

# 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

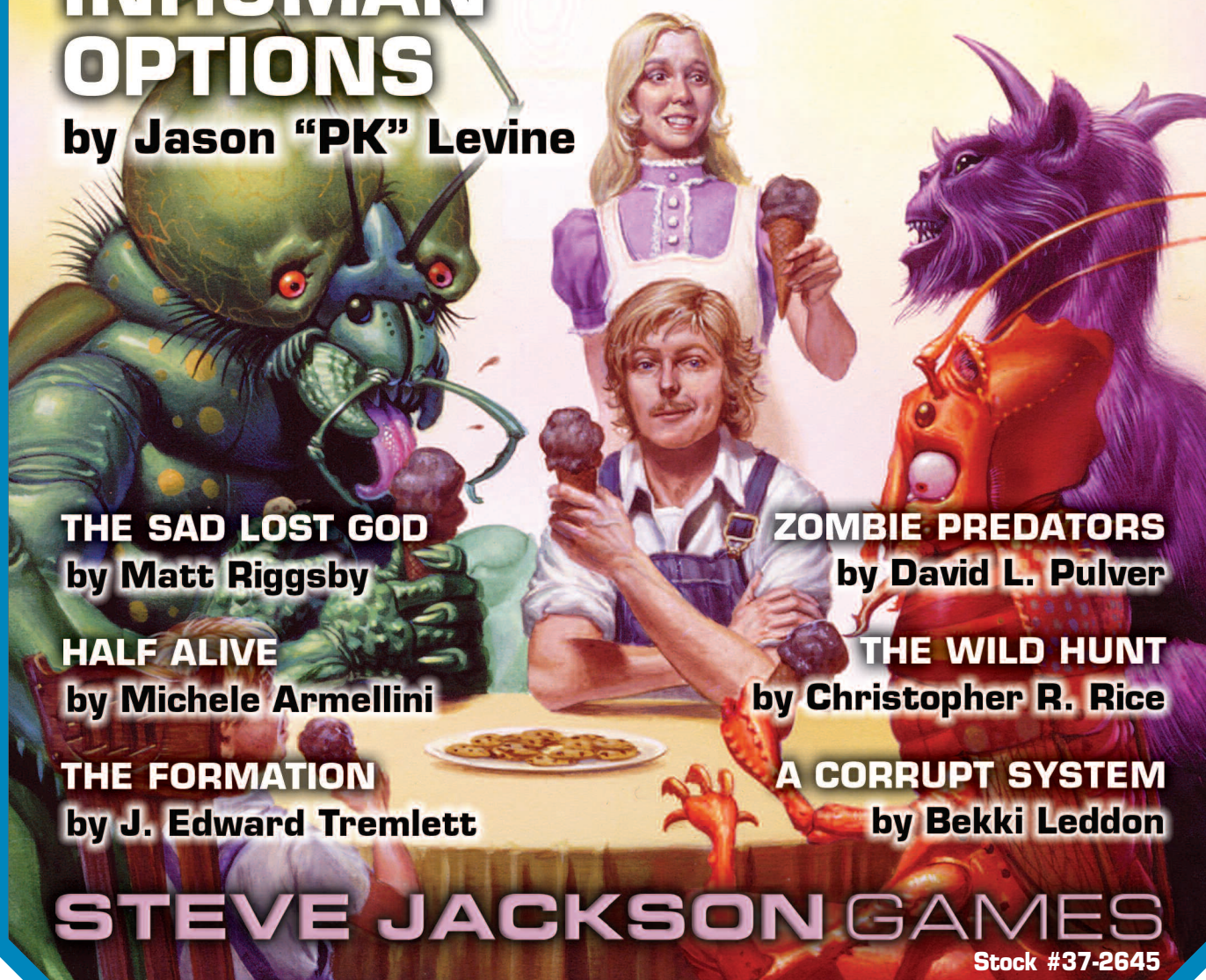
**ZOMBIE PREDATORS**  
by David L. Pulver

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by Christopher R. Rice

**A CORRUPT SYSTEM**  
by Bekki Leddon

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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

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# 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

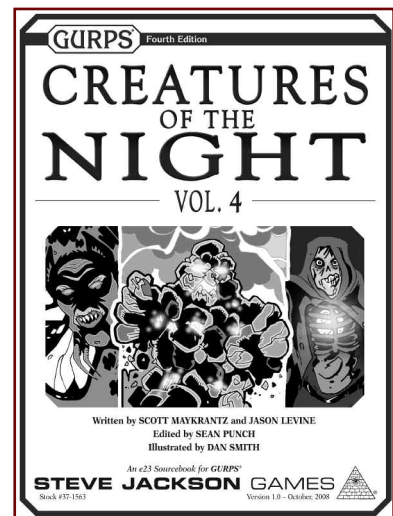
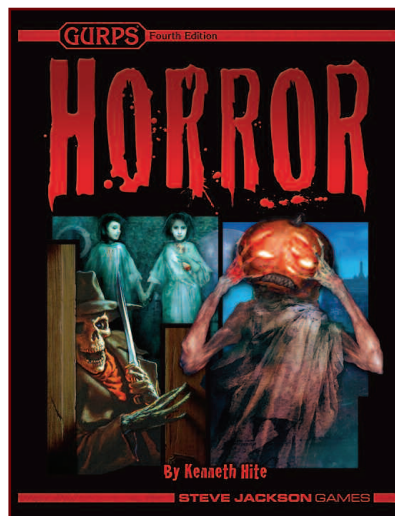
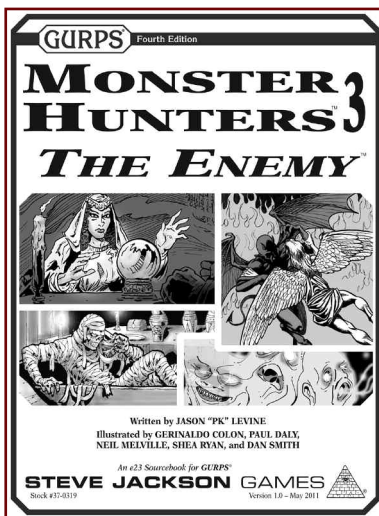
slathering to a fantasy world, or infect a space station with dark and dangerous beings, you should be able to find something in this issue to sate your appetite.

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](mailto:pyramid@sjgames.com), or deliver your daring ideas online at [forums.sjgames.com](http://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](http://sjgames.com/pyramid/writing.html).



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*“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.

# 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.<sup>1</sup>

# 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).



## ABOUT *GURPS*

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*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.

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