# GURPS® Fourth Edition

# AFTER THE END 2™

## THE NEW WORLD™

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# CONTENTS

*A while ago, this humongous comet came crashing into the Earth. Bam! Total devastation. End of the world as we know it. No celebrities, no cable TV. No water! It hasn't rained in 11 years. Now 20 people gotta squeeze inside the same bathtub. So it ain't all bad.*

       – Tank Girl, in **Tank Girl**

# INTRODUCTION

*World serves its own needs, listen to your heart bleed. Tell me with the rapture and the reverent in the right – right. You vitriolic, patriotic, slam, fight, bright light, feeling pretty psyched.*
*It's the end of the world as we know it . . . and I feel fine.*
    *– R.E.M., "It's the End of the World as We Know It"*

There's nothing quite like an apocalypse to shake things up. Cities become ruins, rivers run with poison, and *strange* people – and things! – wander the countryside. If you're going to adventure in the wasteland, you need some help. You need a guide. You need *GURPS After the End 2: The New World.*

For players, this book looks at every hazard and adventuring scenario your characters are likely to face, from fighting gangs to scavenging gear to reprogramming robots. Forewarned is forearmed – and to make certain that you're prepared for these dangers, every useful character trait is rendered in **boldface.** Keep this by your side when building your wastelanders, and you'll never worry about overlooking a crucial skill or advantage!

Of course, the GM needs to know how to use these people, places, and things in a way that best challenges the players, which is why *The New World* includes plenty of rules and guidance, too. It also walks the GM through the most important steps of setting up the campaign, and is loaded with general advice for running an *After the End* game.

Every well-planned journey begins with a map, so think of this as your atlas to the wasteland. Grab whatever improvised gear you can scrounge up and get ready to explore! It's a whole new world out there . . .

## PUBLICATION HISTORY

This is the first edition of *The New World.* However, some of the rules herein were adapted from other books and modified to fit a post-apocalyptic setting. This includes rules for combat from *GURPS Action 2: Exploits,* survival from *GURPS Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures* and *GURPS Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics,* persuasion from *GURPS Social Engineering,* zombie-fighting from *GURPS Zombies* and *GURPS Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy,* and diseases from *GURPS Reign of Steel: Will to Live.*

## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

*The New World* is fully self-contained; only the *GURPS Basic Set* is required to play. It assumes you'll use the templates, lenses, gear, and guidelines from *GURPS After the End 1: Wastelanders,* but except for mutation, this isn't required. These rules can be used in any post-apocalyptic game, as long as the world ended at least a few generations ago.

Other books may provide useful inspiration. *GURPS Y2K* (for Third Edition) is an "apocalypse now" book, not a post-apocalyptic one, but it can help the GM plot out how the world ended (see Chapter 1). *GURPS Social Engineering* is useful in games focusing on diplomacy, trading and haggling, or intimidation and mob violence. *GURPS Bio-Tech* is packed full of potential mutations, exotic diseases, and new drugs. If zombies are a key part of the setting, *GURPS Zombies* is invaluable for its wide variety of walkers *and* expanded rules for dealing with them. And *GURPS Reign of Steel: Will to Live* makes a wonderful catalog of rogue robots.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Reverend Pee Kitty used to be known as "Jason Levine" – back before the End Times, when he was the Assistant *GURPS* Line Editor. His training from the Church of the Subgenius (an alien-worshiping doomsday cult) made him a post-apocalyptic expert. Sadly, now that he's become a radioactive, three-headed mutant, this document is all we have to remember him by.

## ABOUT *GURPS*

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*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, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition.* Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

*As the Primary Cause:* Even if this was the cause, there was generally a prosaic reason behind it; e.g., we polluted too much, and ended up paying the price. Likely secondary effects include *Bombs Away* (if we fought back), *Mega-Virus* (new deadly spores, rabies from angry animals, etc.), and *Things Fall Apart* (we gave up in the face of overwhelming odds).

*As a Secondary Effect:* Nature's vengeance is an appropriate response to massive, global destruction, making this a common "apocalyptic symptom." If the primary cause was one with localized effects (e.g., *Bombs Away,* where some areas experienced far more destruction than others), this can produce interesting ecological shifts; one area might have thick snow and vicious animals, while another has waves of heat and mutated plants.

*Appropriate Hazards:* Every nonradioactive option under *Climate* (pp. 12-13) fits, from storms caused by extreme greenhouse effects to the permanent "ash winter" following a supervolcano eruption; *Disease* (pp. 13-15) in the form of mutated pollen, insect attacks, etc.; *Gangs* (pp. 15-17), such as eco-cults of bloodthirsty neo-Druids; *Mutants* (pp. 18-21) for animals and plants; and *Paramilitaries* (pp. 23-24).

## Reign of Steel

In retrospect, maybe we shouldn't have made the robots so smart. This can take two forms, which can be combined. On a macroscopic scale, enemy bots wiped out most of humanity and are now an omnipresent, deadly threat. On a microscopic one, nanobots were unleashed as weapons (by either humans *or* those rogue robots) – capable of disassembling matter on a fundamental level. This implies that we reached a tech level (pp. 7-8) suitable for the bots in question (at least TL10 for truly threatening robots and TL11 for nanotech), but the GM can avoid this by splitting the TL ("The old world reached only TL8, but with TL11 robotics.").

*As the Primary Cause:* At heart, we're to blame for this one – the robots didn't build themselves. For this to be *the* apocalypse that slaughtered humanity, the robots must have been widespread; thus, this is a world in which enemy bots are *everywhere,* not just occasional threats. Likely secondary effects include

*Bombs Away* (either we or they used nukes), *Dinosaur Killer* (if the bots had access to satellites or spacecraft), *Mega-Virus* (a nanovirus or anti-human bioweapon), and *Things Fall Apart* (the aftermath of a robot-human war will strongly resemble that of a human-human one).

*As a Secondary Effect:* Robots and nanotech may have been our attempt to fix almost *any* other issue; e.g., a nanovirus engineered to combat a *Mega-Virus.* As a symptom, these threats don't have to be quite as ubiquitous. Instead, rogue bots and gray goo become just another hazard, though a common one.

*Appropriate Hazards:* This choice demands using *Nanotech* (pp. 22-23), *Rogue Bots* (pp. 25-27), or both. Other potential hazards include *Chemicals and Munitions* (pp. 9-11), as the bots are unlikely to care about proper toxin and explosives handling; *Disease* (pp. 13-15), as a nanotech side effect; and *Mutants* (pp. 18-21) if some nanotech rebuilds people. *Gangs* (pp. 15-17) are possible, but will be uncommon if this is the primary cause; when faced with a powerful inhuman threat, humanity tends to band together instead of attacking each other.

## Things Fall Apart

Something undermined the structure of society itself, causing it to tear itself apart via countless small-scale events rather than one massive cataclysm. This could have any number of sociopolitical origins, but the most common are "conventional war" and "shortage of resources." The former was likely a series of civil wars, which explains why weapons of mass destruction were not used. The latter could have been a lack of anything vital – food, technology, money – as long as people were willing to kill each other over the last bits of it.

*As the Primary Cause:* This is the best option if you want a weirdness-free campaign – one without mutants, radiation, robots, etc. That doesn't mean you *can't* have such things, of course! Likely secondary effects include *Bombs Away* (for a mix of conventional and nuclear wars) and *Reign of Steel* (we couldn't count on humans at the end, so we built these machines).

It is *highly* aggressive, racing to attack anyone who invades its territory. Invaders have a *slight* edge if they catch it napping or just waking up, but not nearly enough to offset its speed and ferocity.

**ST:** 21 **HP:** 21 **Speed:** 7.00
**DX:** 14 **Will:** 13 **Move:** 8
**IQ:** 4 **Per:** 12 **Weight:** 300 lbs.
**HT:** 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** +1

**Dodge:** 11 **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 3

**Claw or Bite (16):** 2d+1 cutting; Reach C, 1.

*Traits:* Bad Temper (6); Berserk (15); Combat Reflexes; Enhanced Move 1 (Ground Speed 16; Costs Fatigue, 1 FP); Fur; No Fine Manipulators; Semi-Upright; Sleepy (12 hours/day); Slow Riser; Wild Animal.
*Skills:* Brawling-16; Running-15.
*Notes:* RP 17; Freakishness 12.

# MUTATED PLANTS

Anyone with **Plant Empathy** gets +6 to his roll to identify (p. 18) mutant vegetation; if the GM would normally not allow a roll, he gets one anyway, but without the bonus. No common mutated vegetation is intelligent enough for Influence rolls, but even when dealing with a nonsentient plant, he may roll against the better of **Naturalist** or **Tactics** to predict who and how it will attack.

## Spore Bomber

This large, bulbous plant resembles a smooth-skinned artichoke, if it were stuck into the ground stem-down. It has a rudimentary ability to sense nearby movement; make a Per roll, applying separate bonuses for the invader's size and speed, and a penalty for range, from the *Size and Speed/Range Table* (p. B550). (For a typical walking human, just make a Per roll, applying any range penalty; a *running* human gives +2.)

If it detects someone, it releases dozens of small, lighter-than-air "bombs" – mucus sacs filled with gas and spores. These drift quickly through the air; *everyone* nearby is vulnerable! Roll against a target number of 10 for each person; apply the person's SM *and* the range penalty between him and the plant. If successful, one "bomb" hits, plus another for every three full points of success. The only defense is to dodge.

**ST:** 0 **HP:** 15 **Speed:** 0.00
**DX:** 0 **Will:** 0 **Move:** 0
**IQ:** 0 **Per:** 10 **Weight:** 120 lbs.
**HT:** 13 **FP:** 13 **SM:** 0

**Dodge:** N/A **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 1

**Spore Bombs (10):** 1d+1 toxic; contact agent. See text for details.

*Traits:* Blindness; Deafness; Doesn't Breathe (Breathes carbon dioxide); Doesn't Sleep; High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous); No Legs (Sessile); No Manipulators; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Reduced Consumption (Special; Requires modest sunlight and water); Vibration Sense (Air).
*Notes:* RP 14; Freakishness 4.

## Venus Guy-Trap

This is actually a *class* of mutated plants, all of which have adapted to hide as a different type of plant. Some look like small trees, some like vines, and so on. The plant has sensory clusters embedded along its length, giving it the rudimentary ability to see. When a target comes within reach, the plant lashes out with several "mouths," each the size of a football. If the victim has not noticed the trap, he gets no defense against the first attack! Once the victim is dead, the trap digests his flesh and absorbs the nutrients from the blood spilled onto the ground.

**ST:** 16 **HP:** 16 **Speed:** 6.00
**DX:** 10 **Will:** 0 **Move:** 0
**IQ:** 0 **Per:** 8 **Weight:** 200 lbs.
**HT:** 14 **FP:** 14 **SM:** +1

**Dodge:** N/A **Parry:** N/A **DR:** 3

**Bite (12):** 1d+1 cutting; Reach C-5. May attack with five mouths simultaneously.

*Traits:* Bad Sight (Nearsighted); Colorblindness; Deafness; Dependency (Sunlight; Weekly); Doesn't Breathe (Breathes carbon dioxide); Doesn't Sleep; Extra Attack 4; Extra Mouth 4; High Pain Threshold; Injury Tolerance (Homogenous); No Legs (Sessile); No Manipulators; No Sense of Smell/Taste; Stretching 4.
*Skills:* Brawling-12; Disguise-12.
*Notes:* RP 15; Freakishness 4.

Alternatively, they can work together as a single unit. Follow these steps:

1. Designate one scavenger as the leader – usually the one with the best Scrounging skill. Everyone else is an assistant.

2. Average the assistants' Scrounging skills, rounding to the nearest whole number. Roll against this average skill and treat it as a complementary skill to the leader's roll (below). This is an exception to the rule about no skill being able to complement itself.

3. Roll against the leader's **Scrounging** skill, with the complementary skill modifier. If there are multiple assistants (not counting the leader), also apply +1 for 2-3 assistants, +2 for 4-7, +3 for 8-15, +4 for 16-29, and +5 for 30 or more. Use the leader's result for *all* purposes.

# LOCATIONS AND LOOTING

The *Scavenging Table* (below) lists several location types. If a given place doesn't fit into one of these categories, the GM should either choose the closest applicable one or come up with new modifiers that feel right – and more appropriate location-specific stuff.
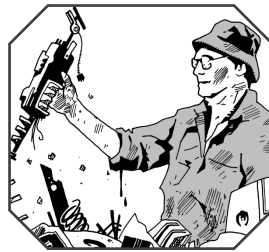
*Commercial:* A place at which retail goods were sold, stored, or processed. Small examples include convenience stores and pawn shops; large ones include malls and mega-marts.

*Corporate/Trade:* A place where professionals plied specific trades. Small examples include standalone accountants and hairdressers; large ones include office buildings and business headquarters.

*Encampment:* A gang (pp. 15-17) or mutant (pp. 18-21) camp, either outdoors or based in a nondescript building. (If the building clearly fits into one of the other categories here, use that category.) See *Encountering Gangs* (p. 15) for examples.

*Food:* A place that sold, stored, or processed groceries; this can include *any* location likely to be stocked with canned and preserved goods. Small examples include independent grocers and food kitchens; large ones include supermarkets and packing plants.

*Industrial/Research:* Either a place that manufactured or stored materials (e.g., aluminum, plastic, or coal), or one that was related to scientific research. (While these two categories are very different, the *loot* tends to be similar!) Small examples include storage buildings and trailer-labs; large ones include factories and warehouses.

*Medical:* A place devoted to healing the sick. Small examples include doctors' offices and standalone pharmacies; large ones include hospitals and drug-processing centers.

*Military/Police:* A place equipped for martial or peacekeeping action. Small examples include police stations and small paramilitary (pp. 23-24) bases; large ones include National Guard depots and large paramilitary bases. True military sites (e.g., an Air Force base) are *wonderful* places to scavenge . . . but they're *always* occupied and well-defended.

*Residential:* A place where regular folks used to live. Small examples include houses and trailers; large ones include apartment buildings and condos.

*Transport:* A place for storing, maintaining, or using vehicles. Small examples include truck depots and mechanic shops; large ones include airports and train stations.

For each type, the scavenging modifier depends heavily on how looted-out the location is, as determined by the GM:

*Unlooted:* The place is currently inhabited, or has not been looted since the last occupants moved out. It *has* gone through cycles of looting and occupation; a truly pristine location (that is, one that has not been touched since the apocalypse) is a unique find, something the GM will have to adjudicate.

*Semi-Looted:* The location has only recently been abandoned or is somewhat hard to get to, and has thus been invaded by a few groups of scavengers.

*Looted:* Many wastelanders have had a chance to pick through this area. Very little obvious "treasure" remains.

# RESULTS

Roll 3d on the *Scrounging Results Table* for each successful scavenging attempt. Use *Minor Finds* for success by 0-4 or *Major Finds* for one by 5+. For a critical success, use *Major Finds* for a margin of 0-4 or *Amazing Finds* for one of 5+. (Thus, most amazing finds require a combination of luck *and* skill.)

In addition to this, if your scavenging was successful *and* the result was equal to or less than the Stash value on the *Scavenging Table* (below), you have a chance to find something special; see *Stashes* (p. 38).

## Scavenging Table

| Location | Unlooted | Semi-Looted | Looted | Stash | Location-Specific Stuff |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Commercial | 0 | -3 | -5 | 6 or less | Miscellaneous equipment |
| Corporate/Trade | -2 | -4 | -5 | 6 or less | Computers; tools |
| Encampment | 0 | -2 | -4 | 5 or less | Rations; ammo; weapons |
| Food | -1 | -3 | -5 | 5 or less | Canned food; common drugs |
| Industrial/Research | -2 | -4 | -6 | 7 or less | Tools; scientific gear; computers |
| Medical | -1 | -4 | -6 | 6 or less | Medical supplies; experimental consumables |
| Military/Police | 0 | -3 | -6 | 5 or less | Ammo; weapons; law-enforcement gear |
| Residential | 0 | -2 | -4 | 7 or less | Junk* |
| Transport | 0 | -3 | -6 | 5 or less | Vehicular parts (for repair); fuel |

\* See **Wastelanders** (p. 30). While residential buildings are easy to scavenge and often have stashes, the prevalence of junk makes them a mixed bag.

Combat usually works best with the basic system and the simplified rules on pp. 43-46. Extra effort (p. 45) should be *encouraged.* Picking and choosing one or two cinematic combat rules (p. B417) can help craft a particular "feel," but don't use them all or your game will quickly turn cinematic. Skip over any optional rules that drag things out or increase lethality, such as *Bleeding* (p. B420) and *Changing Posture in Armor* (p. B395), and focus on keeping the plot and/or the action moving forward at all times.

## Gritty

The focus of **After the End** is on boldly adventuring through the wasteland, but that isn't incompatible with a gritty approach. A gritty game emphasizes harsh realism; heroes should be sneaky, cautious, and paranoid, because the hazards of the world *will* kill them otherwise! Simple survival (pp. 30-32) becomes a major concern, especially if the GM makes rations hard to acquire.

A gritty game doesn't have to involve extra bookkeeping. The new FP/LFP rules from **Wastelanders** are just a simplified version of the existing ones, and the RP take on radiation is quite harsh in the short-term. To make radiation scarier without using the rules from p. B435, simply decree that for every 10 RP lost, your RP statistic drops by 1 *permanently.*

Combat can still use simplified rules (pp. 43-46.), but if the GM sets fights in realistically cramped tunnels or hallways,

he may want to switch to tactical combat occasionally. It is possible to use the extra-effort options (p. 45) in a gritty game, though Second Wind may temper the fear of death.

Hazards (see Chapter 2) should be particularly unforgiving. Bad guys, like gang members and mutants, react intelligently and take advantage of any mistakes or openings the PCs make. Environmental dangers, like storms and chemicals, appear frequently and there will be no obvious ways to avoid them. However, it's *crucial* that the GM doesn't actively try to kill the characters (or make their players feel that way); there's nothing fair or fun about an omnipotent being toying with mere mortals.

# MORALITY

Just as important as campaign style is *campaign morality* – how the GM expects the PCs to behave. It's important that everyone be on the same page here *before* character creation. If the party consists of a white-hat marshal for justice, a paranoid and sociopathic thief, and a compulsively murdering gangster, the very first game session is likely to end with the PCs trying to kill each other!

## Heroes Wanted

The world may be a violent, horrible place, but you rise above it. You live by a code of ethics and work to make the wasteland a little bit better everywhere you go. You can kill, but not murder. You can fight (and do sneaky stuff like backstabbing), but only with *true* justification for your actions.

The wastelanders should avoid disadvantages like Bloodlust, Bully, and Callous – instead choosing ones like Charitable, Code of Honor, Pacifism (Cannot Harm Innocents *or* Self-Defense Only), and Sense of Duty. The PCs do *not* have to be doe-eyed and innocent. A true hero *can* be a grizzled veteran who'll gun down anyone who deserves it without remorse. The key is that it has to be clearly *deserved.*

## Shades of Gray

People aren't "good" or "evil" – they're just people, and nobody's perfect. There are times when you kill a slave trader and free his cargo, and there are times when you have to trade with one for supplies and then ride away being thankful that at least the slaves have shelter. "Compromise" is the name of the game, and those who can't learn to play that game aren't long for this world.

Characters shouldn't take polarizing disadvantages (e.g., Sadism). An extreme Code of Honor or Sense of Duty that compels the PC to defend a huge class of people will get him into trouble quickly. Fanaticism is rarely a good fit, whether for a noble *or* ignoble cause. Because the PCs have much more leeway in terms of personality, their players will need to coordinate during character creation to ensure that everyone can work well together.

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# KEEPING HEROES ALIVE

The protagonists won't always prevail in an **After the End** campaign. If the wastelanders underestimate their opponents (or just have some bad luck), it's entirely possible for them to end up knocked unconscious or worse. If the GM doesn't want everyone to build new characters, he has a few options.

*Better "Dead" Than Dead:* If someone is being badly beaten, the GM should remind him that he can play dead (p. 44). This doesn't work with hazards, or animals that eat dead bodies, but intelligent foes may very well just steal his stuff and leave him be, if fooled.

*Capture:* Many gangs (human or mutant) would rather have new slaves (p. 15) than waste ammo on a kill. Some paramilitaries are willing to take prisoners. And even animals might be so full that they'd rather save their new prize for a later meal. This turns a total-party-kill situation into a new adventure: escape! Because some players associate "capture" with "execution," it's important for the GM to give them an honest answer about their characters' chances of survival should they become prisoners. When he tells them, "This gang seems likely to let you live if you surrender," they should realize that he's giving them a way to survive a hopeless situation.

*Deus Ex Wasteland:* The wasteland is *full* of hazards, which means that any two-way conflict can easily turn into a three-way one! For example, if the PCs are getting beaten badly by a group of robots, a sandstorm can be a lifesaver. While it's equally bad for everyone, it effectively *breaks up the fight,* which gives them a chance to regroup and recover. Alternatively, if one of the PCs has **Serendipity,** it can turn this into a genuine lucky break – maybe instead of a sandstorm, a pack of mutant animals show up, angered by the high-pitched noise of the robots' servos, and *just* attack the bots!

# INDEX

Acid rain, 12-13.
Acidic water, 13.
Adventures, *see Campaigns*.
Aerosol particulates, 10-11.
Aliens, *as cause,* 7; *as hazard,* 20; *zombie cause,* 27.
Alkaline mud, 11.
Ammunition, *bartering and,* 47.
Animals, *dogs,* 31; *hunting,* 30-31; *mutated,* 19-21; *trapping,* 30.
Anthropology skill, 8.
Bartering, 46-47.
Battle plans, 44.
Blustering, 44.
Bombardier beetles, 19-20.
Bombs, 11.
Bosses, gang, 17.
Buildings, 32-36; *additional dangers,* 36; *age penalties,* 8; *area exploration roll,* 34-35; *exploring,* 34-35; *getting inside,* 33-34; *location types,* 37; *mishaps,* 35; *scrounging,* 36-38; *structural collapse,* 35; *traps,* 36; *see Structural Integrity*.
Bullets, *bartering and,* 47.
Bunkers, *see Buildings*.
Cameras, 34.
Campaigns, *adding color,* 51; *cinematic style,* 49; *downtime,* 51; *gear,* 51-52; *gritty style,* 50; *heroic realism,* 49; *keeping heroes alive,* 50; *making everyone useful,* 52-53; *morality,* 50-51; *styles,* 49-53; *tech-level decisions,* 7-8; *time-frame decisions,* 8; *see also Causes and Effects*.
Camping, 32.
**Car Wars,** 51.
Causes and effects, 4-7; *bombs,* 4; *cosmic rays,* 5; *dinosaur killer,* 5; *disease,* 5; *mega-virus,* 5; *meteor strike,* 5; *Mother Nature,* 5-6; *nuclear war,* 4; *number of,* 4; *overview,* 4; *radiation,* 5; *reign of steel,* 6; *resource shortage,* 6-7; *robots,* 6; *societal collapse,* 6-7; *supernatural,* 5; *war,* 4, 6-7; *zombies,* 7.
Ceilings mishaps, 35.
Chemicals, 9-11; *trap effect,* 36; *weapons as hazards,* 10.

Cholera, 14.
Climate, *as cause,* 5-6; *as hazard,* 12-13.
Cold, 12.
Colonies, *return of,* 8.
Colossus mutant, 19.
Combat, 43-46; *extra effort options,* 45; *fighting on the move,* 45; *flipping a weapon,* 46; *gunplay,* 43-44; *horde,* 29; *posturing,* 44; *shadows and,* 44-45; *simplified range,* 43; *strategy,* 44; *surprise,* 44; *underwater shooting,* 46; *zombies,* 29; *see also Guns, Weapons*.
Computers, 42-43; *debugging,* 42; *hacking,* 42; *see also Nanotech, Robots*.
Contact toxins, 36.
Cosmic rays, *as cause,* 5; *zombie cause,* 27; *see also Radiation*.
Damage Resistance, *alkaline mud and,* 11; *biohazard suit,* 47; *contact agents and,* 9; *doors and attached hardware,* 33; *joy buzzer trap and,* 36.
Deadfalls, 36.
Disappearing, *during combat,* 45.
Disassembler nano, 22.
Disease, *as hazard,* 13-15; *as cause,* 5; *as trap,* 36; *as zombie cause,* 27; *carriers,* 14; *dealing with,* 13-14; *immunity,* 14, 28; *mutant-causing,* 11; *nanoviruses,* 23; *samples,* 14-15; *weaponized,* 15; *zombie infection,* 15, 28.
Distractions, *during combat,* 44; *rules for,* 48.
Docs, *challenges for,* 52; *treating patients,* 45, 51.
Dogs, *hunting with,* 31.
Doors, 33.
Drugs, *fabricating components,* 40; *treatments,* 13, 18; *see also Inventing*.
Ebola-B, 14.
Encampments, 16.
Encouragement, *to teammates,* 44.
End of the world, *see Causes and Effects*.
Explosions, *creating,* 34; *traps,* 36.
Extra effort options, 45
Fallout, *rain,* 13; *sandstorms,* 13.
Falls, 35.

Fences, 33.
First aid, 45.
Fitting in, *rules for,* 48.
Floor mishaps, 35.
Followers, *making,* 46, 51.
Food, *gathering,* 30; *hunting,* 30-31; *location type,* 37.
Freakishness, *NPC mutants and,* 18.
Friends, *making,* 46.
Gadgeteer advantage, *Gizmos and,* 42; *inventing, upgrading, and repairing and,* 39-41.
Gangs, 15-17; *identity,* 16; *attitude lenses,* 16; *encountering,* 15-16; *gear,* 17; *infiltrating camps,* 33-34; *sample members,* 16-17; *social interactions,* 46-48; *traps and,* 36; *see also Mutants, Paramilitaries*.
Gathering food, 30, 51.
Gear, *analyzing,* 41-42; *bartering value,* 46-47; *gang,* 17; *new,* 47; *value as parts,* 39-40; *see also Guns, Inventing, Parts, Repairs, Upgrading Gear, Weapons*.
Generations, 8.
Gizmos advantage, 42.
Gray goo (nanotech), 22.
Greys (aliens), 20; *see also Aliens*.
Guardian robots, 26.
Guns, *as melee weapons,* 44; *flipping to hand,* 46; *leading the target,* 44; *shooting two,* 44; *simplified rapid fire,* 43-44; *simplified shooting,* 43-44; *trap effect,* 36; *underwater shooting,* 46.
**GURPS,** 49; ***Action 2: Exploits,*** 3; ***After the End,*** 3, 7-9, 14, 24, 45, 49, 50, 51; ***After the End 1: Wastelanders,*** 3, 4, 7, 11-13, 18, 19, 24, 25, 30-32, 37-39, 44, 47, 49, 50; ***Basic Set,*** 3, 7; ***Bio-Tech,*** 3; ***Dungeon Fantasy 16: Wilderness Adventures,*** 3; ***Low-Tech Companion 3: Daily Life and Economics,*** 3; ***Monster Hunters 3: The Enemy,*** 3; ***Monster Hunters 5: Applied Xenology,*** 20; ***Power-Ups 5: Impulse Buys,*** 49; ***Reign of Steel: Will to Live,*** 3, 26; ***Social Engineering,*** 3, 46; ***Thaumatology,*** 5; ***Ultra-Tech,*** 7, 26; ***Y2K,*** 3-5; ***Zombies,*** 3, 5, 27; ***Zombies: Day One,*** 27; *see also* ***Pyramid.***
Haggling, 47.
Hazards, *adding new,* 9; *chemicals,* 9-11; *climate,* 12-13; *disease,* 13-15; *focus,* 9; *gangs,* 15-17; *munitions,* 9-11; *mutants,* 18-21; *nanotech,* 22-23; *paramilitaries,* 23-24; *radiation,* 25; *recommended by causes,* 4-7; *robots,* 25-27; *zombies,* 27-29.
Healing, 45; *Second Wind extra effort,* 45.
Heat, 12.
Heavy metals, irradiated, 11.
Hulks, *challenges for,* 52.
Hunters, *challenges for,* 52-52.

> *Your people were getting too intelligent. We could not wait until you were strong enough to attack us; we had to attack you first.*
>
> *– Ro-Man, in* **Robot Monster**

*Finn: We've been showing these films **unauthorized.***
*Jake: But these movies are before the Great Mushroom War.*
*Finn: We should still respect authority, man.*

*– **Adventure Time** #2.2*