Special Section for
The Fantasy Trip

AFTER THE END II™

NO PLACE LIKE HOME
Chip Limeburner

THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR FOREBEARS
Nathan M.M. Meluvor

MOON OF SILVER
J. Edward Tremlett

WHISPERS
David L. Pulver

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Orange: **The Fantasy Trip** Features

COVER ART
Christopher Shy

CARTOGRAPHY
Chip Limeburner

IN THIS ISSUE

Sure, there was an apocalypse . . . but that's not the end of the world! Society is yours to make anew, with **GURPS After the End.** This month, *Pyramid* revisits the potential and power of post-apocalyptic gaming.

When the sun no longer shines and wolves have turned into something even more ferocious and bloodthirsty, danger is omnipresent with a *Moon of Silver, World of Dust.* Frequent *Pyramid* contributor J. Edward Tremlett describes a post-apocalyptic setting caused by a supernatural disaster. Discover the new masters of the land – werewolves – including tactics, adventure seeds, and *GURPS* stats for the horrifying threats.

When the acid rain starts pouring down, you need shelter fast, and there's *No Place Like Home.* What secrets does this seemingly abandoned farmhouse hold for wastelanders who drop by for a visit? This spine-tingling *GURPS* adventure zooms in on a time when the apocalypse is in recent memory. It includes a full map of the titular house, plus *GURPS* stats for two versions of the key antagonist.

Once society stabilizes after the End, *The Knowledge of Our Forebears* will be essential to building a new future. Learn about the perils that can befall books and other printed material, with an overview of dangers and optional rules to let you tell with a roll of the dice how fragile these printed treasures are. Then discover how – once you have readable books – you may still have problems *reading* them, if language and literacy have drifted in the intervening years.

This month's Eidetic Memory presents *Whispers From the Wastelands,* a collection of three ready-to-use encounters, including a vampire (and its minions), zombie tamers, and a troll. But as David L. Pulver – author of **GURPS Reign of Steel** – suggests, things are not always what they seem!

Random Thought Table ponders the end of the world with a look at new ways of creating a wide-open world.

But that's not all for this issue! *After the end* of a successful Kickstarter, the excitement is still high around here for the classic dungeon-crawl fun of **The Fantasy Trip,** so we proudly include a special section with some new items of interest for that game!

It's a tough world, and "survival of the fittest" is the order of the day in *Building Character: Funnels in* **TFT.** Learn about what funnels are, discover how to use them to take someone from zero to hero, and roll the dice on the random background table to instantly add life to low-level characters.

With *Monies of Cidri,* you'll gain new insight into money, metal, and measurement . . . and maybe unleash three new **TFT** spells to help with all three.

Finally, **The Fantasy Trip** Line Editor Guy McLimore offers *Lessons From Darbo Delver,* two fun vignettes that offer insight into labyrinth and trap creation from Cidri's premier labyrinth and trap maker.

What are you waiting for? With this *Pyramid,* worlds await!

From the Editor

The World Is What You Make It

I think one of my favorite aspects of post-apocalyptic gaming is that it's so wildly open to interpretation. It's the genre that spawned both *Twilight: 2000* and *Gamma World;* the former is about as realistic a depiction of a world after the bomb as possible, while the latter is a madcap mélange of a million wonderful ideas.

One of *GURPS'* great strengths is the ability to customize it to the game that you want. And *GURPS After the End* allows for nearly any permutation of wasteland weirdness you like.

Perhaps another secret of this genre is that nothing is set in stone. It's a basic tenet of the genre that you can go from "normal" to "strange" easily: Surprise! You're dealing with rationing and bandits when suddenly mutant squirrels show up!
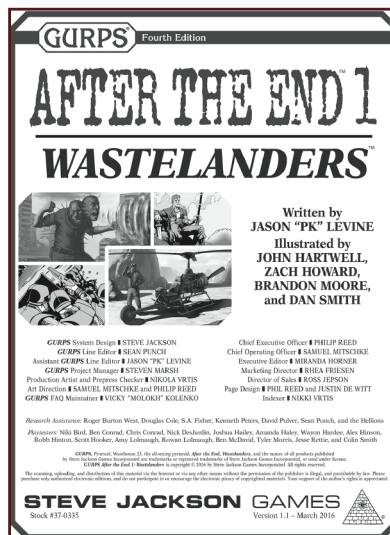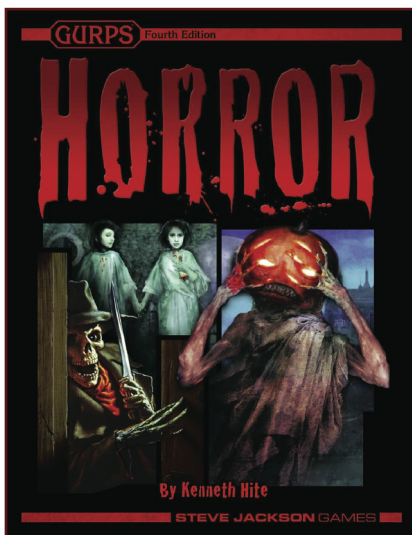
But the genre is also fine with going the other way. If you start with mutants and psionic powers and whatnot, and everyone decides that they'd have more fun if they were dealing with more mundane concerns like rebuilding the world, then the weirdness can just . . . go away. The world has already gone through crazy amounts of change; who's to say that whatever uncanny forces were empowering any unwanted oddities didn't just run out? (Tangential, but the television series *Eureka* started out as this *X-Files*-esque "Conspiracies are everywhere! Trust no one!" series, only to morph pretty quickly into a quirky, cozy ensemble-weirdness-magnet story. Best I can tell, the fans were totally fine with that transition.)

This issue revels in the entire spectrum of post-apocalyptic possibilities, from realistic horrors that show the depths of depravity in the human heart, to wasteland werewolves. We hope there's something here that will prove inspirational to your efforts to build your world . . . or *rebuild* it, as the case may be.

Write Here, Write Now

Your comments help us improve our publication. How are you using this material in your campaign? What do you wish we'd write about? Let us know via private feedback at **pyramid@sjgames.com**, or join the public discussion online at **forums.sjgames.com**.

Moon of Silver, World of Dust

by J. Edward Tremlett

"Man, I can't believe the Wolves haven't hit this place yet," Ethan said, grabbing cans of food off the barely broken shelves. The labels were faded so badly it was hard to be sure what was what, but **some** of it had to be edible. Hopefully.

"What was it, anyway?" Billie asked, her eyes glued on the open door, and the silver-lit forest beyond – the tree line so thick it was no wonder **anyone** had missed it.

"A convenience store, I think," he said, puzzled by the phrase *"Use By."* *"Kind of like a grocery store, I think. Just smaller."*

"Just hurry," she whispered, raising her gun instinctively. *"This isn't far from where they took Dad and the others."*

"Don't remind me," Ethan sighed, recalling that horrible day all too well.

Suddenly, there was movement, out in the trees. A head poked out between them – furry and fanged, nostrils flaring at the delicious scent of humans.

"Ethan!" Billie shouted, shooting at the wolf. If it charged, she was dead – her brother had the silver bullets, not her.

No sound came from behind her, and she turned to look. Ethan was slumped on the floor, groaning from a blow to the head. Around him were several men, dressed in the livery of the nearest Wolf Lord.

The one standing above her brother was shaggy and filthy, and had a horrible bite scar on his neck. She recognized him instantly.

"Dad?"

He looked at her – lips peeling back in an inhuman snarl. His teeth were long and yellow, and his eyes were no longer human.

Billie had just enough time to scream before the wolves pounced from behind . . .

Many generations ago, the Sun shone bright and true, the world was green and bountiful, humanity was the apex predator, and werewolves were just a myth. Then came the day the Moon ate the Sun – its bright, silver light changing the plants and awakening something terrible within humans.

Now the northern lands are sand and dust, with a thick band of poisonous, alien forest nestled at their center – slowly moving in either direction. Now humanity either cowers far to the south, or struggles to survive in what was once lush and fertile land. Now humanity lives in fear of its new, skin-changing masters, all too aware that if tooth and claw will not carry the day, the terrible weapons of a bygone age might be used instead.

Can those who remain find enough food, shelter, and supplies to survive? Might they find enough weapons and silver to strike a blow against the lupine oppressors or their human servants? Is there some way the world can be put right, or will all humanity eventually succumb to the curse of the Wolf?

This supernatural **GURPS After the End** campaign setting presents an ecologically ravaged Earth slowly converting into something more befitting the wolf within. PCs can be scrabbling wastelanders trying to survive in the face of dust and deprivation, all the while avoiding being eaten, herded, or turned by the Wolves. They could also be traitor humans – helping the world's new masters out of madness or mere survival – or those lucky enough to be far outside the monsters' reach, trying to retain or rebuild civilization.

This article explains what happened (though the *why* is uncertain), how it's changed the world, and what life is like on both sides of the civilizational divide. It also provides **After the End** campaign considerations, ideas for stories, and **GURPS** stats for the Wolves and the Wolf Lords they serve.

A supernatural, post-apocalyptic campaign setting.

Take Stock, Reflect, and Rue

Come, child, and sit. Let me tell you the story of the ending of the world before, as it was told unto me. Let me tell you of that world, with its ships of the sea and planes of the air, and its mighty nations with great armies and terrible weapons. Let me tell you of a land green and bountiful, lit by a Sun by day and a Moon by night. A time before the dust and the poison, the culls and the Mansbane.

The time before the Wolf.

Then, every so often, the Sun and the Moon would cross paths, like strangers in a marketplace, and the Moon would hide the Sun for a time. The learned ones called this an eclipse. As the elders tell it, the learned ones of the time before had predicted the eclipse of a lifetime. They were not wrong.

EIDETIC MEMORY

WHISPERS FROM THE WASTELANDS

by David L. Pulver

Here are three encounters for a **GURPS After the End** campaign that may initially appear as distorted rumors or traveler's tales. However, each contains a kernel of truth which intrepid survivors may discover. In each case, there is more to the story than it seems . . .

It's assumed at least a generation or two has passed since the fall of humanity, long enough for myths and legends to arise. One encounter assumes the existence of brain-eating zombies (as a primary or secondary threat) and mutated creatures (see *The Necros*, pp. 23-26); as such, it can also fit in with some **GURPS Zombies** campaigns. The others presume some "experimental TL9+ technology existed in some form prior to the fall, but that familiarity with such technology is no longer commonplace among most wastelanders. Feel free to adjust the assumptions to fit specific campaign backgrounds.

> *Are the traveler's tales and rumors mere myth . . . or is there something more to them?*

THE CAVE OF THE VAMPIRES

Traveler, you think ghosts and vampires are bedtime stories and campfire tales? Well, you're wrong. I know that vampires are real. There's one who lives nearby, in a cave not a half-day's ride into the hills.

What's the vampire's name? Varma, some say. They say she lurks in a cave of wonders, served by bats and monsters. If a brave warrior fights his way through them, he has to face her . . . and none can stand against her magic. Maybe she will put him to sleep and keep him as a slave, or feed him to the bats, or if he's lucky, take him to bed and suck his blood. If he pleases her, she may keep him forever . . . or tire of him and let him go.

Who would risk a vampire? Well, some folks are fools and drawn by her beauty. Others say her house is full of treasures, and those whose blood she drinks who please her, men and women both, may share her power! There was Sawbones Torch, who folk called Doc Methuselah, who had one of those 'lectric flash-things and used to be the oldest man of the village and *was a whole 70 years old before the cannibals got him. Claimed he'd been her lover when he was a young lad, that's why he lived so long . . . That's probably the moonshine talking . . . but I've heard a few who swear it's true!*

THE TRUTH BEHIND THE STORY

The vampire cave is actually a high-tech underground survival bunker dating from just before the End. The "vampire lady" is actually a semi-intelligent computer, called VARMA, that runs security and medical systems. VARMA is an experimental automated medical bed that was installed in the bunker. The name is an acronym for Virtual Autonomous Robotic Medical Assistance. Its "bats" are a flock of small flying security/recon drones armed with non-lethal toxins.

Random Thought Table

New Ways to Open the World

by Steven Marsh, *Pyramid* Editor

Perhaps more so than most other settings, post-apocalyptic backdrops like *GURPS After the End* are especially well-suited for open-world or sandbox gaming. But – even for groups that like that style of play – other options can exist than what is typically meant by sandbox gaming.

The Basics

To make sure we're all on the same page, sandbox gaming is where the heroes are given access to a larger-than-normal area (quite possibly the entire world), and are encouraged to explore and play where they may . . . as if the elements of the setting were toys to be experienced as one wants, like in a sandbox.

So, for example, the adventurers might be given the overview map of the city, and encouraged to poke around wherever they feel like exploring. Or the players might be presented with an almost-blank hex map – with an icon representing where they start – and encouraged to "fill it in" by wandering where they want to. The GM may have a keyed map with mini-encounters, interesting set pieces and NPCs, and other elements that are more or less doing their own thing until the heroes intersect with them. (For fans of video games, this kind of play is often what's in mind when looking at games like *Witcher III,* the modern *Grand Theft Auto* series, and so on.)

This contrasts with many "conventional" gaming adventures, where heroes are kept to a tighter map. A standard dungeon crawl might have an initial room with two or three offshoot choices, which lead to two or three other choices (some of which loop back on themselves or close off in dead ends), etc. More scoffed at by many gamers is the "railroad" adventure, where there's only a single path the scenario can play out (or maybe a junction or two).

But for the purposes of our discussion here, the important thing is that not all sandbox campaigns need to start with the *map*. Rather, the important thing is that the number of choices that are open to the heroes is considerable, and the outcome of the campaign shouldn't be predetermined.

What makes sandbox gaming so appealing for *After the End* is that the core of the post-apocalyptic experience often centers around the self – the central area the heroes call home. The desire to leave and explore often stems from *them* rather than an outside force. (Or, at least, the outside force compelling exploration isn't some king saying, "Go kill this dragon," but rather the uncaring forces of entropy and survival.) *After the End* settings are also often blank slates, with the heroes being mostly unfamiliar with the world outside of their own village.

But, as noted, not everything needs to center on a map. Here, then, are some other ideas that are particularly well-suited for warriors of the wastelands.

Radio, Radio

Since *After the End* campaigns almost always center on a world that was once technologically advanced enough to hit at least TL7, you can look to technological methods to expand the notion of "map." One of the most flavorful may well be to build on the idea of radios.

In this case, the "open world" that inspires gamers is a radio, receiving various stations. Each station would be a clue or adventure seed that leads to another interesting location. Some examples of sample audio the heroes might hear:

- A robotic voice containing an enigmatic periodic countdown. ("ARARAT PROTOCOL IN 87 DAYS, 17 HOURS.")
- A periodic human voice speaking in an unknown language. It contains enough elements of humanity (pauses, occasional chuckles, etc.) that it seems to be authentically human and non-military.
- A one-second tone, every 10 seconds.
- Someone who claims to be trapped underground, with limited food and water.
- A continuous musical radio broadcast from before the Fall, complete with announcer banter and commercials. It *must* be a recording . . . right?
- A friendly-sounding voice talks about the wonders of their settlement and invites outsiders to visit. If someone makes contact, the person sounds genuine.
- Silence (not even static).
- An automated voice repeats the latitude and longitude of the heroes (or their base of operations).

About GURPS

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of **GURPS** players. We can be reached by email: **info@sjgames.com**. Our address is SJ Games, P.O. Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Resources include:

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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.

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