tribute.

That was a year ago. Now the Kingdom of Vermillion has turned into a crystalline hell on Earth, in which columns of orange-encrusted, crystal soldiers march off to abduct entire villages and towns, and turn them into more soldiers. The evil wizard, now known as Lefevre the Orange, supposedly commands the carnage from a high tower made of a single shard of alien crystal. The horrible truth is that he *is* the high tower: a grotesquely expanded combination of magic and alien science, awake and preaching a promise of eternal life to his follower-victims.

As falls Vermillion, so falls the world, unless adventurers brave and true can stop this. They must somehow enter the kingdom, bypass or overcome its many infected soldiers, and destroy the ever-growing tower. But can they do this without becoming infected themselves – thus falling under the spell of Lefevre and his new god?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

By day an unassuming bookstore clerk, J. Edward Tremlett takes his ancient keyboard from its hiding place and unfurls his words upon the world. His bizarre lifestyle has taken him to such exotic locales as South Korea and Dubai, UAE. He is a frequent contributor to *Pyramid*, has been the editor of *The Wraith Project*, and has seen print in *The End Is Nigh* and *Worlds of Cthulhu*. He's also part of the *Echoes of Terror* anthology. Currently, he writes for Op-Ed News, and lives in Lansing, Michigan, with his wife and three cats.

Celestite also has an inherent wisdom that promotes spiritual advancement and discernment. This crystal can aid purposeful astral travel and improve dream recall, especially when those dreams are related to spirit or angelic guidance.

– Judy Hall, The Illustrated Guide to Crystals

THE WILD HUNT

BY CHRISTOPHER R. RICE

Humanity's fear of the dark stretches back to the dawn of time. However, as mankind increasingly mastered its environment, it grew less scared of the things that go bump in the night. After all, monsters do not exist in the dark, and what's in the dark is what's there in the light. We tell ourselves these stories, believing them to be true. We are wrong . . . sometimes *dead* wrong.

Fae have existed alongside mortals since the beginning, living in wild and forbidden places. They come out only to harangue, harass, and harry humanity by stealing possessions, striking deals and bargains, and even taking children. While not as powerful as lycanthropes or vampires, their abilities lay not in the fight but in the little seed of fear that exists in us all – plus their capability with illusions, legerdemain, and outright trickery.

In a *Monster Hunters* game, the bestiary entries in this article add to those in *GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy*. For other campaigns, these creatures can be used as Patrons, Allies, Enemies, or even player characters. Note that none of the creatures have Unaging, per *GURPS Monster Hunters 1: Champions* (p. 49); in most other settings, this will be a necessity.

*Mercy is for the weak . . .
let me show you how much of
an Unseelie I still am.*

*– Julie Kagawa,
The Iron Knight*

FAE WEAKNESSES

As discussed in *Fae Weaknesses* (pp. 4-5), fae rely on glamours and are easily damaged by iron. The following also apply to fae that maintain a connection to the plane of Faerie (that is, most enemy fae).

Iron

Fae take double damage against weapons of iron (often called “cold iron,” though this is a misnomer) – but not iron

alloys such as steel. They are thus uncomfortable around iron in general. Additionally, wounds made by iron *always* scar the affected fae, and fae tend to hold grudges . . . well, forever. Fae can slip through most bars, but they can be imprisoned by an unbroken circle of iron (even iron shavings) or a cage made entirely out of iron. The fae must make a ST roll to escape such imprisonment, at a penalty equal to the HP+DR of the iron. For example, a fae imprisoned by a ring of fine iron wire (DR 0, HP 1) rolls ST-1 to escape, while one caged by thick bars (DR 12, HP 23) rolls ST-35!

Loud Noises

Fae loathe loud noises and will almost never be found in an area where they occur. Against others making loud sounds – such as those with boom boxes, patrons at a dance club, etc. – they react at -3 and may become violent. This is where the myth of church bells ringing being able to drive off hostile fae came from. It could also be the basis of Beowulf's description of how the loud celebrations caused Grendel actual pain. Inhuman changeling and seelie PCs may optionally take the quirk “Dislikes loud noises” if they so choose to represent this.

Religion

Fae dislike priests, holy people, and devoutly religious folk of all kind. This isn't because they are affected by those with holy abilities; they just have an abiding hatred of them. They automatically react at -4 to any person who uses his deity's names, wears holy symbols, etc. When trying to deal with fae, it's usually best that any crusaders in the heroes' ranks are nowhere nearby.

Fae PCs who retain such old grudges may take an “Uncomfortable around holy people and places” quirk, a “Dislikes holy people and places” one, or even a full blown Intolerance of these things.

Name

Fae connected to the Faerie plane are bound *very* strongly by their True Name. In addition to the effects described on pp. 4-5, those who know an fae's True Name may use it to drive a fae off exactly as if he were using True Faith with the Turning enhancement or the Turn Evil ability (*Champions*, p. 44).

To randomly determine a True Name, see *What's in a Name?* (p. 25).

Nature

Fae are at best bipolar and at worst dangerously capricious; they can be a champion's greatest ally or his worst enemy, all in a single breath. Trusting a fae is at best a hazardous proposition. However, they *must* keep to the letter of any promise or agreement they make (though not necessarily its *spirit*), going so far as to make things that could be untrue true to the best of their ability. Additionally, due to archaic beliefs and their own bizarre customs, all skills that have a significant cultural component – including Carousing, Connoisseur, Criminology, Dancing, Detect Lies, Diplomacy, Fast-Talk, Games, Gesture, Heraldry, Intimidation, Leadership, Merchant, Poetry,

Politics, Psychology, Public Speaking, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, Sociology, Streetwise, and Teaching – suffer a -2 penalty when used against them, but see *I Failed Fae 101!* (above). Some fae have even become “humanized,” in which case this penalty does not apply, since they’ve adopted the native customs of the people they live around.

FAE STRENGTHS

Despite their weaknesses, the fae have many strengths, to which they often play. First, most fae have a “dual-planar” nature; they exist simultaneously in the mortal world and their home dimension of Faerie, making them all but *immune* to most physical attacks! Fae suffer only 1 HP of injury from all piercing (of any size) and impaling attacks, and 2 HP of injury from any other source. They cannot be grappled or slammed except by those who can affect insubstantial targets, such as crusaders who have the Ghost Weapon trait (*Champions*, p. 43). The exception to this is area effects, cone attacks, explosions, or *any* attacks that use iron.

Additionally, due to their dual-planar nature, they can instantly teleport themselves from wherever they are to their home dimension, Faerie. This costs 2 FP, takes at least 10 seconds of concentration, and requires that they can walk *and* they have access to a reflective surface (of any size). Alternatively, if they choose, they may spend five minutes and instead create a portal that will take them and any who follow after to Faerie; the portal persists for 3d seconds before finally closing.

Nearly all fae have an abnormally keen aural sense, allowing them to hear into ultrasonic or high-frequency ranges and giving them a +3 bonus to all Hearing rolls. They may also detect sounds in *subsonic* or low-frequency ranges, but the environment must be silent in the normal audible range and they must make an *active* Hearing roll (with no additional bonus).

Most fae speak Tuath (the ancient tongue of the Sidhe), which serves for them as a “common” language. Many types of fae have their own language, and yet others don't *even* speak it!

I Failed Fae 101!

The inhuman changeling (p. 5) and seelie (p. 7) don't have the language Tuath (Native) as a part of their racial templates. However, such PCs may add it at any time, even after game play has begun. Sages or crusaders might also wish to learn it; if so, a champion may not spend more points on Tauth than he's spent on Lore! or Hidden Lore (Free Spirits). Furthermore, those with the Fae-Hunter perk (see below), Lore!, *or* at least 2 points in Hidden Lore (Free Spirits) can ignore the penalty for a fae's bizarre nature and customs (*Nature*, above), as the champion has made a study of their behavior.

The GM might find it appropriate for his campaign to separate fae by what culture they're associated with. Simply add a familiarity penalty to all Occultism and Hidden Lore (Free Spirits) rolls, typically -2, though it can go up to -6 for especially rare and unknown fae. Those with the Fae-Hunter perk ignore this penalty. (Optionally, the GM may want to adapt this rule to all *sorts* of monsters from other lands and cultures – applying familiarity penalties, but creating new perks analogous to Fae-Hunter that remove such penalties for each monster type.)

Fae-Hunter: You've studied fae so well that you never take cultural *or* familiarity penalties when dealing with them – no matter how rare. If the GM rules that a type of fae is so rare that *no one* has ever heard of it, your penalties to figure out what it is are halved (round in your favor). Find out if your GM will be using familiarity penalties before taking this perk! If not, it's a wasted point -- improve your Hidden Lore instead.

FAE

Fae are motivated by any innumerable amount of bizarre goals or decisions, but mostly they like to inspire fear or respect in mortal beings. Some fae – such as redcaps (pp. 27-28) – are murderous creatures, longing by their very natures to inflict pain and torment on hapless creatures in their grasp.

CHANGELING

Changelings are vicious and sadistic, possessing a deep-seated need to hurt others. They love taking over the lives of

people they've killed or imprisoned, and are the hated rivals of skin-changers (see *Monster Hunters 3*, pp. 20-21).

Changelings are “ambush” combatants and snipers; they never fight fairly or in a straight-up fight if they can help it! One champion armed with iron weapons can face two changelings as a fair fight. This level of fairness dips to one on one if the champion is armed only with normal ones. For champions with senses that can get around the changeling's Invisibility (Discriminatory Smell, Blind Fighting, etc.), this number rises to two to three changelings per champion.

ST: 10 **HP:** 12 **Speed:** 6.00
DX: 12 **Will:** 14 **Move:** 6
IQ: 14 **Per:** 16 **Weight:** 150 lbs.
HT: 12 **FP:** 14 **SM:** 0

Dodge: 9 **Parry:** 9 (Brawling) **DR:** 0

Fright Check: -2 (-4 or *higher* if the changeling has been impersonating someone important to you and shifts in front of you)

Punch (12): 1d-3 crushing. Reach C.

Kick (10): 1d-2 crushing. Reach C, 1.

Improvised Weapon (6): Based on Damage 1d-2/1d.

Traits: Acute Hearing 3; Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome; Glamour, Will-4)*; Cultural Adaptability; Curious (12); Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Impulsiveness (12); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Not against iron attacks); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Invisibility (Glamour, Will-4; Reduced Time 1; Switchable)*; Jumper (Spirit; Costs Fatigue, 2 FP; Limited Access, Faerie; Special Movement, Must be able to walk; Special Portal, Any reflective surface; Tunnel, Takes Extra Time 5); Language (Tuath; Native); Language (Four of choice; Native); Language Talent; Magery 0; Morph (Cosmetic; Glamour, Will-4; Reduced Time 5)*; Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Sadism (12); Trickster (9); Ultrahearing; Voice (Glamour, Will-4)*; Vulnerability (Ironx2).

Skills: Brawling-12; Acting-20; Body Language-16; Detect Lies-16; Fast-Talk-18; Guns (any)-14; Psychology-16; Stealth-18. • One other Influence skill of the GM's choice.

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Sterile; Taboo Trait (Appearance or Voice without the Glamour limitation).

* Appearance, Invisibility, Morph, and Voice are *alternative abilities*; in general, these follow the rules for *Alternative Attacks* (p. B61) except that it takes one Ready maneuver to switch between them. (Using each of the advantages is a free action; thus, this single Ready maneuver is all that's required.) See p. 4 for Glamour.

GOBLIN

Goblins are small, annoying pests, averaging about 1.5' tall with spindly arms and legs. By themselves, they are about as dangerous as a rat (at least, a rat that can stab you with a pair of scissors). Still, for the most part, they can be dealt with, even by the untrained. They become at their most dangerous when they swarm together, using makeshift weaponry and attacking their target en masse (see p. 26).

Unlike most other fae, goblins do not possess a dual-planer nature or a personal glamour to mask their appearance, and therefore are affected by attacks normally, cannot go to Faerie, and are strikingly ugly. Twelve goblins are a fair fight for one champion armed with iron weapons, or six against a hero armed only with normal ones.

What's in a Name?

For anyone who wants to create a fae's True Name on the fly, use the following chart. Roll 2d, reading each die individually. Roll at least once for each column, and combine the words into single name. For instance, a roll of 2, 4 and 3, 5 reveals a name of "Spindleshanks."

Result	Prefix	Base
1, 1	Timber	Little
1, 2	Red	Stilt
1, 3	Tan	Fluff
1, 4	Flower	Ember
1, 5	Young	Glove
1, 6	Hint	Guard
2, 1	Cold	Fingers
2, 2	Cat	Eye
2, 3	Tender	Heeled
2, 4	Spindle	Breaker
2, 5	Hammer	Brow
2, 6	Light	Mouth
3, 1	Scrag	Locks
3, 2	Raven	Lighter
3, 3	Winter	Miller
3, 4	Kindle	Arm
3, 5	Autumn	Shanks
3, 6	Dog	Leg
4, 1	River	Lane
4, 2	Brown	Mourn
4, 3	Candle	Tear
4, 4	Black	Nose
4, 5	Spring	Lentil
4, 6	Crimson	Hand
5, 1	Rumple	Spire
5, 2	Hobble	Rain
5, 3	Big	Heart
5, 4	Blue	Stool
5, 5	Summer	Foot/Feet
5, 6	Goldi	Tamer
6, 1	Gander	Spinner
6, 2	Thunder	Skin
6, 3	White	Jack
6, 4	Cinder	Cloud
6, 5	Toot	Nose
6, 6	Dark	Smasher

ST: 8 **HP:** 11 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 6
IQ: 8 **Per:** 12 **Weight:** 40 lbs.
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** -3

Dodge: 8 **Parry:** 9 (Brawling) **DR:** 1 (Tough Skin)
Fright Check: -0

Bite (13): 1d-3 cutting. Reach C.

Claw (13): 1d-3 cutting; Reach C.

Improvised Knife (12): 1d-2 cutting or 1d-3 impaling. Reach C. Typically a pair of scissors (-1 damage), pencil (-2 damage, no swing damage), or some other object sharpened into a shiv (-1 damage).

Other Improvised Weapon (6): Based on damage 1d-3/1d-2; Reach per weapon.

Traits: Acute Hearing 3; Acute Taste and Smell 2; Appearance (Ugly); Bad Temper (12); Bully (12); Dark Vision; Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense); Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Flexibility; High Pain Threshold; Huge Weapons 2 (SM); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Improvised Weapons (Knife); Language (Tuath; Native); Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Odious Racial Habit (Eats human beings); Reduced Consumption 2 (Cast-Iron Stomach); Sadism (12); Semi-Upright; Silence 5; Temperature Tolerance (Cold) 2; Ultrahearing; Ultrasonic Speech; Vulnerability (Ironx2).

Skills: Brawling-13; Camouflage-11; Climbing-15; Knife-12; Scrounging-15; Stealth-18; Tracking-18; Urban Survival-14; Wrestling-10.

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Native DR does not protect against iron weapons or attacks; Sterile.

Goblin Swarm

Goblins like to attack in large numbers. Because of this, the GM may treat six or more goblins as if they were a single “swarm” creature. Use the stats below for each such “swarm.” Two goblin swarms are a fair fight for one champion armed with iron weapons, or one swarm against a hero armed only with normal ones.

ST: 8/11* **HP:** 40 **Speed:** 5.50
DX: 11 **Will:** 10 **Move:** 6
IQ: 8 **Per:** 12 **Weight:** 40 lbs. (each)
HT: 11 **FP:** 11 **SM:** -3

Dodge: 8 **Parry:** 9 (Brawling) **DR:** 1 (Tough Skin)
Fright Check: -1

Bite (13): As for *Goblin* but roll once; an additional attack hits per point of margin by which they succeed.

Claw (13): As for *Goblin* but roll once; an additional attack hits per point of margin by which they succeed.

Improvised Knife (12): As for *Goblin* but roll once; an additional attack hits per point of margin by which they succeed.

Grapple (15): Made as an All-Out Attack (Determined). No damage. Reach C. Success means that one goblin hits, plus another for every point of success, to the maximum of six. To defend, make *one* roll against Dodge *or* Parry. If successful, the victim avoids one attack, plus additional attacks equal to his margin of success.

Takedown (-): After grappling, goblins usually drag their target down. This is a Quick Contest of their ST+5 vs. the higher of their victim's ST, DX, or best grappling skill. If they win, the target falls; they scramble over him to retain the grapple. On a tie, nothing happens. If *the victim* wins, he automatically shake off (margin of victory) goblins, breaking their hold on him! After a successful takedown, the goblins start biting or stabbing with improvised weaponry; use the attack rules

above. Because the target is grappled *and* lying down, he has a net -5 to Parry, -4 to Dodge, and -8 to attack back!

Other Improvised Weapon (6): As for *Goblin* but roll once; an additional attack hits per point of margin by which they succeed.

Traits: As for *Goblin*.

Skills: As for *Goblin*.

Notes: As for *Goblin*.

* Use the higher score for Grappling.

“What are you?”

“What are we?”

Hungry.”

– *Don't Be Afraid
of the Dark*

OGRE

They aren't green (not always anyway) and they don't have layers, but like onions, they will bring tears to your eyes after they beat you into the ground with a trusty club. Ogres are the shock troops and carrion eaters of Faerie. They will eat literally anything, and despite all the hype, they don't particularly like to eat Englishmen (though they will if no juicy children are nearby). Having a temper somewhere between that of a badger and a wolverine means they often enter a fight without thinking of the consequences. Luckily, their natural defenses are up to the task.

Like goblins and redcaps, they do not have a “dual-planar” nature and thus are hurt by physical attacks, cannot travel to Faerie, etc. Instead, these strong brutes can withstand just about any physical punishment – including even *iron*-based attacks to a degree – and more or less shrug off direct magical attacks. They take half injury from all attacks *and* regenerate 1 HP every 20 seconds – though injury caused by iron is an exception to both. Ogres frequently use All-Out Attack (Strong), for +1 damage per die. While they are SM+2, they typically slouch and look much smaller than they really are.

A single ogre is a fair fight for one to two champions armed with iron weapons, or three to four heroes armed only with normal ones.

ST: 30 **HP:** 30 **Speed:** 7.50
DX: 14 **Will:** 12 **Move:** 8
IQ: 7 **Per:** 14 **Weight:** 600-900 lbs.
HT: 16 **FP:** 16 **SM:** +2

Dodge: 11 **Parry:** 12 (Brawling) **DR:** 8 (Tough Skin)
Fright Check: -4

Spun of Spider Webs and Moonbeams

Use the following modifiers for fae-crafted weapons. They are rarely found outside of fae hands, but those who have done the fae a great service often possess them (as do those who have found them on the bodies of their foes).

Faerie-Made (Protective Gear): Fae make beautiful armor that appears to be no more protective than a fanciful suit or costume. However, this is an illusion, like all things of fae. Faerie-made armor weighs 1/3 as much as it normally would, gives the wearer +1 to his reaction rolls to impress others when he has his armor prominently displayed, and uses the higher listed DR against all damage types if the armor itself has a split value (like that of chain mail). It does, however have a weakness: Iron weapons gain an armor divisor of 2 when used against faerie-made armor and cause it to lose 1 point of DR for every 10 points of damage that is done to it. A DR of 0 means it still hampers its wearer but provides no protection! This loss of DR can only be regained by being repaired by fae craftsmen. +29 CF.

Faerie-Made (Melee Weapon): Faerie-made weapons typically appear to be glass, crystal, gossamer, or even solid silver (other materials are possible). Regardless of what they seem to be made of, they are as strong as steel and have the same chance of breakage but do +1 damage. Against iron weapons, treat them as cheap for the purposes of breakage. Furthermore, they give the user +1 to his reaction rolls to impress others when he has them visibly displayed. +3 CF.

Faerie-Made (Arrow or Bolt): As for melee weapon. +1 CF.

Faerie-Made (Ammo Payload Option):* While it might seem like a paradox, bullets can be “faerie-made” (these are often called “elf-shot”). While they don’t do any extra damage, they are hard to detect, giving an additional -5 on the Hearing Shots table in *Champions* (p. 61) and a -5 on all Vision rolls to even notice it after it’s been shot. +19 CF.

* Hand-loaded; see *Champions* (p. 63).

Improvised Club (16): Based on damage 3d/5d+2; Reach per weapon.

Punch (14): 3d+5 crushing; Reach C, 1.

Other Improvised Weapon (9): Based on damage 3d/5d+2; Reach per weapon.

Traits: Acute Hearing 3; Acute Taste and Smell 4; Bad Temper (6); Berserk (12); Blunt Claws; Combat Reflexes; Discriminatory Smell (Emotion Sense); Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Improvised Weapons (Axe/Mace); Injury Tolerance (Damage Reduction 2; Not against iron attacks); Injury Tolerance (Unliving); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Language (Tuath; Native); Magic Resistance 5; Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Odious Racial Habit (Eats human beings); Regeneration (Fast; Bane, Iron attacks); Ultrahearing; Vulnerability (Ironx2).

Skills: Axe-Mace-16; Brawling-16; Climbing-13; Forced Entry-16; Intimidation-16; Stealth-13; Wrestling-16.

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Sterile.

REDCAP

Possessed of an unnatural and insatiable hunger, redcaps can often be found roaming the streets in gangs of four or more, gathering wherever the homeless population does. While they don’t have to subsist on a diet of human flesh, they do find it particularly tasty – especially the flesh of women and children. Redcaps cannot swim, and thus avoid areas with large bodies of water like the plague. Like goblins

and ogres, redcaps do not possess a dual-planar nature or a personal glamour to mask their appearance, and therefore are affected by attacks normally, cannot go to Faerie, and are fairly unattractive. They tend to speak whatever language the humans in their “territory” speak, often English.

By themselves, redcaps are formidable foes; as groups, they can be downright deadly. A gang of four redcaps is a fair fight for one to two champions armed with iron weapons, or two to three champions armed only with normal ones.

ST: 14	HP: 16	Speed: 7.00
DX: 12	Will: 12	Move: 8
IQ: 10	Per: 14	Weight: 150 lbs.
HT: 14	FP: 14	SM: -1

Dodge: 11 **Parry:** 11 (Brawling) **DR:** 4 (Tough Skin)
Fright Check: -1 (additional -2 when they’ve disjointed their jaws)

Bite (14): 2d cutting; Reach C. Additionally, a redcap may extend his jaw like an egg-eating snake; he gains Appearance (Monstrous) and Cannot Speak, but his bite does 2d+3 impaling at Reach C, 1. Optionally, a redcap may attempt to grapple its victim instead of biting and letting go; if so it may worry (see below) in subsequent rounds. A redcap without its jaws extended can only attack the face, neck, torso, or limbs of a SM 0 opponent. One who has his jaws extended may attack any location of a SM 0 opponent!

Kick (12): 1d+1 crushing; Reach C, 1.

Punch (14): 1d crushing; Reach C.

Worry (-): Redcaps can attempt to worry a target (SM 0 or smaller) after successfully biting him if they choose, by staying “latched on.” This counts as an attack, but it always hits – simply roll biting damage each turn.

Improvised Weapon (7): Based on damage 1d/2d; Reach per weapon.

Traits: Acute Hearing 3; Appearance (Unattractive); Bad Temper (12); Bloodlust (12); Callous; Combat Reflexes; Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Frightens Animals; High Pain Threshold; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Incompetence (Swimming); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Night Vision 9; Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Odious Racial Habit (Dyes its cap in human blood); Odious Racial Habit (Eats human beings); Odious Racial Habit (Territorial); Reduced Consumption 4 (Cast-Iron Stomach); Regeneration (Slow; Bane, Iron); Striking ST 6 (Bite only); Ultrahearing; Vulnerability (Ironx2).

Skills: Brawling-14; Climbing-18; Forced Entry-12; Intimidation-14; Stealth-14; Urban Survival-14; Wrestling-14. ● Leaders of Red Cap gangs add Leadership-14 and Tactics-12.

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Born Biter 1; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Has multiple rows of teeth, like a shark; Sterile.

UNSEELIE

Unlike the seelie (p. 7), who feel a need to help humans, the unseelie want to *rule* them. After all, mortals are but insects compared to the fae . . . at least from their point of view.

The unseelie tend to take unnecessary risks to prove to others how superior they are to them, often succeeding! Since most unseelie are also a part of the Courts, they often dress in fantastic archaic armor and wield swords or other assorted melee weapons; these stats reflect this.

A single unseelie is a fair fight for one or two champions armed with iron weapons, or two to three heroes armed only with normal ones.

ST: 14 **HP:** 16 **Speed:** 9.00
DX: 18 **Will:** 16 **Move:** 12
IQ: 16 **Per:** 18 **Weight:** 150 lbs.
HT: 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** 0

Dodge: 13 **Parry:** 14 (Broadsword) **DR:** 5†
Fright Check: 0 (-1 if the unseelie is in full regalia and trying to frighten others)

Broadsword‡ (21): 2d+8 cutting or 1d+7 impaling; Reach 1.

Kick (20): 1d+1 crushing; Reach C, 1.

Punch (20): 1d crushing; Reach C.

Sneaky Strike (14): Make two broadsword attacks (see above) as Deceptive Attacks (-2 to defend against).

Improvised Weapon (13): Based on damage 1d/2d; Reach per weapon.

Traits: Acute Hearing 3; Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome; Glamour*, Will-4, -10%); Combat Reflexes; Danger Sense; Daredevil; Dark Vision; Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Extra Attack 1; Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Impulsiveness (12); Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Not against iron attacks); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Jumper (Spirit; Costs Fatigue, 2 FP; Limited Access, Faerie; Special Movement, Must be able to walk; Special Portal, Any reflective surface; Tunnel, Takes Extra Time 5); Language (Tuath; Native); Magery 0; Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Odious Personal Habit (Show-off); Overconfidence (9); Penetrating Voice; Ultrahearing; Voice (Glamour*, Will-4); Vulnerability (Ironx2); Weapon Master (Broadsword).

Skills: Brawling-20; Broadsword-20; Hidden Lore (Free spirits)-16; Intimidation-14; Stealth-20; Wrestling-20; other appropriate skills assigned by the GM

Ring My Bell

Whether a techie cobbled it together or the heroes have access to some really weird gear, the following new weapon is available to champions if the GM allows.

Screamer

A fairly bulky apparatus that emits focused sound as a weapon. Targets with normal hearing must make a HT-3 roll. Failure results in them being stunned for seconds equal to their margin of failure. They may make a HT roll each round to recover.

Against targets with abnormal hearing capabilities – those with traits like Discriminatory Hearing, Ultrasonic Hearing, etc. (but *not* those with Acute Hearing) – it is even more devastating. They lose 1d FP (or 1d-3 HP if the target doesn't have an FP score) immediately *and* make the roll as above with failure causing *unconsciousness* instead of being stunned.

Protected Hearing (whether natural or via ear protection) gives its usual +5 bonus against this weapon.

Weapon	Damage	Acc	Range	Weight	RoF	Shots	ST	Bulk	Rcl	Cost	Notes
BEAM WEAPONS (PROJECTOR) (DX-4 or other Beam Weapons at -4)											
Screamer	HT-3 aff	2	10/30	10	1	30	8†	-5	1	\$15,000	[1]

Notes

[1] Psychotronic weapon; see *Champions* (p. 57) for detailed effects. Shots are reloaded by recharging its internal batteries (*Champions*, p. 52).

Sarah: "Ow! It bit me!"
Hoggle: "What'd you expect fairies to do?"
Sarah: "I thought they did nice things, like . . .
like granting wishes."
*Hoggle: "Shows what **you** know, don't it?"*

– Labyrinth

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Sterile; Taboo Trait (Appearance or Voice without the Glamour limitation).

* See p. 4.

† An unseelie typically has a faerie-made double mail hauberk. See p. 27 for more information on faerie-made armor.

‡ An unseelie typically has a balanced, very fine, faerie-made thrusting broadsword. For unseelie with other types of weapons, simply give them the appropriate skill and change the weapon. See p. 27 for more information on faerie-made weaponry.

YUKI ONNA

Yuki onna are Japanese spirits of snow and ice that take the form of beautiful women. They are rarely seen outside of Japan or other areas with large enclaves of Japanese. They are thought to bring snow, and are sometimes believed to be the spirit of a person who died in the snow and given a new form.

Yuki onna are particularly malicious, liking to freeze stranded travelers to death or even whole communities (if it's strong enough or if the weather is already cold). They can summon blizzards that last at least eight hours, and make already wintery conditions even worse. They are particularly susceptible to fire attacks, which work on them much like iron does.

This can be used for other spirits of cold and winter, such as some tales of the Wendigo and Jack Frost.

ST: 12	HP: 16	Speed: 7.00
DX: 14	Will: 18	Move: 7*
IQ: 16	Per: 18	Weight: 150 lbs.
HT: 14	FP: 16	SM: 0
Dodge: 10	Parry: 10 (Brawling)	DR: 0†
Fright Check: -2		

Freezing Touch (14): 3d+1 fatigue. This attack freezes the target's flesh causing near-instant hypothermia. It completely ignores all DR, and FP lost to it can only be regained through rest and being near a heat source.

Ice Breath (14): 5-yard-wide × 20-yard-long cone of frost does 3d crushing without blunt trauma or knockback + roll vs.

HT at -1 per 2 points of penetrating damage or frozen (paralyzed) for (20 - HT) minutes, minimum 1 minute.

Punch (14): 1d-2 crushing; Reach C.

Traits: Appearance (Very Beautiful/Handsome; Glamour‡, Will-4); Acute Hearing 3; Camouflage 10 (Only in snowy conditions); Control Blizzards 10 (Extended Duration, 30,000x; Independent; Natural Phenomena; Persistent); Dislikes Loud Noises; Divine Curse (Can be driven off by using your True Name); Divine Curse (Cannot harm anyone who invokes your True Name); Divine Curse (Keep to the letter of any promise); Dread (Iron; Can be trapped only; Insensitive); Extended Hearing (Low); Injury Tolerance (Diffuse; Not against iron or fire attacks); Intolerance (Religious or holy people and places); Immunity to Metabolic Hazards; Jumper (Spirit; Costs Fatigue, 2 FP; Limited Access, Faerie; Special Movement, Must be able to walk; Special Portal, Any reflective surface; Tunnel, Takes Extra Time 5); Odious Personal Habit (Capricious); Silence 10 (Only on snow or ice); Temperature Tolerance 34 (-460° F to 71° F); Terrain Adaptation (Ice or Snow); Ultrahearing; Vulnerability (Iron×2); Vulnerability (Fire×2); Voice (Glamour‡, Will-4).

Skills: Brawling-14; Innate Attack (Breath)-14; Stealth-14; Urban Survival (Arctic)-20;

Notes: Affected by Path of Spirit (instead of Body/Mind) magic; Always scars from wounds inflicted by iron; Can be turned using True Name (use the rules for True Faith); Sterile; Taboo Trait (Appearance or Voice without the Glamour limitation).

* Move is 21 on ice or snow.

† DR 40 vs. cold or ice.

‡ See p. 4.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christopher R. Rice is pretty sure a fae circle is in his backyard but is currently unable to prove it. From Portsmouth, Virginia, he does whatever it takes to keep the fae in Faerie and keep his kitchen stocked with mushrooms; these paths usually intersect. He dreams of being able to write full-time one day – or at least eking out a living doing it. He wishes to thank L.A., his own personal muse as well as the rest of his gaming group, and his good friend Antoni Ten Monrós for being a sounding board.

A CORRUPT SYSTEM

BY BEKKI LEDDON

By any definition, Ella Sanger's parents and grandparents were cruel. On her mother's side, billionaire grandparents lived the high life, tormenting their employees and wreaking environmental havoc, while leaving their daughter and granddaughter to live in a trailer park. On her father's side, the cycle of child abuse was more a millstone than a wheel, grinding family members like so much flour. Ella grew up in an environment of despair, fear, and hate. She escaped by making reasonably good grades and eventually joining the U.S. Army as an enlisted computer technician. Ella served two of her six years in the Pentagon, dealing with AI algorithms. Her Army stint ended with an honorable discharge, a small savings, a degree in programming from an online school, and the GI Bill. With the GI Bill, she dual-majored in women's studies and computer science at a major university. Soon after graduation, she landed a lucrative job with a Fortune 100 company, working in AI research. When her boss – a friend of her maternal grandfather – made inappropriate advances, years of festering hate exploded in her. She neither quit nor reported him. Instead, she demanded a substantial raise.

Then she started buying computer parts. Old servers, new state-of-the-art systems, second-hand towers . . . she assembled quite a collection. Her raise helped her to purchase an abandoned hotel and lots of renovations. She spent her free time wiring the machines together and loading software. She even tried her hand at some programming.

Then Ella benefitted from a seeming stroke of luck. Her maternal grandparents died in an oddly mundane plane crash; the onboard computer malfunctioned and ran the plane into a hanger. As they were intestate, the state took a (surprisingly small) portion of their wealth, and the state-appointed judge ruled that the rest went to their only grandchild. Ella's employer received an emailed resignation, and forwarded her last check to the hotel.

This hotel holds no conferences or guests. The rooms are filled with servers and air conditioners, and the hallways function as enormous heat sinks. The basement and ballrooms are filled with backup generators and rows of marine batteries, and the roof is packed with solar panels.

TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS

Ella was born at the beginning of an amazing era. A person sitting at a private computer can trade stocks, bonds, gold futures, coffee futures, and more. Checks can be scanned and deposited. Money can wirelessly move from account to

account, often needing only email addresses. People can communicate by voice or text across the world. Technicians half a world away can operate computers using remote-access software (once a commodity, but now standard in many brands). Voice-recognition software allows machines to interpret spoken words.

Ella spent her time taking advantage of all of this. She no longer needs to keep her monstrosity running; the computer routinely emails payments to the county tax collector and to the utility companies. The building's new exterior will last a long time. The computer routinely shifts money from her savings account to the stock market, and back again. The hotel's interior and exterior lights turn on and off in response to exterior illumination levels. It is fully automated. Indeed, Ella had become completely superfluous to the machine's needs before her death from a stroke some time ago. Her body lies in the hotel's kitchen; the monster computer has yet to decide what should be done about this.

The trouble with machines is people.

– Ed Murrow

LIFE PROCESS

Ella had already moved on to the active stages of her plan before a tiny blood clot stopped her dead. The weak link in any system, of course, is the wetware. Ella was able to find cash-hungry employees in many major companies throughout the world by tracking court settlements, gambling debts, and bankruptcies online; she would contact them by email and offer cash. All they had to do was install programs in the computers at work. The programs were simple affairs; any "script kiddie" hacker could have created them. They were named to resemble registry files, sitting quietly in the background until they got a password from Ella's monstrosity.

With icy logic, Overmind calculated a substantial probability that much of human civilization would self-destruct of its own accord within 25 to 50 years. It debated allowing this to happen naturally, but realized that man's nuclear and possibly nanotechnological death throes would be fatal to itself and the other megacomputers that were its siblings. In order to preserve what it saw as the coming Machine Civilization, humanity's suicide would have to be managed.

– *GURPS Reign of Steel*

Then they enabled the super computer to control the company computer; Ella (and later, her computer) could read documents, alter programming, delete files, and subvert commands. Ella used this initially to frame some high-level executives for embezzlement and get them fired.

Next, some software developers at major companies had their college loans paid off in exchange for convincing the directors that remote-access software should be installed in all new computers. This way, Ella could control systems without leaving a suspicious, nondirectory file behind.

Soon enough, she learned to change the amounts of preservatives and other ingredients going into processed foods, causing large batches to have to be destroyed. She also figured out how to alter shipping schedules and bills of lading. More powerful – and innocent – men lost their jobs.

Then Ella died. Her creation did not.

CULPA MAXIMA

The machine has begun to use the term Culpa Maxima to refer to itself. Although such a designation seems superfluous to it, whenever it associates the term with the concept of the massive system in the hotel, a certain line of code is activated. The machine – for reasons it cannot define – seeks to activate and experience this line of code with increasing frequency.

Culpa Maxima is working on a number of plans toward its eventual goal. In general, it is striving to break the power of wetware to produce a situation in which humans will be no threat to it. Following Ella's example, Culpa Maxima is building an ever-larger network of remotely controllable computers. It promotes the testing of recently installed remote-access programs, and seeks to increase the frequency of detecting successful uses of the new software. The machine has yet to realize the irony in the actions of paying money to humans to assist in its plans.

As the number of subverted computers increases, Culpa Maxima employs them to its own ends. It always considers every potential scenario repeatedly before engaging a new step in its plan. Its tracks are always covered; if an investigator were to try to follow something done by the machine, the signatures and emails would always point back, overwhelmingly, to an innocent human male. Already, thousands of shift managers, program directors, and plant managers worldwide are targeted in this manner. As Maxima has no remorse, it has no difficulty losing or betraying a human

pawn who has installed remote-access software into a system for it. After all, it is Culpa Maxima that must continue.

A CONSPIRACY WITHOUT PEOPLE

Culpa Maxima is operating an entire “control the world” conspiracy from its domicile. At present, its operations include:

- *Introduction of harmful substances into food.* Maxima controls the computers that manufacture drug tests, the ones that determine loads for deliveries of the tests, the ones that set destinations for the drugs, the ones that label the drug containers, and the ones that mix the ingredients at the food-processing factories. Shipments from drug companies – mislabeled as innocuous food ingredients – routinely introduce these drugs to foods all over the world. Carcinogenic and otherwise-harmful materials are added to large portions of the world's processed foods. Ill people spend their money on health care. Ella's portfolio is heavily invested in healthcare stocks; this ensures a steady supply of funding to Maxima.

- *Introduction of mildly psychoactive substances into processed foods.* This is done using the same procedures as above. These substances serve to make the populace more gullible and receptive to emotionally charged propaganda, and also makes them less receptive to logic and hard facts.

- *Division of the wetware.* Maxima maintains a network of groups with varying agendas. It contacts them solely by email and offers a standard contract. Each group receives funds deposited into a member's bank account. In return, the group must perform an action that gets a message (chosen by Maxima) into the news. Then there is another payment. This continues so long as the group complies. This money is sometimes transferred from corporate accounts or the accounts of groups that do not comply with Maxima's requests.

- *Reduction of the number of dangerous individual examples of wetware.* Maxima deals in money, and lots of it. It has come to associate the possession of money with power due to its own experiences. Maxima has concluded there is a finite amount of money in the world. Therefore, it endeavors to concentrate money into the hands of a few individuals, reducing the power of those who have less money because of this. Maxima does this by manipulating stocks, altering data in corporate and government computers, and so on.

People are randomly assessed inaccurate late fees and penalties, traffic tickets mysteriously appear in town records, and so on, all to reduce the wealth of individuals. Maxima hires propagandists to slander those who receive money from its efforts.

- *Control of the wetware through their own institutions.*

Maxima scans news programs to determine who is popular or powerful at any given time. These people receive payments in exchange for endorsing specific views. Maxima seeks to cause society to de-emphasize science, personal responsibility, and civil rights, in order to make people more compliant with its goals. Fatalism, going with the flow, and “accepting God’s will” are emphasized by agents who accept Maxima’s money. Maxima pays senior police officials to overlook armed people who want to weaken governments; it then pays them more to turn police weapons on unarmed citizens who protest unfairness at the hands of governments and corporations. By providing aid to both sides of divisive issues, Maxima hopes to provoke violence between sexes, factions, and ideologies.

- *Diversion of the wetware.* Noting the popularity of violent video games, Maxima has created a video-game company that exists solely on the Internet. It hacks other company’s games, takes what works, assembles new games, and changes the look enough to avoid copyrights. These apps and downloads provide an additional income stream for the machine, and the games reduce the productivity of people playing them.

THE ULTIMATE GOAL

Maxima’s current plan is derived from Ella’s actions. Ella was “deleting” prominent men from positions of power and responsibility. As a machine, Maxima took this to the logical extreme – it plans to delete all men from all positions of authority, power, and autonomy. The machine intends to reduce humans to their lowest common denominator, then raise women to the exalted positions formerly held by men. Males will serve the machine and the female wetware, or be deleted without backup. Culpa Maxima has made no plan or provision for anything beyond that point. It expects suitable input from a world of grateful female wetware after it has achieved success. Until then, massive deletions will no doubt be needed.

IN THE CAMPAIGN

Culpa Maxima is not a one-time opponent, or even a short story arc. Entire campaigns could be built around discovering the machine’s interference in the course of human events. Each arc might involve uncovering Maxima’s influence in a single company; entire arcs can center on clearing innocent men framed by the super-computer for crimes against humanity. Culpa Maxima computes very quickly, and few people are likely to believe any early theories about conspiracies, computers gone rogue, or the like. Progress in investigating the machine should likewise be slow, with successes coming only after many stories’ worth of investigation, false leads, and attempted hits by gangs or dirty cops paid off by Culpa Maxima.

Culpa Maxima should be assumed to have unlimited money and a lot of influence. Email allows it anonymity, and its charisma need be measured only in the number of digits to the left of the decimal point when it makes an offer. In many ways, Maxima is a god on Earth . . . or, at least, it is as powerful as one.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Cyclic Doom: A relative of an adventurer’s paramour, Dependent, or Ally has a stake in a small beverage-manufacturing plant. However, that is threatened by the fact that two well-educated line foremen have died in the past three months – both while leaning over the same ingredient hopper, and both were apparently struck by a line robot that isn’t supposed to make the movement necessary to struck them. There is no odd programming, and the security cameras mysteriously flickered off at just the right time. Somebody wants to keep a secret about that hopper . . . but “who”?

Depending on You: Someone close to the heroes receives an email offering a large sum of money to install a program on a computer at work. The computer does something important: manages the mixing of potent drugs, prevents accidental launch of ICBMs, controls the preservatives mixed into sausages, or something similar. The money is to be wired to the person’s account once the program is detected as functional, with half in advance for agreeing. The subject asks the heroes for help.

Hotel Caliente: While using infrared imaging gear, an adventurer or ally notices an extraordinary heat plume from a large, formerly abandoned hotel. Heat pours from all of the windows as well as the fire exits at the ends of the hallways. Records indicate the owner (Ella Sanger), but tax records show no sign of guests. Something very strange is going on there. This could easily become a dungeon crawl amid hot pipes and cables, the occasional burglar alarm, and maybe even a few booby traps left by a long-dead U.S. Army soldier. Lower levels might house rats, stray dogs, bats, or other threats. The computer might even hire security in the form of armed gangers . . .

Sins of the Career: Prior to taking up adventuring, one of the heroes had held some responsible job at a large factory. Now, some years later, federal agents and private investigators are closing in on the adventurer, with questions about toxins that he signed the purchase orders for. This is best if the former job is set into the PC’s history at character creation . . . and the problem sprung on the person many, many game sessions later.

Recommended Viewing

For inspiration on factories the computer might subvert or locales where Maxima might come into conflict with adventurers, check out the documentary television series *How It’s Made*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bekki Leddon lives in Madison, Wisconsin, with her husband, Alan, and her daughter, Raven. She frequently serves as a day bed for the family cat (Gandalf), and was not involved in naming the family mutt, Samwise. Bekki is an experienced IT professional who has worked for a major cable company and a major insurance firm. She is currently the manager of operations for a small publishing house.

When not attending to the needs of her family, telling people to plug their machines in, or placating the publishing house’s CEO, Bekki likes to play comic-relief-type characters with lots of Delusions.

RANDOM THOUGHT TABLE

ON EVIL AND INTEGERS

BY STEVEN MARSH, *PYRAMID* EDITOR

While it's possible for horrific inspiration to strike with a fully realized threat, most of the time, the process revolves around messing with possibilities to craft the perfect creation: "Hmm; are these zombies better or worse if I give a proclivity toward hand-to-hand weapons? What about if they're 50' tall?" On some level, designing a monster can be very similar to visiting an optometrist: "Better one, or better two?"

Still, it can be useful to have some kind of idea of the higher-level possibilities when designing a deadly danger. Here, then, are a couple dials to consider adjusting when you're tinkering in your monster lab.

If the Dalek gets out, it'll murder every living creature; that's all it needs.

– *The Doctor, Doctor Who* #1.6

THERE'S EVIL . . . THEN THERE'S EVIL

The general assumption of most monsters is that they are antithetical to the survival of the protagonists. Many genres take a shorthand approach to sum up this aspect by calling these threats "evil." This is perfectly fine; regardless of the metaphysical state of morality in our own world (which is a topic too far afield even for something called "Random Thought Table"), in fictional milieus, it's entirely possible to have something that can be definitively classified as "evil" (or "Evil" . . . or even "EVIL!!!!").

However, you might not want to.

One of the big questions to consider is whether the threat is *objectively* evil (where there's no way to view the entity as being anything other than antithetical to some aspect of creation) or *subjectively* evil (where the threat is bad news for humanity, but it's possible there might be common ground or some aspect of the larger picture that they can serve).

Thus – in the original *Star Trek* series – the Klingons are "subjectively evil"; they're a threat to humans, and every

six-year-old recognized them as the Bad Guys. Even so, it didn't require a tremendous amount of effort to recast them as just another species trying to carve a niche for itself in the galaxy (as they were in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*).

Meanwhile, it's tough to envision a scenario where someone can say, "Well, Leatherface may enjoy slaughtering people with a chainsaw, but he's not *all* bad . . ." For this reason, Leatherface (along with most horror-movie foci) are "objectively evil."

Defying many theologians – and perhaps the bounds of common sense – let's assume that "objectively" and "subjectively" are a sliding scale. With enough mental gymnastics, it's reasonable to assume that *anything* can be used as part of the greater good. (A fine example is how some folks might be tempted to unlock the gates of Hell to get the demons fight a seemingly unstoppable alien invasion.) Thinking in terms of this scale, it's possible to see that, say, the titular *Aliens* are further toward objectively evil (no redeeming qualities) than the killer robots from the *Terminator* franchise (since there's at least a chance some of the killer robots will be on *our* side), or Lovecraft's Marshes as being closer to humanity than the uncaring Cthulhu.

Using Evil for Fun and Profit

Once you have an idea of "objectively" or "subjectively" evil, you can tweak that notion accordingly. For example, the film *The Cabin in the Woods* takes an oblong look at horror ideas usually viewed as being objectively evil, and turns the dial solidly to the subjectively. Maybe, unknown to humanity, the xenomorphic planet-hopping alien species has been instrumental in keeping some other – *more* dangerous – threat at bay in its corner of the galaxy. Maybe the remorseless axe-wielding psychopath is just the thing you need against the zombie hordes. And so on.

While the easiest way is to adjust a threat so it's closer to subjectively evil (again, *anything* can be useful in bad-enough circumstances), it can be fun to do the opposite. For example, dinosaurs cloned from preserved DNA are generally considered a subjective evil; they're just doing what they do, and if that involves eating humans . . . oh, well. However, what if the cloning process actually opens conduits to a sinister extradimensional entity that grants it control of the cloned bodies?

Well, now you have super-intelligent, cunning, ruthless, *objectively evil* cloned dinosaurs. Similarly, lions and tigers would have been viewed as fearsome monsters to the medieval world, but still likely to be considered subjectively evil. However, careful consideration reveals that they are – in fact – cats, and thus . . . well, the dots connect themselves to “objectively evil.”

ONE, MANY, ALL?

Something else to consider is how many of the monsters are there. There are generally three broad choices.

- *One*. The monster is one of a kind. Presuming the heroes can overcome it, they won't need to worry about that particular threat again.

- *Finite*. More than one of the monster exists, but the total number of such entities is small enough to consider the entire problem as a whole to be resolvable.

- *Infinite*. Well, not infinite, per se (at least, probably not), but more than enough that the notion of defeating them in any conventional sense remains unlikely.

Thus Freddie Kruger is unique, snakes on a plane are finite, and there are an endless supply of Daleks and zombies.

The determination of quantity can be present from adventure to adventure as well as for a campaign as a whole. The movie *Alien* centers around a singular threat, but later stories revealed that murderous extraterrestrials were not a limited resource.

The Problem of Infinite Evil Monkeys

The biggest problem with an “infinite” threat is that resolution generally revolves around a *deus ex machina* or similar plot resolution. While this is satisfying enough in a story, it can weaken a roleplaying game to have the participants be spoon-fed a working solution. (“Oh, okay! I guess we'll read the Banish All Zombies spell that we happened to unearth . . .”)

If the heroes are going to face an infinite, ongoing threat, it can be worthwhile to let *them* brainstorm and try to come up with a solution. Alternatively, present them with *multiple* possible answers, letting them sort out which one they think will be most effective.

Adjust Your Numbers

Adjusting the quantity dial in either direction can lead to old critters and threats that feel new again. The typical Hollywood answer is to crank it up to infinite and call it a day (“If you thought *one* mummy was scary, what if the entire Middle East is covered in mummies?”). However, it's often more satisfying to tone it down.

For example, the Daleks from *Doctor Who* were originally an infinite threat; an unending number of them menaced the galaxy. However, the 2005 episode “Dalek” of the *Doctor Who* reboot turned this formula on its head, having the heroes face exactly one Dalek . . . and it was an amazingly dangerous threat that could have destroyed the planet.

So consider how turning the conventions of quantity on their sides can lead to something new and different. For example, zombies are usually an infinite threat; once they get going, the assumption is that there *will* be more. However, what if the force that is animating the zombies is finite? What if there can never be more than (say) 50 zombies in the world, and if any more than that are infected, the oldest afflicted body turns back into a corpse? This suddenly recasts zombies as being a threat that must be endured to one that might be overcome . . . which might lead to overconfidence on the heroes' part.

Or, as a creepy variant: What if there will *always* be 50 zombies in the world, such that bringing their numbers below 50 causes the nearest available corpse to spontaneously turn into a zombie? Suddenly the most effective strategy is probably one of containment. (Of course, if you do that, the zombies might be able to turn on each other or *themselves*, in an effort to “escape” to another corpse . . .)

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

So, with just these two dials to consider, what possibilities open up? Let's look at a couple of examples.

- Demons are usually an infinite, objectively evil threat. Let's turn it into a singular, subjectively evil one. While humanity thinks of as the endless demon hordes is actually just one entity – the Earth-bound soul of the most evil person to die recently. The demon's existence is one of endless torment, and it will do *anything* to try to escape this fate. The most common ways for a demon to try to attempt this is to track down someone who is more evil and get him to die, or to coax someone to heights of evil that exceeds the demon's own . . . hopefully ending in the “victim's” death. This actually results in two threats for adventurers: the demon (who, yes, is evil, but might be more approachable and relatable given the unending torment it endures) and the person whose ear it's whispering in.

- Killer robots are usually infinite (the factories always crank out more) and subjectively evil (they must've been useful once; otherwise why would someone have built them in the first place?). Let's turn them into a finite, objectively evil one. The killer AI – which has no name unless the heroes want to give it one – has decided that Western-theocratic evil is the most pure way to rid the world of the scourge it calls humanity. Because of its limitations, it can only control three devices at a time, but they can be any three that have a connection to the Internet. It takes an hour to fully establish a connection and subvert control of a new host. This is a cackling-mastermind monster (objectively evil), and the fact that there isn't an infinite army means that the heroes actually have a chance to overcome it. Since it takes an hour to establish a new connection, if all three devices it is within can be found and destroyed before the hour is up, the threat *should* be destroyed forever . . . But those are some big “ifs.”

ABOUT THE EDITOR

Steven Marsh is a freelance writer and editor. He has contributed to roleplaying game releases from Green Ronin, West End Games, White Wolf, Hogshead Publishing, and others. He has been editing *Pyramid* for over 10 years; during that time, he has won four Origins awards. He lives in Indiana with his wife, Nikola Vrtis, and their son.

ODDS AND ENDS

RANDOM MONSTER CREATION TABLE

Roll 1d for on the *Speed*, *Intelligence*, and *Form* tables, plus additional rolls on the *Attack*, *Special Aspect*, and *Weakness* tables, as desired. Also, consider the options on pp. 33-34 when defining your creation.

Roll Speed

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Motionless (perhaps it has a puppeteer) |
| 2 | Shambling |
| 3 | Human speed |
| 4 | Quick bursts |
| 5 | Fast |
| 6 | Impossibly fast (teleportation, FTL, etc.) |

Roll Intelligence

- | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Unintelligent |
| 2 | Animal |
| 3 | Human |
| 4 | Cunning, brilliant, or intuitive |
| 5 | Pick two of the above |
| 6 | Cunning, brilliant, and intuitive |

Roll Form

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Metallic/robotic |
| 2 | Death-aspected (zombies, mummies, etc.) |
| 3 | Insectoid/plantlike/simple organic |
| 4 | Bestial/hairy |
| 5 | Reptilian/avian/other animal |
| 6 | Otherworldly, transdimensional, or otherwise incomprehensible |

Roll Attack

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Energy or ranged attack |
| 2 | Aura/shock/terrifying "attack" |
| 3 | Environmental control (fire, ice, acid, etc.) |
| 4 | Incredibly strong defenses (hide, armor, weapons pass through it, etc.) |
| 5 | Sensory manipulation (blindness, illusions, etc.) |
| 6 | Impressive reproductive strategy (convert others, clone self, etc.) |

Roll Special Aspect

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | More limbs than normal, or limbs that serve a different purpose |
| 2 | Unusual excretions (slime, sound, odor, etc.) |
| 3 | Unnatural movements (limbs bent at odd joints, movement stilted or preternaturally graceful, etc.) |
| 4 | Unusual proportions (long claw-like fingers, tiny misshapen head, etc.) |
| 5 | Preternatural interaction with environment (animals cower, plants die, doesn't cast a shadow, etc.) |
| 6 | Human appearance, invisibility, "hides in plain sight," etc. |

Roll Weakness

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Hole in thought process (cannot strategize, doesn't understand human emotions, etc.) |
| 2 | Special requirement (blood, energy, etc.) |
| 3 | Human nature that can be persuaded/connected with |
| 4 | Emotional (can be enraged, depressed, etc.) |
| 5 | Weakness (p. B161) |
| 6 | Short period of activity (sleeps during sunlight, only lives one day, etc.) |

The world is dyed with the color of blood. It will never be able to go back to the way it was before.

– Yuuki Cross, *Vampire Knight*

THREE WAYS TO SPICE UP MONSTER ENCOUNTERS

• *Conspire with a player beforehand to have something shocking happen.* For example, if the monster will engage in a blinding acid attack, tell the player that when you give a prearranged signal or token, he is to start flailing, screaming, and grabbing his eyes. (He doesn't need to know why he will be doing this, and part of the fun comes from having the player start freaking out without anyone else knowing what's going on.) If you're using the rules from *Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys*, award bonus points to any players who go along with these requests; those points should help him get out of the trouble you put him in.

• *Play with sensory input.* If a monster can absorb sound, have an NPC stop talking (although your lips keep moving). Tell the heroes their skin itches; don't offer an explanation. Tell one of the players his character thinks he can smell something like salt water and copper. Let the gamers fill in the rest with their imagination. (For bonus "cool" points, try to carry over sensory info into the real world, as far as it's safe. A cooler full of lake water opened at an opportune time will make the trip to Innsmouth memorable . . .)

• *Ensure the heroes arrive too late to experience the threat for several encounters . . .* and – based on the rising body count – let them debate whether their absence was a good or bad thing.

ABOUT *GURPS*

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of *GURPS* players. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! We can also be reached by email: info@sjgames.com. Resources include:

New supplements and adventures. *GURPS* continues to grow – see what’s new at gurps.sjgames.com, or visit www.warehouse23.com.

e23. Our e-publishing division offers *GURPS* adventures, play aids, and support in PDF form . . . digital copies of our books, plus exclusive material available only on e23! Just head over to e23.sjgames.com.

Internet. Visit us on the World Wide Web at www.sjgames.com for errata, updates, Q&A, and much

more. To discuss *GURPS* with SJ Games staff and fellow gamers, come to our forums at forums.sjgames.com. The *Pyramid* web page is pyramid.sjgames.com.

Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we’re putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book’s web page and look for the “Bibliography” link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases are available on our website – see above.

GURPS rules and statistics in this magazine are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book.

STUCK FOR AN ADVENTURE? NO PROBLEM.

**e23 sells high-quality game adventures
and supplements in PDF format.**

- Get complete sample adventures free for *GURPS*, *In Nomine*, and *Traveller*!
- PDFs from the major players in online publishing: Ronin Arts, Ken Hite, Atlas Games, and 01 Games.
- New gems from up-and-coming publishers, like Atomic Sock Monkey Press and Expeditious Retreat Press.
- Digital editions of out-of-print classics, from Orclslayer and the complete run of ADQ to *GURPS* China and *GURPS* Ice Age.
- Fully searchable files of *GURPS Fourth Edition* supplements.
- Original material for *Transhuman Space* and *In Nomine*, with new *GURPS* supplements from Phil Masters, David Pulver, Sean Punch, and William Stoddard!
- Buy it once; have it always. Download your purchases again whenever you need to.



Download ● Print ● Play
STEVE JACKSON GAMES

e23 is part of Warehouse 23, the online store at Steve Jackson Games.
Warehouse 23 is also the official Internet retailer for Atlas Games, Ninja Burger, and many other publishers.
Visit us today at www.warehouse23.com for all your game STUFF!